

*“The world advances progressively backward”* (Edmund Burke, 1770)

Dear friends and colleagues,

In the mid-18th century, Paris became the center of an explosion of philosophic and scientific activity challenging traditional doctrines and dogmas. The movement was led by Voltaire and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who argued for a society based upon reason rather than faith and Catholic doctrine, for a new civil order based on natural law and for science based on experiments and observation. The political philosopher Montesquieu introduced the idea of a separation of powers in a government.

The Philosophes of the French Enlightenment played an important part in undermining the legitimacy of the Old Regime and shaping the French Revolution. Their ideas, together with the **Magna Carta**, the **Trias Politica**, the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**, and the **Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU**, resulted in cornerstones of current societies, are inspiring for everyone, may not be lost, and require to be constantly brought to the attention. Why? Because:

- we are living at the same time in several conflicting worlds full crossroads:
  - a world of **modern humanism** inspired by the Enlightenment;
  - a world turning more **Hobbesian** in (geo)politics, economics and finance, and
  - a world of **ethnic distancing** and **religious separatism**, imposed and directed by strong central authorities
- certain systems and ways of governing were not completed, stagnate in their original design and became step by step means of power for a few, the concepts of truth and trust are under discussion. These big challenges do require adjustments of financial-economic and eco-social systems, forms of government, architectures and institutions, which we have to address together the coming period.

In 1919 Keynes wrote in his 'The Economic Consequences of the Peace': *“What an extraordinary episode in the economic progress of man that age was which came to an end in August, 1914! The inhabitant of London could order by telephone, sipping his morning tea in bed, the various products of the whole earth, in such quantity as he might see fit, and reasonably expect their early delivery upon his doorstep. But, most important of all, he regarded this state of affairs as normal, certain, and permanent, except in the direction of further improvement, and any deviation from it as aberrant, scandalous, and avoidable. The projects and politics of militarism and imperialism, of racial and cultural rivalries, of monopolies, restrictions, and exclusion, which were to play the serpent to this paradise, were little more than the amusements of his daily newspaper, and appeared to exercise almost no influence at all on the ordinary course of social and economic life, the internationalization of which was nearly complete in practice”.*

Thus do wake up, stand up, speak up, and act! Only observing, analyzing, assessing, and the writing falls short. Focus on facts, go vote, use your network, and be eager to learn about developments to come, including those about Europe, its policies and its goals. Change from a follower into a changemaker, designer or an influencer, use (social) media, education, and participate in events: we ourselves decide which direction we and Europe wants to go, it is what we make of it for tomorrow.

Let's leave the very essence of the values, principles and the ethics of comity thrive and grow and allow to function as future-proof basis for societies of the coming era of change in order to be able to live in freedom, peace and prosperity.

To contribute, we encourage to share these findings and to use @C21fellow in the interest of the progress of our future.

Best regards,

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