

A European's viewpoint

The EU is in need of a political core if it is to regain momentum

BY *DUSAN SIDJANSKI**



The future political Union is the key to the success of the monetary Union. This is what the Bundesbank maintained in 1992[†], followed in 1994 by the political project of Lamers and Schäuble calling for a « hard core» equipped with a government and a legislature. Personally I prefer the term federative core, and I will never tire of reiterating the watchword : no single currency has ever existed without sovereign power. Yet the euro is incorporated within an economic mechanism deprived of a political framework. Karl V. Deutsch's study of numerous cases concluded that successful federations were formed at the instigation of a federative core.

The rejection of the « Schäuble plan » and later of the Constitution marked the beginning of a series of serious crises : the financial crisis imported from the United States in 2008, which morphed into the economic and social crisis, undermining the very fabric of our societies. The drift towards authoritarianism in Hungary and Poland are evidence of this. Moreover, the threats are mounting : the effects of austerity measures, the surge of nationalism supported by a wave of populist, even extremist and anti-European sentiment, criminal organisations and conflicts between neighbouring regions, not to mention the fears aroused by the influx of migrants and the threat of terror attacks by Islamist extremists.

So many Damoclean swords hanging over the European Union. At the same time, globalisation combined with the rise of new superpowers and the destabilization of the world order by President Trump and Brexit, are raising deep concerns which are a wake-up call for

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[†] *Monthly Report of the Deutsche Bundesbank*, February 1992

the Union. Some people are calling for the reconstruction of the EU, which would entail years of negotiation. Indeed Merkel's meeting with the Polish government confirmed the latter's desire to recover powers transferred to the Union.

It's time to admit that the EU is in urgent need of a dynamic federative core equipped with sovereign powers if it is to be revitalised, with other Members who so desire following the same path. In this respect, the Lisbon treaty provides for "enhanced cooperation", allowing for the creation of a vanguard political core group capable of responding to the accumulation of threats and ensure the survival of the euro.

Incorporated within the Union, this core group would have at its disposal the same structures reduced in size to the number of its members: a European Council, a Council of Ministers and most importantly, an Executive and ECB, a Commission accountable to the European Parliament and one chamber of the Court of Justice. The core would have sovereign powers and its decisions would be taken according to the community method by qualified majority regarding monetary and economic affairs, but also in relation to external relations, security and defence or migration flows.

This initiative should be taken in Rome on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the Treaties of Rome which will be celebrated on 25 March 2017. This decisive move would ensure the survival of the euro, the definition of common strategies and the assignment of the means to implement them due to a specific budget. The details still need to be fine-tuned but the essential idea is to strengthen collaboration in a democratic structure incorporated within the Union. As a result, the driving force inspired by this federative core would provide impetus to all 27 members by intensifying their unity in diversity in accordance with a federal view. It's up to France and Germany, together with Italy and other Eurozone States brave enough to do so to take such an initiative and commit themselves to inspiring all the EU Members with hope and confidence.

It's time to cure the infantile disease from which the Union is suffering; ever since the failure of the EDC it has not been able to equip itself with a political project whereas today politics has replaced pure economics. This revival is what is needed for the European Union to recover its role as a beacon of democracy in our globally destabilized world. I am convinced that the very survival of our civilization depends on this.