

The recovery plan agreed in July 2020 is a key step forward. However, it will need to be built on in the process of creating a political and federal union, in order to enable the EU to take back control of major transnational issues through a new European democratic sovereignty. This is the aim of the proposals made here to the Conference on the Future of Europe by Sandro Gozi, MEP, and visiting professor at the Centre of Excellence. Human rights and fundamental freedoms must be front and centre of the political integration project. On that basis, the focus of the new European transformation process should be on digital and ecological transition, which represents a crucial choice for society and for the future. The Union must also set itself the ambition of establishing itself as a new democratic power capable of rising to the key global and regional challenges. A strategy will need to be developed to counter foreign interference in our democratic processes, but also to promote a more humane and more effective migration policy, and to develop European strategic autonomy within a renewed transatlantic alliance. All this requires a rethink of the relationship between Europe and power. To this end, different political and institutional reform options are discussed, emphasizing the possibility of moving forward through a dynamic group of States and peoples in a continental area of variable density. The momentum needed to embark on this new democratic, transnational and humanist phase of European integration will also call for the mobilization of its citizens, European and national institutions, and representatives of organised civil society.

Launched in October 2016 as part of the *Global Studies Institute* at the University of Geneva, the *Dusan Sidjanski Centre of Excellence in European Studies* conducts academic research on leading-edge topics related to European integration. Its Steering Committee consists of Professors Nicolas Levrat (Chair), Dusan Sidjanski, René Schwok, and the General Secretary of the University, Dr Didier Raboud. The Advisory Board consists of Prof. Micheline Calmy-Rey, Prof. Christine Kaddous, Viviane Reding, Dimitris Avramopoulos, Dr Antoine Firmenich, Prof. Ronald Inglehart, Dr John Latsis, Prof. Fausto de Quadros, Jean Russotto, Jean-Pierre Roth, Prof. Paul Taylor, Jacques de Watteville and Prof. Charles Wyplosz. Affiliated researchers: Dr Frédéric Esposito, Dr Miroslav Jovanović, Dr Georges Kolyvas, Dr François Saint-Ouen. Dr Sandro Gozi is the visiting professor for 2020–2021.

PROMOTING EUROPE AS A SOVEREIGN AND DEMOCRATIC POWER  
CONTRIBUTION TO THE CONFERENCE ON THE FUTURE OF EUROPE

SANDRO GOZI

PUBLICATIONS DU CENTRE DE COMPÉTENCES  
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SANDRO GOZI

**PROMOTING EUROPE AS A  
SOVEREIGN AND DEMOCRATIC POWER**

***Contribution to the Conference on the Future  
of Europe***

Preface and Postface by Dusan Sidjanski

English translation by IDEST Communication SA



## *Preface*

### **A few lessons from history**

This book, written by Sandro Gozi at the request of the *Centre of Excellence*, has been published in time to contribute towards the debates and conclusions of the *Conference on the Future of Europe*. It reflects the questions which have been haunting the Centre's team as it seeks answers that could form part of a multidimensional and global European project able to tackle new challenges and new threats. The bipolar world which characterised the post-war period, during which the current European project was created, no longer exists. It has been replaced by a multipolar world where new powers are emerging, many of which do not share our values and those of our European Union. A united Europe must retain its position and find its place in this new context. This is far from a foregone conclusion.

The spirit of Europe has been present in our different countries for a long time but it has never been powerful enough to truly lead to political action at the level of the European Union itself.

The *Conference on the Future of Europe* is now being organised. This event should reinvigorate the European Union project by involving Europeans themselves, and I thought it would be helpful to recall some of the initiatives which came before because this latest one is by no means the first. My hope is that it can open up new horizons.

#### *Utopias and projects*

The desire to assert European ambitions, utopias and projects is nothing new, as Denis de Rougemont wrote in his book *Vingt-huit siècles d'Europe* [28 Centuries of Europe].

Indeed, European ideas, dreams and projects date back to the time of Ancient Greece. They were inspired by mythology and took the form of religious alliances known as amphictyonies which, like European integration in the 20th century, sought to bring an end to civil wars. This ancient landscape was often recreated over the course of history without ever fully taking shape. The amphictyonies, for example, lacking in strength and solidarity, were shattered in Rome's push for expansion. This had a profound impact because the vanquished went on to conquer Rome through their culture, making a landmark step towards one of the pillars of European culture through recognition of the individual, Stoicism and the



example set by Athenian democracy at the time of Pericles. This cultural heritage, enriched by Christianity and Rome's institutional legacy and experiment in citizenship, would go on to inspire the Middle Ages and its complex pre-federal structure alongside the birth of great European visions, including Dante's *De Monarchia* which called for a supranational authority with a duty to respect the diversities of people and customs. Mention should also be made of Pierre du Bois' Christian Republic and a succession of projects for Confederations equipped with common institutions, assemblies and armies.

These great visions contributed to feeding the *European imagination* but never convinced those in power. This school of thought was perpetuated and grew thanks to the legacy of the Age of Enlightenment, the recognition of human rights and a slow process of democratisation and social evolution at a time of industrial progress. One example is Kant's concept of perpetual peace which rests on the essential principle of shared values within member states, prefiguring the ideal of a European Federation supported by philosophers, political leaders, writers and poets, such as Victor Hugo, Proudhon and Lamartine. It is to them we owe the vocabulary and ideas of a freely granted federal relationship as opposed to a union imposed by force à la Napoleon.

#### *From guiding principles to political action*

In the 20th century, during the period between Europe's two civil wars, which went on to become world wars, the European dream turned into political action with Coudenhove-Kalergi's Pan-European Union. Its Congress in Vienna, attended by 2,000 people from 24 States, approved the *Pan-European Manifesto* and defined the key features of a European Confederation: guaranteed equality, security and confederal sovereignty accompanied by a military alliance and, gradually, a customs union and a common currency, with respect for nations and minorities as part the framework of the League of Nations.

Shortly afterwards, Aristide Briand made a momentous speech in Geneva, calling on the people to form "*a kind of federal relationship*". Several elements of this speech have become a reality today, although in a different context of high technology and communication. Charged with clarifying his proposal, the French Government published a Memorandum on the organisation of a regime of European federal union in May 1930, just as Hitler was celebrating his first electoral victory. The death of Stresemann and Hitler's growing power in the midst of a socio-economic crisis and hyperinflation did not augur well for the future of this official project for a federal union. In the end, nothing came of it. However, the impact of the Memorandum was profound in terms of what it proposed and the

invention of a European vocabulary which is often to be found in the writings and speeches of Jean Monnet, such as the Schuman Declaration for example. This is hardly surprising as its main author, the Secretary General of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Alexis Leger, was a great poet who wrote under the name Saint-John Perse.

Ideas such as a “*common market*”, a “*customs union*”, the “*movement of goods, capital and people*”, giving prominence to less economically developed regions, “*de facto solidarity*”, “*community of European peoples*” and “*continuous creation*” therefore appeared, contributing to the creation of a European narrative and establishing terminology to enlighten the various aspects of the European Project and its progress towards a European Federation with its own sovereignty, as called for by President Macron.

#### *Plans for a Federal Union during the French Resistance*

The march towards a federal, sovereign and democratic union continued within the core of the French resistance and was asserted in newspapers and manifestos, such as that of *Ventotene Island* written by Altiero Spinelli, a communist who had converted to democratic federalism, and Ernesto Rossi, both interned on that island. The manifesto, dating from 1941, inspired the European Federalist Movement (*Movimento Federalista Europeo* or MFE) which advocated for a European Federation with sovereign powers in areas of common interest. The *Ventotene Manifesto* sought to safeguard freedom in Europe and demanded European citizenship for every citizen in its member states. Meanwhile, *Combat*, a French newspaper also created in 1941, made history by circulating articles in support of the Union of Europe written by Henri Frenay, Georges Bidault, Albert Camus, Henri Teitgen, Edmond Michelet, Francois de Menthon and many others. These publications, targeting the same goal, prepared Europeans for a future of peace and freedom within a future Union.

The first meeting of members of the Resistance movement from nine countries, with the participation of a group of German anti-Nazi militants, was held in Geneva on 31 March 1944.<sup>1</sup> To my knowledge, this was the first political act of the federalist members of the Resistance, launching a call to coordinate resistance movements in their fight for liberation of their countries and a federal union of European peoples. Such a union required a government responsible to their people, an army acting under the orders of that government and a supreme court.

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<sup>1</sup> Raymond Silva, future Secretary General of the European Centre for Culture created following the Congress of Europe at the Hague in 1948 and led by Denis de Rougemont, acted as an intermediary between Resistance groups.

As for a democratic Germany, it would have to banish all traces of Nazism in its education of the young and integrate its heavy and chemical industry into the European industrial set-up.

#### *The blossoming of European movements*

As a consequence of these waves of resistance, large pro-European movements would go on to blossom during 1946 and 1947. It was these movements that would create a vast network supporting the official institutions and organisations: the Council of Europe, the ECSC and the EEC.

A few years ago, in its history of integration, the European Commission attributed the origins of the European Communities to the Schuman Declaration. I immediately wrote to the author to remind him of the distant past, of Ancient Greece and its amphictyonies, not forgetting Rome and Christianity... However, without reaching back to the dawn of time, it is important to underline that grassroots movements and the commitment of civilian figures in creating and operating these movements represented the foundation upon which the official initiatives of European governments built, having benefited from the support of these pro-European networks. Moreover, most of their projects and proposals have been used by the European institutions with the result that these movements found themselves overtaken by the work of the European institutions.

Nevertheless, the origins of European integration are to be found in the Pan-European Movement and the Briand Project, in the Resistance projects starting with the Ventotene Manifesto, in grassroots movements within towns, cities and regions, and two European Congresses: first the UEF Congress in Montreux in 1947 with a Manifesto for European Federalists in the form of federal principles presented by Denis de Rougemont, and supplemented by the outline of an Economic Federation drawn up by Maurice Allais, a future Nobel Prize winner.

This was the first step in preparing for the great Congress of Europe at the Hague. A thousand delegates, members of a variety of political committees and advocacy groups, attended this European meeting from 7 to 10 May 1948. Debates were presided over by Winston Churchill<sup>2</sup>, supported by a group of European leaders, politicians from the Resistance and the discreet but significant presence of Adenauer. The split between British unionists and continental federalists was evident. However, the federalists, although united about the goal, would divide over the approach to be followed. After dismissing Paul Reynaud's suggestion of

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<sup>2</sup> In his speech in Zurich in 1946, he had advocated for a continental union under the patronage of the United States and the United Kingdom.

a constituent assembly elected by universal suffrage, the participants agreed to a “*European Manifesto*” without a specific project, asserting the fundamental values of Europe and resulting in the creation of the European Movement, the Council of Europe and its Court of Human Rights. Moreover, the Congress’ cultural resolution led to the creation of the European Centre for Culture and the College of Europe in Bruges. The essentials were summarised in the “*Message to Europeans*” written by Denis de Rougemont, who would go on to be responsible for founding the European Centre for Culture with Raymond Silva in Geneva in 1950.

Although it set out the need for an economic and political union, the final resolution at the Hague fell short of the demands of the members of the Resistance and the federalist campaigners. However, it emphasised freedoms of thought, association and expression, as it did the right to form an opposition and human rights. This was at a time when East/West tension was intensifying. The Berlin crisis that same year marked the start of the Cold War! The European Movement, the Union of European Federalists (UEF) and frictions in Berlin precipitated the creation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), bringing Western Europe under the American umbrella. At the same time, the Marshall Plan was supporting reconstruction of this part of Europe and the creation of the Organisation for European Economic Cooperation (OEEC). Against this turbulent background of threats and challenges, Jean Monnet, the Commissioner-General of the French National Planning Board, and his team drafted the Schuman Declaration. The declaration confirmed the reversal of France’s policy as regards Federal Germany and gave rise to adoption of the Treaty establishing the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC).

This first community-level institution was closely followed by René Pleven’s proposal for a European Defence Community (EDC), supported by the United States and aiming to strengthen Europe in the face of the Soviet threat. The EDC was supposed to be accompanied by a “*European Political Community*” responsible for democratic oversight of the use of what was called the future ‘European army’. Paradoxically as it was originally a French initiative, the French Parliament archived the draft Treaty establishing the European Defence Community (EDC) in 1954 without comment and thus buried the project for a political community. Under the influence of the Communist party, General de Gaulle and Marshal Juin, France actually rejected its own EDC project. This rejection opened the way for American rearmament of Germany and its membership of NATO, simultaneously dashing all hope of a political union, a hope which has remained dormant to date.

It is what I have called the ‘original sin’ of the young Europe. The pernicious effects on Europe’s journey can still be felt 66 years later!

A profound crisis then ensued, a veritable trauma, after so many dashed hopes! Integration was revived thanks to Jean Monnet's work with governments and parliaments, including the Bundestag, and with the support of the European Movement and widespread public support, bringing the six ECSC Member States to the negotiating table in Messina to draw up the Treaty of Rome, which was signed in March 1957, establishing the European Economic Community (EEC) and the European Atomic Energy Community (EAEC). The EEC rose to the challenge, applying Jean Monnet's strategy for sector-by-sector integration which, it was assumed, would lead, step-by-step, to a political union. Hypothetically, it would have the spill-over effect postulated by Ernst B. Haas whereby, applying the theory of functionalism, States and political parties, socio-economic players, interest groups and multinationals would all be pulled along in its wake, creating European loyalty. The process was far from smooth. It was a long march filled with crises and international conflict.

Jean Monnet had said and written: *'Europe will be forged in crises and will be the sum of the solutions adopted for those crises.'* This accurate and realistic observation has been interpreted in various ways, eventually resulting in the claim that Europe evolves and is strengthened through crises. This statement calls for a brief examination of the crises in question. An initial warning came from General de Gaulle's position in refusing the Anglo-Swiss proposal for a free trade area. According to him, it would prevent the introduction of a customs union. In the same spirit, de Gaulle insisted on compliance with the Treaty of Rome which France had ratified. The second act would play out at the start of 1963, when the French President used a speech to issue a categorical and prophetic "*non*" to membership of the United Kingdom.<sup>3</sup>

#### *The 'empty chair crisis' and a compromise on the disagreement*

The 'empty chair crisis' in 1965 had a serious impact on how the European institutions operated because it prevented the introduction of qualified majority voting for the common agricultural policy, provided for in the Treaty, and maintained unanimity. This was the first indication of the tension which still exists between the Community method and inter-governmental procedure. The Hallstein

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<sup>3</sup> Closeted in Jean-Pierre de Launoit's summer house with Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, the Finance Minister, and Jean-François Deniau, the main negotiator, I remember that we discussed the French President's position. Jean-François Deniau reminded us that approximately 50% of the problems were still unresolved while others evoked the insular nature of England, often accused of being America's Trojan horse, or drew attention to the agreement Macmillan had signed with Kennedy on the Skybolt rockets which was supposed to have precipitated President de Gaulle's "*non*".

Commission had proposed a package to ensure funding for the agricultural policy through the creation of a “common fund” financed by customs duties and agricultural levies. This budgetary autonomy was to be subject to oversight by the European Parliament whose powers were to be increased. At the end of June 1965, de Gaulle put forward his own analysis of the situation at a press conference: the Commission seemed to see itself as a future financial power or a future government with broad powers of initiative. I remember that the General was irritated by Hallstein's ambitions. He was always quick to roll out the symbolic red carpet when he received Heads of State as if he were their equal. That was more than enough to provoke a reaction in the name of a Europe of States or nations, the Europe which inspired General de Gaulle's thoughts and actions! After long negotiations, the crisis ended with an ‘agreement to disagree’ in Luxembourg in 1966.

#### *Michel Debré's project versus the Fouchet Plan*

Michel Debré's book *Projet de Pacte pour une Union d'États européens* [Draft Pact for a Union of European States], published in 1950, was ahead of its time. It took inspiration from the presidential and federalist model. It recommended an adjudicator elected for five years by universal suffrage, a senate composed of ministers from member states and commissioners appointed by the adjudicator. In addition, there would be an assembly of parliamentarians elected by millions of citizens.

This revolutionary proposition returned to the European debate from time to time but did not find favour among the players in the European political community and even less when up against de Gaulle's Fouchet Plan at the start of the 1960s in the face of political questioning of common defence, foreign policy and countries in the East or as regards developing nations. This project crystallised opposition to two concepts: a supranational union, the credo of Spaak and Luns, and a union of States or nations, President de Gaulle's idea. The Fouchet Plan envisaged regular meetings of heads of State or government at least every four months. Foreign affairs ministers would hold sessions at intervals. The Council would hold decision-making powers and would be supported by three Commissions: political, defence and cultural. The Brussels Economic Commission, whose independence distinguished it from the three new Commissions, would be composed of representatives from member states. The role of the European Assembly would be limited to debating political issues and formulating advice and recommendations. This was a Europe based on intergovernmental cooperation versus a community with a federal vocation.

It should be remembered that the Fouchet Plan contained a *progressive clause* proposing that a review of any progress should take place after three years. Despite the need for a common foreign and defence policy in the midst of the Cold War, the five other members balked at the influence that the council of member states and the political commission would have over the European Communities. Initiatives and posthumous regrets did not provide anything in the way of results but at subsequent conferences Paul-Henri Spaak was quick to express his regrets and present his project which, while retaining the key features of the Fouchet Plan, proposed an 'independent political commission'.

*France and Germany: tested by the explosion of Yugoslavia*

Much later, we witnessed the violent breakup of Yugoslavia and unilateral recognition of Slovenia and Croatia by Germany on 23 December 1991. This act, which took France and the United States by surprise, reminded us of the weight of the history of the Second World War in the Balkans. France and Germany were close to divorce but were saved by their need for solidarity and the assertion of a common trade policy during the negotiations under way within the framework of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). Once again, senior officials felt the need for a political union. Hence the pillar of political cooperation in the Maastricht Treaty.

The immense geopolitical change marked by the decline of Communism occurred during peaceful disintegration of the Soviet Union. Today, new powers have emerged with the return of Russia, Brazil, India and, above all, China. The latter practices a form of totalitarian Communism involving control of its citizens while opening itself up to world markets. It attracts investments and stimulates its exports through very competitive prices while establishing its presence in Europe, the Americas and, most markedly, in Africa.

In our research with Jean Meynaud in the 1960s for *L'Europe des affaires*, we warned the European Commission of the risk of American multinationals having a stranglehold over European companies. These multinationals were private property though and their only aim was to maximise their profits in Europe. Today, on the other hand, China's giant corporations are under the control of the Communist Government and are therefore obliged to follow its policy of breaking into world markets, particularly into the European Union. This is worth remembering at a time when the Commission has just signed an agreement on investments with China.

The desire to commit to the path of a Union of Europe will be created from pressure from public opinion wanting peace, freedom, democracy and a federal political

union driven and expanded by free accessions, as demonstrated by the waves of accessions and applications.

The question which haunts me, as it does Sandro Gozi, is whether the nations of the European Union have made sustainable progress together, including on the path towards an unprecedented federation, despite the growing threats and challenges that the EU faces? And how can its power and efficacy be accelerated as a matter of urgency while still respecting its founding values and principles? Over to Sandro Gozi...

Prof. Dusan Sidjanski