

European issues
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Brexit, the possibilities of a continent

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It is everyone's failure if a country leaves the European Union. In spite of some undeniably, specifically British features, we must not underestimate nor analyse it lightly, because Brexit reveals some errors of conduct and foretells of serious complications. Firstly for Great Britain. By wanting to unify his party David Cameron has disunited the Kingdom. Britons are now divided, long term. Gibraltar, Northern Ireland, Scotland and the City are all equally burning issues to be solved, and that's without reckoning with the economic and social consequences of this purely political divorce. Then for the European Union itself. Indifference on the part of national leaders has meant that its management has swum with the tide for the last twenty years, its policies challenged, its functioning criticised, its goals brought into question. As soon as the results of the British referendum were made public a thousand and one voices could be heard calling for the Union's re-design, its transformation or its reform. We should now be happy that national political actors are finally paying attention to this structure is at the core of national issues.

The European Union needs the support of the people, who also depend on the courage of their leaders and the relevance of what they are putting forward. Let's hope that the elections that are now to come on the continent will provide an opportunity to unveil real projects with a clear vision of European commitment. What is it for and what are its goals? Where are we heading? Will we remain one of the leading economic and democratic blocks in the world? How do we approach this and with whom? Because this is about the fear of losing status in a new world, the feeling of decline that is tormenting the peoples of Europe. Answers have to be found. We should have had these debates a long time ago and they will have to be settled in the most democratic way possible, by giving a clear mandate to new leaders who will owe their election to a vision to which they are bound. This is the best way to provide representative democracy with all of its justification and greatness. In the meantime we have to make haste. The European Community existed before the UK joined in 1973, it will continue to exist after its departure. This has to be settled with clarity, without a spirit of revenge or punishment, whilst avoiding the secrecy inherent to diplomatic compromise. The UK is still a major European ally, but will now lie outside of the EU, whose rules it will no longer be able to influence. The continent has to continue on its way and show that its organisation – even if it has to be

reformed – is not the nightmare that some would lead us to believe. The leaders of the Union's Member States have a heavy responsibility to bear. It is up to them to stand united and to be worthy of the fight. They have to show they agree to respond to the urgent demands made by their citizens who, for the time being, have not found any answers in Europe. This especially is preventing true European policy within the Union and the daily commitment by the States to settle extremely real, joint issues. Without spontaneous, long term cooperation the treaties and procedures will simply turn into constraints. Before undertaking any reform of the treaties and with the existing tools, perspective and vision have to be given to the migratory crisis, to the legitimate feeling of insecurity and to economic and social uncertainty, which implies that decisions have to be taken now. Helping the States physically and financially to rise to the migratory wave entails effective solidarity that will control immigration within the respect of our principles. The goal must be to reduce long term migratory pressure, with a joint response that will largely define the Member States' national domestic policies. Committing to closer engagement together in the face of security risks, both internal and external, but also providing both physical and financial support to those who are fighting to quash terrorism at home and abroad would be the proof of true European solidarity.

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Immediately improving the functioning of the euro zone is possible without changing the texts. This requires an open mind which does not just mean the implementation of austere, bitter tasting discipline. Without prospects of recovery and the restructuring of debts, despair will continue to plague people and throw them into the arms of the extremists. Discipline will not be enough to guarantee stability. Only the hope of recovery will really help, by truly enabling the hordes of sceptics and the States in difficulty to recover their serenity. In response to all of these urgent requirements we do not need immediate federal organisation and organigrams, we just need true cooperation. The rest will follow. And although, as always, it will be difficult for 27 to reach agreement let some Member States show that they can work together – now!

It is up to the joint institutions to be realistic and for us to support them. We are sure that the President of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker will join in with a strategic and political vision which he has called for himself. It is good news for the future of Europe if the suggestion box is now open. But for its present stability we urgently need to provide real, energetic, tangible answers in response to fears and anxiety. They require strategic vision, meaning immediate renewed political determination and courage. This will then be a historical turning point for Europe

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