

## ‘IF WE ALL PULL TOGETHER’

Europe, an environment with a history of a religion-based way of thinking, determined by the church, a rich culture and many wars and conflicts.

500 years ago, the idea of Reason came into being. This idea resulted in humanistic themes, great inventions and the emergence of influential cultural, artistic, literary trends and movements. Yet religion, rich culture and humanism were not strong enough; in the 1st half of the 20th century there were 2 world wars. At least 82 million people lost their lives and large parts of Europe were in ruins. But as before with such tragedies, great minds brought ideas for "perpetual" peace.

Already in the interbellum, Frank Buchman, an American Lutheran pastor, wanted to rearm the Western civilization with moral values and fundamental principles, in 1941 Ernesto Rossi and Altiero Spinelli, under house arrest on the Italian island of Ventotene, established a manifesto for a free and unified Europe.

In 1946 in Zurich, Sir Winston Churchill said that France and Germany should take the lead together. Buchman started a reconciliation program in Caux sur Montreux between the French and the Germans. On 7 May 1948, Sir Winston Churchill gave a speech at the Congress of Europe in The Hague. In it he said among other things:

*“If we all pull together and pool the luck and the comradeship and firmly grasp the larger hopes of humanity, then it may be that we shall move into a happier sunlit age, when all the little children who are now growing up in this tormented world may find themselves not the victors nor the vanquished in the fleeting triumphs of one country over another in the bloody turmoil of destructive war, but the heirs of all the treasures of the past and the masters of all the science, the abundance and the glories of the future”.*

The growing confidence provided support given to Jean Monnet's suggestion for transnational management for the stock of coal and steel. This resulted in the ECSC, which was the beginning of the European Union.

Instead of communism and fascism, a liberal order developed, a society in which citizens enjoy great liberties. This order rejected the principles that led to two world wars - ethnic nationalism, spheres of influence and imperialism - and replaced it with a system based on universal values, human rights, the rule of law and national sovereignty and did not happen by accident; it was the result of tireless efforts to lay the foundation, to promote and guarantee the values. The result was 70 years of peace and prosperity.

Since 2008, Europe faced multiple issues simultaneously that have profoundly influenced social life. Agreements were not (fully) implemented and consequences of this created an, sometimes violent, hostility. Populism, obscurantism, political revisionism, nationalism made grateful use of the situation. Little was left of the idea of Europe.

But now the tide seems to be turning to the advantage of Europe: new positive dynamics in politics and among citizens are giving rise to discussions about how people imagine life in Europe: **safe, social, prosperous, sustainable, democratic and a Europe as strong player on the world stage.**

In the contemporary era, countries and people are interconnected. Own sailing is increasingly dependent on the extent to which globalization is progressing. It is important that Europe completes agreed policies and that people develop **cohesion and community spirit (1)**. After all, open ends caused several vicious problems at the same time and seriously questioned the *raison d'être* of Europe. With all its consequences. Moreover, there are internal and external forces that increasingly undermine **liberal Western society (2)**, with grateful use being made of social media, the prevalent culture of individualism and fragmentary thinking.

- (1) by knowing who local authorities and deputies are, putting forward good arguments in discussions, checking facts and by voting;
- (2) through politics (revisionism), political philosophy (The Fourth Political Theory), (political) economy (crony capitalism, plutocracy) and extremist expressions of (religious) conviction.

Discussions have also arisen about the **functioning of the economic system of free market capitalism**. Since 2009 there has been the rise of global movements **(1)**, which protest against the power of the banks, the bad sides of capitalism and outdated social structures. Neo-capitalism **(2)** apparently did not work and the benefits of neoliberalism benefited certain groups: we are in a situation of powerful lobbies **(3)** and big data, big money and a few versus many, short versus long. Capitalism in extreme forms has led to ruthless pursuit of growth at the expense of society's prosperity. Overcoming entropy seems to be necessary and ethics is the anti-dote for entropic decline in every company.

Undermining the liberal society and lack of comradeship should not put Europe in the situation that other parties start to dictate terms or gain dominance in geographical areas.

**Germany wants to renew the EU, spin the Franco-German axis, reform the Eurozone and strengthen the European Parliament.** Europe must have available common agreed powers for the protection of major interests and must complete business when implementing the associated policy. The more effective and stronger the EU functions, the better for the Member States, the more effective and stronger the Member States, the better for the EU. The citizen will benefit from this.

Europe started a civilization ideal that has created in the world the largest area with common prosperity and long-term peace. That challenge should be broadly committed. There are few chances and opportunities to put Europe at the forefront. May 2018 is such an opportunity. Europe is diversity, knows a rich cultural history, has a wonderful diversity of biodiversity and is an area where characteristic personalities brought truth, grandeur and beauty and where humanities **(4)** flourished. MEP Esteban González Pons said:

"....., Europe is not a market, it is the will to live together. Leaving Europe is not leaving a market, it is leaving shared dreams. We can have a common market, but if we do not have common dreams, we have nothing. Europe is the peace that came after the disaster of war. Europe is the pardon between French and Germans. Europe is the return to freedom of Greece, Spain and Portugal. Europe is the fall of the Berlin Wall. Europe is the end of communism. Europe is the welfare state, it is democracy, ..... Can we live without all this? Can we give this all up?"

The idea of cooperation, long-term peace and prosperity has returned regularly, until today with the plan to protect the largest area of prosperity ever in the history of mankind, to solve factors that lead to dissatisfaction among the population and to continue the ideal of civilization.

The *raison d'être* of Europe does not disappear, Europe does ask to work on the value it deserves. We have to take care of that ourselves. This can not be done through the use of raw language, oppression, intimidation, aggression, threats and violence and the right to achieve chaos, but by working on improving our human condition.

Europe is a place to feel at home. Citizens in EU Member States have European citizenship and have therefore the opportunity to help prepare texts, decision-making and the evaluation of the work by the EU. Europe also provides humanities, cultures, identities, virtues, tolerance, solidarity, equality, the rule of law and justice. All of them values that contribute to improving well-being.

Step by step, taking into account diversity and using the system of multi-level governance, Europe is on the way to greater unity. But as it turns out, Europe usually only grows after major setbacks.

Citizens are also looking for a compass, lifestyles where everyone can make a free choice and can help to achieve together a better society, supported by a modern economic system and a form of government based on the ideal of human equality.

"If we all pull together" then Europe can regain its grandeur again.

- (1)** 'Occupy', 'Indignados' and 'The Zeitgeist';
- (2)** An economic ideology that combines some elements of capitalism with other systems and that is characterized by correcting excesses through measures that monitor social welfare;
- (3)** Financial sector, car industry, health sector, oil industry, war industry, technical sector;
- (4)** Languages, literature and poetry, history, philosophy (within which ethics), religion, the arts and music, health and sport.