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## **A Narrative for European federalists? ©**

Further elaboration

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

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# **A Narrative for European federalists?**

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## **Summary**

This narrative goes about the message of the European Federalists. What needs to be underscored and which correlations should be made to distinguish the European federalist way of thinking from the outdated, but still omnipresent, nationalistic reasoning. The positive dynamics of a post-national federalism are highlighted. Adaptation is no doom scenario but instead a message of hope in the future of our European way of life.

# A Narrative for European federalists?

A third (revised) draft formulation

## Introduction

### - Preliminary remarks

- The suggested narrative is the third consecutive version written by the author and supersedes the previous ones. It will not be the last version, since a narrative should go through a **process of maturation**. This draft should be considered a possible formulation among other ones dealing with the European integration. It should be opposed to the existing narratives, in as far as they exist. (see N. 54 in the Series Which Europe? pages 14-15)
- This draft narrative can be a **starter** for a fruitful exchange of views among European federalists in order to proceed towards a jointly supported text. Many subjects should further be elaborated. However this narrative should not be too long and consequently become hard to read.
- **Is a narrative needed?** A number of preliminary questions should be answered. Why a narrative? Which definition of a narrative? Which goals for a narrative? Which form and how detailed should it be? Whom is the narrative intended for?
- The question **what mental steps** should be bridged, in order to have the objectives and the principles of a post-national Federal Union picked up and accepted, will be treated here too.

### - Why a narrative?

- 'Time has come to **deepen the reflection on the basic characteristics and goals of our society**. A well outlined mission-statement will set the final goal of the European federalists. The basic characteristics and goals of our society are no longer obvious to people of Europe. (adapted from Caroline Ven, CEO VKW - De Tijd - 21/03/2013)
- Europe is, as a societal project and a polity, today institutionally and ideologically ill-equipped to face its numerous challenges. The accumulated backlog imposes a **refoundation right now**.
- For many years Europe lives in a **new situation**. Why is there so much resistance about the need to think and act differently? Each generation should adapt its paradigms, where needed. The context becomes very much compulsive.
- Ideological interpretation by the European federalists is a **precondition to justify and position themselves**. 'An ideology is no static by a dynamic proces'. (Tinneke Beeckman - Liberales) The same is true for a narrative.

- The **choices made now** determine our future. Therefore a shared frame of reference should be available.
- Innovative thinking about Europe should create **levers able to achieve the objectives** for now and the future. Polity reform should serve people and not create powergames. Proper adaptation improves the competitive edge of Europe towards the internal and external world.
- 'The idea of a **new start is liberating**'. (Karel Verhoeven - De Standaard - 2/01/2015) This implies breaking away from certain ideas and attitudes rooted in prejudice.

### - How to define this narrative?

- This narrative **sketches the broad outlines** of current situation, proposes solutions and the basic ideas for the ideology of the European federalists. The difference with a written ideology lies in the link up of the present and the intended societal and political developments.
- 'A narrative should be **strong and authentic**'. (Michel Deboeck - HR-Consultant) A narrative should be **inclusive and normative**.
- A narrative is a description. Drawing conclusions from the present and the future will always be coloured by personal ideological inclinations whatever precautions are taken. The proposed remedies should therefore be **presented as one among other possible scenarios**. In each configuration the number of choices is high.
- This narrative will **not get entangled in speculation about the feasibility** of progress related to a political Union for the whole or part of the EU. The final goal of a federal post-national European project will be kept in mind and attention will go towards its **rich potential**, not to the possible hurdles barring the road.

### - Which goals?

- Narratives **compete with each other**. European federalists need a narrative that provides people and elites with adequate arguments against egocentric and nationalistic ideas, and favours an open-minded attitude towards societal and polity needs of today and the future of Europe.
- An **overall direction of adaptation** is important in order to stay on course. Therefore a final goal should be defined. Though a time-schedule cannot be established exactly, it should be present in all proposals formulated by European federalists.
- European federalists should monitor **and correct wrong perceptions or prejudices** prevailing for all in the intended target audiences.
- European federalism should be associated with a **message of pertinent change**.
- European federalists demonstrate **their interest in people of Europe**. This federalist narrative will emphasize the positive consequences of change, grip on

decision-making, a solidary Europe, a perspective of progress and conservation of the welfare-state.

- A vision on Europe should answer the question **how Europeanisation does profit people and the community**.
- A federalist vision - expressed in a narrative - should highlight its **effective potential**. This federal narrative holds a positive message and promising perspectives. The narrative should also expose populist reasoning that worsens political stalemate in Europa and produces hatred, egoism and shortsightedness.
- Europa can choose between **various scenarios**. The best choice will be the outcome of deep **reflection, debate and consolidation**.
- European federalists differentiate themselves from a **cold and formal attitude by European officials**.
- Which **basic questions** underscore the message of the European federalists? (1) what went wrong and why? (2) who is responsible for the current deadlock? (3) how can stakeholders of the EU shape together their joint future? (4) which unique opportunities and perspectives open up by the project of a European post-national federation?
- The narrative and related communication should **create a positive image** with policy-makers and influential audiences, since European federalists confront them with a durable alternative, geared at the present and the future.

#### - Which form and how detailed should a narrative be?

- The narrative should - as a broad tool of communication - be **easy to read**. The narrative should **not be too detailed or be too abstract**.
- **Unfounded prejudices** should be refuted and be given proper federal counterarguments.

#### - Whom is the narrative intended for?

- The greater **part of the elites** should back the federalist approach promoting gradual implementation of an ambitious final goal.
- These elites are able to **understand the whereabouts** of European integration, and the objectives of the political alternative offered by the European federalists.
- European federalists **should focus on people** who understand European integration, who are familiar with it, who can boost public acceptance of the European idea, and finally influence those who determine the future of Europe.
- **Broad access** to target audiences can be achieved by reaching those who: (1) have a positive inclination towards European integration; (2) can yield a positive

influence on a large public and (3) can pass on their knowledge of European integration to the public.

- **Young people** are an important factor in the intended refoundation. Investing in youth is needed to secure continuity. Education at all levels should prepare youth for the future, especially for living in 'an ever closer Union' in Europe.

## **A Draft Narrative suggested by a European federalist**

### **\* Basic assumptions**

- \* *The basis of Europe's current values and standards was laid all along its history. These values are now under **severe internal and external pressure**.*
- \* *Political and socio-economic developments in Europe have reached a critical point that should place the refoundation and reinvention of Europe on **top of the political agenda**. Delay will considerably harm general and individual interests.*
- \* *A post-national federal system that places **citizens centrestage**.*

### **\* Call for positive action**

- \* *'From **historical perspective** the big threats of today are not new. (...) New complex developments, believed unmanageable, create uncertainty and make people qualify each threat more dangerous than it is. (...) Those who follow a path which they don't see, live in a world they don't understand the meaning of. (...) Two groups of people can, more than anyone else, create a positive perspective: media and politicians. Both have a tremendous influence on people, professor em. Rik Coolsaet, UGhent, said. (De Standaard - EN - 12/12/2015)*
- \* *'Opening a perspective shouldn't create an illusion. Current developments are indeed radical. The **absence of true political leadership** intensifies the feeling these developments are no longer under control. (...) Politicians create the impression of powerlessness and make people believe they are left to their fate. (...) An individual is powerless. He needs politics, he needs structures, he needs the European Union... Our politicians omit to stimulate a sense of social cohesion, professor em. Rik Coolsaet, complains. (De Standaard - EN - 12/12/15)*
- \* *Pessimism, indifference, rejection, inertia by people, politicians and opinion-makers are **toxic ingredients of society** in Europe. Why should a false perception of European integration prevail over the will to address the challenges that endanger the future of Europe? People should see what their true interests are. The mantra should be: a purpose-led transformation, determination, self-confidence as a co-owner of a joint ambitious European project. An ever closer union holds many achievable and legitimate promises.*

## \* **Changing and wrong political developments**

### General assessments

*'Europe lives in a bubble blown in a glorious past'*

*Andy Langenkamp, senior political analyst of ECR Research (De Tijd - 13/02/2015)*

*'Europe shall look further than sheer economy in order not to become irrelevant'*

*Andy Langenkamp*

*There is a dangerous political vacuum, regarding ideas and action*

*A lot of energy seeps away in tactical political games*

*The European Union needs moral legitimation*

*Has the need faded away to perform collectively better?*

*Transformations are not only technological, many other aspects change as well*

### **Societal and Political Project**

- \* *After the fall of Berlin Wall Europe awoke in a system where other powers didn't need Europe anymore.*
- \* *'Integration by the market and law has reached its limits: neither the internal market, nor the euro overcame the **heterogeneous structures**, illustrated by inflation or growth differences in the euro area'. (Pierre Defraigne, directeur exécutif de la Fondation Madriaga-Collège d'Europe - Le Monde 13/09/2011)*
- \* *By intuition **people want a different governance**. Which one, they don't know. Political parties abstain to take clear sides in the absence of electoral advantage.*
- \* ***Population and politicians are afraid of change**. Will the acquis be endangered? Adaptation of societal paradigms are a generational phenomenon that cannot be eluded.*
- \* *'No optimistic stock exchanges, durable growth and low unemployment if countries **cannot guarantee safety of people or at their borders** and fail to create a feeling of safety', Andy Langenkamp, states. (De Tijd - 13/02/2015)*
- \* *'The crisis we are facing today is not the result of a 'bloated Europe'. (...) It is the result of **less Europe**, of a Europe that has **not developed a fundamentally convincing narrative** for its place on the world stage', Dimitris Avramopoulos, Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship, said. (New Europe - January 2015).*
- \* *Member States defend for all their **national interests** (and some do but that). That attitude cripples the spirit of the European Union or of the euro area. Intergovernmental governance denies to Europe needed integration. That governance does not offer people of Europe what they are entitled to: **good and effective governance**.*

- \* *European leaders feel **uneasy about a well equipped geopolitical tool box**. They prefer to invest in products and salesmanship. The world, however, mocks this attitude', Andy Langenkamp, says.*
- \* *'The **European model** in which capitalism is inextricably linked up with democracy is not as universally accepted as taken for granted. (...) Autocratic and capitalistic countries can act faster and with more vigour, because they are less dependent on an electorate', Andy Langenkamp says.*
- \* *'It is an attractive idea to try to **impose certain universal values**. Actually it doesn't work that way. The elites accept globalisation. This is not true for the layman and the question remains open whether the layman wants it at all, Herman Portocarero, EU Ambassador to Cuba, wonders. (De Tijd - 4/09/2015)*
- \* *'Our parliamentary deliberative democracy is increasingly put in question since operating too slowly in a fast changing world. (...) Societal issues cannot simply be answered by a technical solution from a technocrat. (...) **Political choices** for societal issues **should come first**, expertise comes next in order to achieve the chosen political objectives', Egbert Lachaert, MP for Open VLD, says. (Liberales - 15/05/2015)*
- \* *'We have come to live in a world where representative democracy means representation of **stakeholders yielding the biggest influence**. This is not how representative democracy was imagined', Alexandros Kornaks, says. (director, New Europe - January 2015)*
- \* *'Globalisation is a story of technological development and of political and economic choices, of success and hybris and wrong assessments. (...) Political and economic decisions are important to policy-making, but **ethical choices** are that too', Hugo Van de Voorde, historian, says. (from 'Naar één wereld - De drie stappen van de globalisering')*
- \* *'Business seeks more effectivity by expansion, while **political systems tend to fragmentate** as an answer to a growing stalemate of governance. (...) Mutually conflicting, hindering and expensive decision-levels are damaging', Bart Sturtewagen, states. (De Standaard - 12/06/2015)*
- \* *'**Leadership in Europe is**, for obvious reasons, **unmistakely weak**. Consensus prevails. Each politician is in the first place concerned about its grassroot supporters and wants to score on time', Herman Portocarero says.(De Tijd - 4/09/2015)*
- \* *Issues people know and understand influence their electoral preferences, i.e. our democracy is extensively steered by the **themes that reach public debate**. In many instances our knowledge is inadequate to make the right choices in the voting booth.*
- \* *Media have severely **reduced their editorial staff** dealing with **Europe**. On the other hand the number of authors able and willing to formulate future-oriented opinions about Europe and a federal Europe increases. That is stimulating, but is not enough. Mass media should take greater interest in promoting reform in Europe. A public debate should focus on principles and objectives instead of on mechanisms and technicalities.*

\* *'As the cost of the asylum policy becomes obvious, **moral choices are not free of responsibilities**. Assistance to asylum seekers induces administrations to reflect on the priorities of public spending', Bart Haeck says. (De Tijd - 11/0920/15) Imposed solidarity by the Union should better be replaced by the notion of shared responsibility. Own obligations cannot so easily be backed out.*

### **People of Europe**

\* *'An economic and political system that **yields nothing tangible for most people** cannot maintain itself. Faith in democracy and market economy will possibly weaken and legitimacy of institutions will be put in question.'* (prof. Joseph Stiglitz - New Europe - 13/01/2013)

\* *'Influenced by nationalistic and populist parties a growing number of people reject European integration and the European Union. These parties militate for a **return to the nation state** (or region) with their own rules or perhaps a return to their own currency'. (Liberales - Dirk Verhofstadt - 31/01/2015)*

\* *Many people in Europe have **no positive mindset about their future**, definitely not at community level. Unresolved and coming challenges are huge and call for urgent action. The will to overcome these challenges is often missing.*

\* *Deep-rooted **pessimism undermines people's confidence in the political system** and in the great potential of Europe. The gravity of the situation should however not be underestimated.*

### \* **Intended political developments:**

Based on European federalist principles

*'Citizens are and should be at the center of public action at all governance levels'  
Hande Özcan Bozatl, president of the Assembly of European Regions*

*'The future of Europe lies in intercultural dialogue, mutual respect, democracy and trust'  
Hande Özcan Bozatl*

*'Leaders should realize the final goal of each social system is to grant everyone a fair life'  
Pope Franciscus*

*Committed citizens are important to a living democracy*

*'Europe will either move forward towards its political destiny or will experience further erosion of the legitimation of its cause and institutions'  
Dimitris Avramopoulos, Commissioner*

*Ideas legitimate leadership*

*Let's make Europe a better place to live*

**Societal and Political Project**

- \* *European federalists' **vision of the future** should include a new societal project and a consistent democratic political project.*
- \* *European federalists claim that a **post-national and Federal Union** is the only gateway towards a successful European political and societal project.*
- \* *Following basic needs should be kept in mind: an adapted institutional framework, a new tool box and a partial transfer of the essence of the competences of the Member States to the European Union (shared sovereignty): i.e. providing safety and prosperity to the Union.*
- \* *European federalists' ideas are not limited to institutional matters only. The new polity should reflect the **basic values and standards** of Europe, as well as trustworthy governance practices. These values are basic to the refoundation of the EU and the euro area.*
- \* *'How can European federalists take their community in tow in order to co-evolve towards a shared value model?' (adapted from Drs. Wouter Van Bockhaven - Alechia, 10/2012)*
- \* *European federalists promote a **Europe by and for the European citizens** as the goal of a new polity (democratic, legitimized and effective) and a societal model for Europe, in which participation of people, transparency and dialogue are important features.*
- \* *'Europe needs an adapted **societal model and spirit of governance**. This model will for all consist of contractual relations among all stakeholders (policy-levels, politics, business, civil society and people) in order to build a relation of confidence that enables the implementation of policy in all domains and levels of authority.'* (adapted from F.Q. Quesada in *New Europe*)
- \* *Dick Pels, sociologist and author, defines Europe as a **model of civilisation**, purposively setting aside violence when solving problems. Pels qualifies Europe as a safe haven, in a physical, political and social meaning.'* (*Liberales* - 23/01/2015)
- \* *European federalists elect **differentiated integration in Europe** in the absence of any other good alternative. Contradictory objectives among the Member States create inertia and regression in the EU. On the one side a number of Member States will maintain intergovernmental cooperation while on the other side the other members combine euro area and a political union.*
- \* *'Europe should become a **subject of debate** since Europe is a locus of power. Arguments will not weaken Europe, on the contrary they will strengthen Europe. Debate and democratic controversy are indispensable to create awareness and ownership of a model of civilisation.* (*Pierre Defraigne*)
- \* *'**Political integration should take over**. Hard facts impose a democratic debate at European level on a societal and social model, on ecology, on international involvement and on an effective foreign and defense policy. Institutions should claim their importance as an instrument to reach that objective.'* (*Pierre Defraigne*)
- \* *Effective governance implies abandoning intergovernmental and pre-federal*

governance. **Effective multi-level governance** implies a completely new polity with shared sovereignty, legitimacy and transparency, enforceability, subsidiarity, complementarity, unity of action, effective and institutionalised deliberation. European federalists reject centralisation of power and competences.

- \* *Important goals of **joint policy in Europe**: (1) create the highest possible level of added value for each of the stakeholders; (2) optimal functioning of the internal market and the liberalized markets in the Union and in the eurozone.*
- \* *European federalists advocate the introduction of a **European constitution** that rules the balance of power and facilitates institutional adaptation to changing circumstances.*
- \* *'Good governance goes beyond a shortsighted interpretation and requires motivated political choices. If done well there are more joint objectives than polarized appearances suggest. A **long term vision** is essential, prof. Ivan Van de Cloot states. (De Tijd - 24/03/2015)*
- \* *'Time to change: seeing **the value of small in the big picture**. There is a chance to do things differently locally, nationally, globally. All levels are important. (...) We will support the big initiatives, such the new Investment Plan for Europe, as long as they target growth in the real economy and add societal value on the ground. But this can only happen if the political leaders can ensure that small is part of the plan. (...) Our vision comes from the human, local scale. It is increasingly clear that the 'big' vision can be self-defeating, because it blinds us from the power of local action, personal solutions, real jobs and human behaviour. The links between local action and global effects are fascinatingly strong. (...) Anything global has its locality, in fact 'global' is nothing other than multi-local'. In a globalised world, challenges are local but interconnected', says Manfred Neun, president of the European Cyclists Federation. (New Europe - 01/15)*
- \* *People demand more proximity and legitimized governance. The new polity for Europe will succeed thanks to the **incremental input of people**. That implies more commitment and participation by people and more interest in Europe. An adequate political and societal model will facilitate this participation.*
- \* *'Far-reaching changes require European democracy to adapt as well, especially into a participative democracy. Demand for more **direct forms of democracy** and accompanying forms of citizens' involvement, in addition to a representative democracy, has increased. (...) In this context the politician should demonstrate a completely different attitude. He should create a pro-active support, interact with media, be active on social media, not impose projects top-down, but he will listen, he should let citizens assume their own responsibilities. That represents an **advanced participative democracy**', E. Lachaert states. (Liberales-15/05/2015)*

#### People of Europe

- \* *'What the EU actually needs to do for the next and coming years is to find a way to address following two-fold problem: fill the **legitimation gap** and **connect it with the expectations and needs of citizens**. EU should deal with the growth problem, growing inequalities, poverty and misery. (...) All these factors and the*

way the EU, until now, has faced them, have undermined the EU's economy, people's prosperity and damaged the democratic (national) political system. (...) The European project has to elaborate a **new governance paradigm** of the people, by the people, for the people, Rena Dourou, governor of Attica Greece, said. (New Europe - January 2015)

- \* According to Jürgen Habermas Europe is not only a market, but should create a context where people **acquire influence on the adaptation of society**. He advocates a European Constitution. Our democracy will have to adapt itself to that demand. This can happen through a referendum, deliberative democracy and more transparency.
- \* 'In an **open society and a living democracy** people grant legitimacy to their political representatives, keep MP's and the administration focussed and make them feel supervised. They play an important role in orientating society: they provide support for the implementation of the policies of government, feed it by their daily doing, and take care of societal innovation by formulating ideas, Egbert Lachaert states. (Liberales 15/05/2015)
- \* The **purpose of institutions** and procedures for Europe is to interpret properly European values and expectations of citizens/voters/consumers. Meaning their personal interests will be taken into account.
- \* It is everybody's **right not to participate**, but those who want to should have the means to do so.
- \* 'Citizens no longer intervene on demand of policy-makers, more often they do so **on their own initiative**, through more direct channels of commitment, such as social media, opinions in various media, associations, etc. Nowadays politicians are accountable on a daily basis, in every stage of an issue or of a big decision', Egbert Lachaert states. (Liberales - 15/05/2015)

## Education

- \* A wrong interpretation of European integration cannot be excused by diminishing consensus on Europe. An interpretation should extend far beyond a simple description of changing institutions and procedures. **Education** should play its pedagogic role by explaining context and objectives of European integration.
- \* 'The school of the future should become a **learning park**, where pupils, parents, teachers, associations (and corporations) meet each other in order to learn from each other'. (De Tijd - B. Moens - 18/09/2015)
- \* European federalists back the idea to teach a **vision of the future at school**. Education today confines itself mostly to the protection of the environment or to human rights. European integration, as a global societal project, should be an important part of that curriculum. Many taboos and prejudices about Europe need to be addressed. Challenges to Europe, civil duty, legitimate and democratic expectations in Europe should be part of the package.

## \* **Changing and negative socio-economic developments**

### General assessments

#### Economic environment

*'We are in overshoot mode, and this mode should be switched to a more sustainable one'*  
Sirpa Pietikäinen, Finnish MEP (EPP Group)

- \* *New legislation, disruptive business-models and new technology, in short a fast changing business environment. A transformation process consists of many smaller transformation processes that need to be seamlessly geared to one another. A strictly purpose-led transformation is the message here. Without purpose no successful transformation is possible. It requires guts to put in question your business model and the very existence of your company. Moreover not too much things can be changed simultaneously. One should prioritize and focus on the right aspects.*
- \* *'There is good and bad growth. (...) Good (economic) growth benefits everyone on the long term. In order to be able to discern good from bad growth the effect of our current life style on next generations should be known. Politicians should focus on that type of growth which produces ecological and social added value profitable to other, without destroying themselves or other people', Tinneke Beeckman, author and philosopher, said. (De Tijd - 18/08/2015)*
- \* *'How much affluence do we need to have a good life?' wonders Robert Sidelsky, economic historian and prof. em. 'At the start selflimitation is a moral argument. Actually we need a concept about sufficiency. In its absence we will never get out of the rut of an ever increasing consumption, which is untenable on the long run. (De Tijd - 28/11/2015)*
- \* *'**Industrialised countries**, for all Europe, the USA and Japan, represented during hundred years up to 90% of the world economy. Just 15% of world population enjoyed its advantages. Last 20 years a swift shift towards the emerging countries occurred (they produce now half of all economic activity). A redefinition of the geo-economic environment took place with big political, social and financial consequences (to Europe), Jacques Berghmans states. (director of Tree Top Asset Management in De Tijd Connect - 14/03/2015)*
- \* *'Will Europe become a **less dynamic continent** with a slower rate of growth?' (Peter De Keyser) 'Is this a fatality to Europe? Definitely not'. 'Current upsurge of pessimism about the European economy is exaggerated, but will - in case of growth acceleration - be very modest'. (adapted from Bart Van Craeynest - De Tijd - 4/12/2014) This disappointing situation comes from failing structural political reform and defaulting political will.*
- \* *'Present serious situation will not change in the short or middle term. Definitely not if Europe continues to define risks in financial terms **without mastering the geo-political context**. (...) In these circumstances Europe can no longer pretend to be relevant', Andy Langenkamp states. (ECR Research in De Tijd - 13/02/15)*

- \* *'Many modern world issues come from a non-durable organisation of the globalized economy. (...) Obviously we should look for a **new model for the economy and for the world**', prof. Koen Schoors, UGhent, says. (Liberales - 27/04/2015)*
- \* *'**Technology has a bigger impact on people** than accepted for possible. In the financial world technology took over too much, without instating outside control and monitoring. (...) Perhaps should the responsibility for the financial crisis be located in elusive technological processes that influence and steer our lives in an invisible way. (...) Legislation addresses but part of the problem. People will always start looking for ways to circumvent it', prof. and philosopher Marc Coeckelbergh states in his book Money Machine. (De Standaard - 12/09/2015)*
- \* *'The way disruption carries on in production, energy, bank and insurance, media and technology, biotechnology or education, induces every professional to know the whereabouts of a speedy change in a connected world. We need to adopt a **spirit of innovation** that makes Silicon Valley so unique and that pushes the world. (...) Innovation cannot be stopped. You better embrace it and take the lead, Isabel Albers, chief-editor of De Tijd, said. (19/09/2015)*
- \* *'In the field of scientific research Europe did not (or couldn't) do what was expected. If all national and/or regional **funds for scientific research in Europe would be bundled**, cost of research would be lower and money for additional research would be available. These funds would in fact be transferred to the European Research Council under the provision the money flows back to the countries or regions. That would mean a giant boost to European scientific research. Apparently this idea is too audacious, Luc Soete, vice-chancellor of the University of Maastricht, said. (De Tijd - 22/09/2015)*
- \* *Katrien Mondt, GM of Innoviris discerns two trends: (1) a fast rise in collaborative innovation and (2) a shift from technology steered innovation, towards innovation of business models. Creativity actually is a broad concept. (De Tijd - Bijlage i.s.m. EY)*
- \* ***OpenAI**, a new research center sponsored by the elite of Silicon Valley, is endowed with a budget of 1 billion dollars and is dedicated to keep the applications of artificial intelligence within (moral) acceptable limits and keep them away from damaging developments. 'It is good to reflect on the potentially positive respectively negative technological developments', Pieter Abbeel, Berkeley University, said. (De Tijd - 15/12/2015)*
- \* *A **combination** of big data, deep artificial intelligence and robotics will cause a fundamental shift in employment. The question is when this will happen. (De Tijd - Peter Hinssen - 5/06/2015)*
- \* *'Our society meanwhile evolved that much **the line between work and private life fades away**. A number of flexible jobs feature incredible long working hours, almost no promotion, interim contracts and a lack of trade union representation. Recent research revealed that workers in this type of flexible jobs suffer more often health and welfare complaints than their colleagues in more stable jobs. (Claude Nijs in Liberales - May 2015)*
- \* *Sooner or later **professions disappear or are transformed**. Today people are replaced by cheap labour, smart software-packages, disruptive business models*

or polyvalent robots. (Sam De Kegel, author in B NK, a crossmedial content- platform - De Tijd )

- \* Former corporate culture was mostly based on power. The new culture is based on **shared values**, clear codes of conduct and inspired walk your talk, Wim Hoeckman, CEO of Victor Buyck Steel Construction, states.
- \* 'If we look at the facts, it is clear the European economy can't survive - let alone grow - unless we take some radical steps to **increase our resource efficiency** and move towards a true **recycling economy**. In a circular economy, there is no waste, products are designed to be durable, repairable and recyclable, and when they come to the end of their life-cycle the resources in them are pumped back into productive use again', Sirpa Pietikänen, MEP, EPP Group said. (New Europe - 01/15)
- \* 'In 2015 the **highest temperatures were registered** since observation started. But it can go much worse. Scientists see a **clear limit to the warming up of planet earth**. (...) US-president Obama stated the climate conference in Paris (December 2015) is a 'last chance for climate'. Much money will be needed to save the environment, especially in the development countries. The question 'who pays' became a symbol. Next to war refugees we can expect climate refugees in even larger numbers. (De Tijd - Hanegreefs/Van Haver - 5/06/2015)
- \* The climate-treaty of Paris brings a low carbon world nearer. Professor Wim Soete, UGhent, expects that in 40 years half of the chemical and petroleum cluster will have to be pulled down and transformed in biochemicals, based on biomass. (De Tijd - 16/12/2015)
- \* 'If the external costs of climate and environment are included in the price of fossil fuels, renewable energy would have a bright future. That is why we should capitalize on such technology where we could take the lead. **Internalizing the negative economic costs of climate change** in a higher cost for fossil fuels can accelerate this process'. (Peter De Keyzer - chief economist BNPParibasFortis) In the market there is no adequate mechanism to make the users of collective goods (water, air, soil) pay for that use, prof. Paul De Grauwe, LSE, stated.
- \* 'Two major challenges are impending on our **energy future**: the achievement of a secure energy supply, and a move from dependency on non-renewable to a dependency on renewable energy sources. The challenges call for radical changes or energy transitions (towards a low carbon society). (...) Transitions do not only pose technological challenges, but imply enormous social and economic changes too. (...) These changes also concern market relations and social and institutional positions. And they come with new roles and responsibilities for new actors. (...) Changes depend on individuals and the action of local groups, and how the human factor can be mobilized and be engaged.' (MILESECURE-2050 Project - Manifesto)
- \* Plain mobility is amply available. Durable mobility is not, since absorption of newcomers in traffic is limited. Sharing is the new mantra: carpooling and car-sharing.

## People of Europe

- \* *'It looks as if a **conflict of generations** will not be eluded by this generation. The debt crisis, unemployment, climate change and ageing illustrate this. Will this generation waste the future of its children and grandchildren in order to enjoy its own end of career?'*
- \* *'Globalisation and migration are a source of **increased uncertainty for the Western middle class**. Moreover the few sources of growth which are still left - technology and innovation - threaten to increase uncertainty and inequality. (...) Low growth, stagnation and uncertain perspectives render the electorate uncertain and restless. (...) How can politicians face populists? By exhibiting honesty. They will have to concede prosperity will increase less than in the past. Prosperity will have to be fought for harder. (De Tijd - Peter De Keyser, chief economist BNPParibasFortis Belgium - 18/09/2015)'*
- \* *'The full impact of the crisis comes down on the shoulders of plain (unemployed) people and not on those who caused the crisis. (...) As demand for federalism grows, nationalists and populists start to **attack the very basis of democracy and stability** in various countries. (...) The nation state is sandwiched between Brussels and regional separatism. European citizens are stuck between federalist rhetoric and despair of the moment.'* (Corine Cretu, former MEP, now commissioner)
- *'In a number of EU Member Countries **half or more of youngsters are chronically idle**. We pretend this phenomenon has no social cost. Elderly see their basic income dwindle and sooner than expected they have to eat into their savings. Anticipated pension rights for those who are still at work will be lowered both in years and revenue. A scenario of impoverishment lies ahead of us', Bart Sturtewagen states. (De Standaard - 29/05/2015)'*

### \* **Future socio-economic developments:**

#### General assessments

*'In Europe prosperity and welfare are linked'*

*'Technological skills will not save us. But their absence will surely destroy us'*

*Douglas Wolk, in LA Times*

- \* *'The **collaborative economy** encompasses all new forms of services and avails goods on basis of sharing them. While the classic economy is based on property, use stands central in the new business model. (...) In a collaborative economy the classic scheme where goods-products stand at one side and the consumer at the other side is abandoned. Today each consumer can become a producer and take profit of it. (...) Thanks to geo-localisation it can easily be checked whether a product or service is available in your immediate proximity. (...) From now on human contact, hospitality and trust stand central in the system'. (Deutsche Bank)'*
- \* *'If technology is part of the problem, it can be part of the solution. **How will technology change?** Gradually and bottom-up. In a collaborative economy, i.e. by virtual barter trade on internet. A different worldwide way of thinking is getting momentum with a **different type of human relations**, professor and philosopher'*

Marc Coeckelbergh said in his book *Money Machine*. (De Standaard - 12/09/2015)

- \* 'Europe shall **take the lead in new technologies and concepts**, i.e. internet of things, artificial intelligence and 3-D printing. That is necessary to maintain our competitiveness and prosperity in a world that changes fast'. (Long term vision for Flanders - De Tijd - 18/09/2015)
- \* 'Shopping without money, free books, free coffee for the next customer. (...) The **culture of giving away** is developing. It is situated between wastage and a token of solidarity. (...) To a generation used to free wifi, films on streaming, free software and Wikipedia, the free of charge idea is an evidence. (Le Monde - 6/09/15)
- \* '**Degrowth-thinkers** wonder whether it would not be better to kick off the idea of ever more. (...) Degrowth breaks with dependence on a growing economy in order to function properly. (...) The West reached the point where profits of growth were already cashed and costs of more growth became excessive. (...) Current situation is no individual failing but is systemic', J-F Abbeloos states. (De Standaard - 22/04/2015)
- \* 'Each manager will face a moment were he **will have to make way for the computer**. Human intervention will be confined to raising the right questions and choice of datasets. Specific knowledge remains relevant, until the computer raises better questions than the managers. Senior officers will remain in demand because of their creativity, leadership skills (motivation, inspiration and empowerment and their strategic thinking), says Duco Sickinghe. (Managing partner Forino Capital, Chairman KPN, in De Tijd - 16/09/2015)
- \* 'An employee becomes to a lesser extend someone that accepts work. (...) Instead he will be **looking for new activities that teach him**. He will shape his own life and will no longer be a passive employee. (...) Innovation will increasingly be his assignment. Long term contracts wriggle with this assignment. In the digital area transactions are easier and cheaper to organise', Peter van Lieshout states. (Het Financiële Dagblad - 2015)
- \* '**Innovate to survive**. A status quo means regression. Business as usual will no longer do. **Six megatrends** will not only determine the way of doing business tomorrow, but also will show what the world will look like. These megatrends are: (1) entrepreneurship will boom, (2) health will be reinvented, (3) the future will be digitalized, (4) globalization makes emerging markets more dynamic, (5) the world will urbanise at high speed, (6) we will have to deal with the planet in an innovative manner. (Inzicht, an initiative by EY and Tijd Connect - Rudi Braes - 19/06/2015)
- \* '**Open joint innovation** is more efficient, but more complex than internal innovation. Needed are: adequate attention to the tuning of the corporate strategy, creation of a culture of innovation, use of the right tools and demarcating cooperation. A corporate strategy will be formulated in such a way, that it can easily be translated into an innovation strategy'. (Inzicht, an initiative by EY and Tijd Connect - Alexander Mol - 19/06/15)
- \* 'Setting the **price of carbon at the end of COP21**, the UN conference on climate change, due in Paris December 2015, is needed to restrict climate warming. (...) The failed experience of the emission rights market reminds us that setting adequate quotas, together with rising minimum prices, are needed to create an

*impact on behaviour. (...) Another approach would consist in fixing a price of carbon by country related to its index of human development and its emissions of CO2 per person. (Homayoun Boroumand, Pocher et Stocker - Le Monde - 9/09/2015)*

- \* *'The General Assembly of the United Nations approved the **Basic principles of debt rescheduling**. This would ease debt reduction of a heavily indebted country. One principle states that debt rescheduling applies to all creditors, including 'vulture funds'. Another principle reads: foreign assets of defaulting countries should be protected from creditors. These principles are not binding.'* (De Standaard - 12/09/2015)

### European federalist principles

- \* *Domenico Rossetti di Valbalbero, prof. of the Academie Royale des Sciences de Belgique and secretary-general of UEF-Belgium, identifies **four challenges**: '(1) not to succumb to hyper individualism and keep in mind the founding principles of Europe: actual solidarity; (2) profit from individual empowerment and collaborative economy, (3) reinvent the service economy - oversized in Europe - in view of individual empowerment and a collaborative economy; (4) the EU should address these two trends in order to reduce inequalities; (5) people in the Union have historically - more than the USA or Asia - developed a special relationship with nature where men work the land, use it but with respect and care'.* (La Libre Belgique - 20/04/2015)

### **Which mental steps should be bridged in order to reach the objective of a post-national Federal Union?**

- A **mental switch** is needed to bring deep reform in Europe in higher gear. Opinion-makers should stand up to take on inspiring roles, demonstrating which positive effects are in reach of hand of people who think out-of-the-box. 'Innovation is the newest form of competitiveness', Martin Hinoul, states. (BDM KU Leuven)
- The **intergovernmental method of governance** of the European Union cannot meet the basic legitimate expectations of peoples of Europe and cannot scale down predominance of national interests/egoism or of a political directorate in Europe.
- A vehement clash of objectives among individual Member Countries of the European Union, makes a **two speed development** in the European Union **inescapable**. The vanguard group should for all involve euro area Member Countries. This Group should implement more ambitious objectives, which doesn't mean the other EU-Countries should feel discriminated.
- The vanguard group of euro area Member Countries will **continue to participate in the internal market** of the European Union. This cooperation can be overstepped, if the vanguard group elects, in specific circumstances, to go ahead of the non-members of the vanguard group.
- In a vanguard group of Member Countries **general European interest** will be at a par with national interest. This European general interest will, as much as needed, replace a short sighted nationalistic approach, but excludes centralism in Europe.

- The vanguard group in the euro area should ultimately implement a **post-national federal system** in order to meet the political preconditions to the implementation of a successful multi-level polity able to reconcile big and small, the regional/national/ European level, minority versus majority, liberty versus authoritarian rule, autonomy versus coordination, complementarity versus unity, subsidiarity versus centralism, effectivity versus stalemate, innovation versus status quo.
- All Member Countries will continue to manage a number of **core competences** (i.e. social security, healthcare, welfare, security and education), except for setting overarching European benchmarks.
- A successful euro area project is subject to severe internal and external conditions of effectiveness and efficiency. A Political Union is not an objective in itself, but is the consequence of the **need for more intensive coordination** of the various policy domains and decision-levels in the euro area.
- Based on legitimate expectations and fundamental rights, a legitimate, effective, transparent and enforceable polity should be instituted among Member Countries that wish to do so. **Specific dynamics of the euro area** require further development towards a Political Union in order to make this project succeed. Effectivity of the euro area polity will determine the level of prosperity and welfare people of that area can enjoy. That outcome cannot be expected from Member Countries that persevere in national thinking.
- **Multi-level coordination** at European level, i.e. by setting broad benchmarks, is however needed in order to optimize economic growth, employment, social inclusion and welfare by avoiding fragmentation and low effectivity. This coordination should not impede subsidiarity. Centralisation will be shunned.
- A multi-layer polity needs **tools, procedures and mandates** in order to function adequately. This implies a federal government, a federal parliament, a federal Court of Justice based on checks and balances. This polity will not just deal with economic, financial, fiscal and taxation matters, but will include a Political Union, based on joint values, and on joint defense and safety policy matters.
- No European project will be successful if not **actively involving people of Europe**. People expect a lot of Europe. Participation in and ownership of a polity will increase their sense of belongingness and awareness of being part of dynamic society.
- Individual Member Countries of the EU are not the **last recourse in case of the need when transnational challenges occur**. Hard facts contradict this illusion.
- An **inclusive project** should be **formulated in advance and should become publicly accepted**. Known stepping stones and a clearly formulated final goal should create confidence by all stakeholders, though it should be acknowledged implementation could take much time.
- 'In a **globalized world** solidarity cannot any longer be limited to the national or regional level. One joint common (outside) border and progressing interdependence of Member Countries of the EU raises internal as well as external solidarity to an obvious principle. This Summer we painfully discovered a joint external border means joint responsibility', Luuk van Middelaar states. (De Tijd - 29/23/2015)

- European federalists will all along the process of institutional reform line up **clear intermediate stages**.
- Each target audience will be made aware of the **urgency and pertinence** of the assumptions, objectives and viewed institutional reform by the European federalists.

## Conclusions

- **Major expected developments** affecting our future should not be ignored.
- All stakeholders in the European project should acknowledge the **gravity of current challenges to Europe**.
- **Diversity of opinions in Europe** should secure the blossoming of competing narratives that become subject of public debate. Awareness and citizenship will hereby improve. Negative opinions mostly originate from sheer ignorance.
- The efforts necessary to create a political Union in Europe, serving the purpose of **improved welfare and quality of life** to current and future generations, should be made intentionally and purpose-led.
- The European level has an **extraordinary coordination capacity**. A free and open public and economic space create the need to make substantial progress in 'availing adequate tools to operate in the best circumstances'. That space is multifaceted, i.e. political, economic, social, and should safeguard joint security and fundamental rights.
- A post-national federal Union for the EU or the euro area is the **best survival strategy** Europe has to maintain its unity and specific way of life. Less Europe will only initiate regression and social hardship in Europe.

## ***What is ESIC?***

Established 1963 in Antwerp by European federalists, after successful participation in two Free European Elections by the Congress of European People (an initiative by A. Spinelli). The Europees Studie- en Informatiecentrum or European Study and Information Center (ESIC) is a non-profit organisation: with a library and documentation center, two publications, a website [www.europadebat.be](http://www.europadebat.be) ©, 'Café-Europa' © debates with students, an annual academic cycle 'Federalism, Democracy, Europe' ©, training sessions and lectures on European themes. Free of charge advise.

## ***About the author***

**Robert Verschooten** (1939), master in commercial, transport and consular sciences (RHSA) (1961), post-university programme of business administration - PPB (IPO-Antwerp) (1975). Was active in logistics, sales, procurement, PR and environmental matters. European federalist since 1956. Now active in the Europees Studie- en Informatiecentrum (ESIC), as director (from 1977) and as president (from 1996). Is political adviser to UEF.be and member of EMB. Editor of a newsletter in Dutch ©, the Series 'Which Europe?' © and the ESIC website [www.europadebat.be](http://www.europadebat.be) © (mainly in Dutch). Initiator of Café-Europa © and of an annual academic cycle on 'Federalism, Democracy, Europe' © both are organized in cooperation with Europakring Antwerpen .

## ***ESIC publications***

- Numbers 41 up to 56 in the Series 'Which Europe?'© are available in Dutch and English. Missing translations are forthcoming. These papers can be consulted on ESIC website: [www.europadebat.be](http://www.europadebat.be) ©, see ESIC/Publicaties. The same applies to ESIC Nieuwsbrief © (Newsletter, only in Dutch).

- Number 41: 'The European federalists confronted with themselves' ©, (2010)
- Number 42: 'The European federalists confront Europe with their project' ©, (2010)
- Number 43: 'How can European federalists develop their project?' ©, (2011)
- Number 44: 'Which European federalism?' ©, (2011) (in Dutch only)
- Number 45: 'Proposals to make the European project progress' ©, (2012)
- Number 46: 'Which society model leads to which political union for Europe?', ©, (2012)
- Number 47: 'How to communicate?' ©, (2013) (in Dutch)
- Number 48-49: 'Twelve Visions for a Federal Europe' ©, (2013)
- Number 50: 'Which way towards the Future?' ©, (2014) (in Dutch only)
- Number 51: 'Which political vision appeals most to you?' ©, (2014) (in Dutch only)
- Number 52: 'Which blueprint for a post-national Federal Europe?' ©, (2014)
- Number 53: 'Which strategy by UEF?' ©, (2015) (part 1)
- Number 54: 'Which strategy by UEF?' ©, (2015) (part 2)
- Number 55: 'A differentiated integration: a necessity', © (2015) (in English only)
- Number 56: 'A narrative for European federalists', © (2015) (in English only)