

## **The June 2007 roadmap–**

### **A way out of the constitutional crisis ?**

**9 May, 18:00-19:15, Eastman Building, European Parliament**

**A new Vision, a new Momentum, a new European Consciousness**  
**By Raymond Van Ermen, Member of the Permanent Forum of Civil Society.**

The Permanent Forum of European Civil society organised in November 2006 at Bergamo (Italy) a first debate between partisans of *yes* and *no*. The Bergamo Forum side-event underlined the convergence of opinions on the need for a **Re-Foundation** of the European Union on a new Corner Stone, “the Fundamental Rights supported by a **“Pan-European Consultation/Referendum”**. It was suggested that this “re-foundation” of Europe should take the form of a **Declaration of Interdependence** drafted by the European Parliament with Civil Society accredited organisations participation, This Declaration of Interdependence should become part of the **New Treaty Preamble** Since Bergamo, the Permanent Forum has completed its proposals by developing a new roadmap. Two re-founding COMPACTS called respectively **“COMPACT OF THE EUROPEAN CITIZENS AND STATES”** to be submitted to a pan-european consultation by June 2009 and a second compact, to be approved after 2009 called **“THE SOCIAL, CULTURAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL COMPACT”** are proposed. Any new EU enlargement would intervene only once the two compacts are set into force.

#### **June 2009. The Compact of the European Citizens and States.**

The first compact proposed by the Permanent Forum, called **“COMPACT OF THE EUROPEAN CITIZENS AND STATES”**, (part I and II of the draft Constitutional Treaty), would be jointly elaborated by the Council and the European Parliament and subjected to a consultation of all the European citizens in June 2009. Time has come to innovate and, in particular, to give all its true meaning to the concept of “European citizenship”: the right to take part in drafting the preamble to the “Compact of European Citizens and States”, the right for all to vote the same day, the right to imply oneself in a “European Societal Contract” that is implied by the second Compact.

This first compact would include a formal engagement to convene, as of September 2009, a third Convention entrusted with the formulation of second compact, called **“THE SOCIAL, CULTURAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL COMPACT”** which would reformulate Part III of the Constitutional Treaty so as to redefine the EU policies and action in conformity with the nature of the 21<sup>st</sup> century challenges. This second compact would be also subjected to a consultation of the European citizens in June 2011.

These proposals respect the “Yes” votes because they ensure the entry into force of the provisions aiming at making the Union more effective, as of 2009, and suggest to those who voted “No”, a way to build together a new societal compact. These proposals are strengthened by new developments which are the result of a new vision, creating a new momentum, building a new European consciousness of Europe’s “mission” and leading to a new “European dream”. **These new developments changing the way the constitutional crisis should be addressed will be my key message.**

## **A “New European Consciousness”**

Revisiting the reasons why the European Union is an “added value” to meet our desires, should emerge from new developments which took place since the referenda in France and the Netherlands, built on rediscovering the proactive power of our interdependence to tackle the new challenges.

Mankind is at a turning point and the question is “*have the Europeans a special mission ?*” in the eyes of some, “*has Europe new business and jobs opportunities ?*” in the eyes of others. My answer is definitely YES to both. It is of major importance for the Union to become again, in the eyes of all European citizens from new and old member states, a major lever for a flourishing economy and a society of well-being for all, and to be perceived again as an accelerator of societal progress able to “re-enchante the world” at a time of new challenges<sup>1</sup>.

Europe need to address people’s fears and desires. Europeans need to imagine new ways to secure “progress for all” and “trust”. Before the referenda in France and the Netherlands, it is in relation to globalization that the EU has appeared as a threat: the threat of impoverishment for Europeans, according to some, the threat of a lack of solidarity and justice for a better world, according to others. But now a new momentum is obviously there reshaping the debate. It is now in relation with the new challenges of the XXIst Century related to climate change and resource scarcity that Europe can best give itself a new “mission” ( in line with the priorities which emerged from the citizens panels organised recently by the Commission putting energy and environmental issues as top one priorities for Europe).

All European Citizens, from the North as from the South, from the East as from the West, from the Continent Europe or Islands, from close to the centre as from overseas are sharing the same desire : to secure the well being of our society, a quality of life for us, for our children and the generations to come, in a peaceful world. Today the risks have for name *resource scarcity* and *war for resources*. The opportunities have for name a *resource efficient and low carbon economy* and a *well being society for all*. Contrary to what thinks the Czech President these new urgencies are neither a “Western” or a “Green” agenda against the rights to development of “new member states” and “developing countries or against “business” nor “a communist plot cooked up by the losers of the cold war”. It is a mankind imperative shared at global level by public authorities, the religious, scientific, business communities, It is – as any crisis – a risk and an opportunity (including to make profit and enhance competitiveness). It is the necessary path to help emerging economies and developing countries to “leapfrog”. It is what the German Minister of the Environment, Sigmar Gabriel is calling *a New Deal for economy, environment and employment with at its core a third industrial revolution*.

## **A New Momentum**

The Constitutional Treaty drafting process has been taking place at a time these new challenges of the XXIst century were not fully recognised. Now they are, including by the public opinion of Eurosceptic countries (it should encourage the Dutch Government to welcome our proposals), CEO’s and religious leaders (an element the Polish Government should take into consideration). As Mats Engström noted, *the addition of a serious environmental dimension to the European Union's internal reform and soft-power diplomacy could yet make 2007 a year of vision*.

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<sup>1</sup> To quote an expression used by George Corm, former Lebanese finance minister, in *Orient Occident, la fracture imaginaire*, Ed. La Découverte, 2002.

Back to the wall, the question today is how to “accelerate the shift” toward a new sustainable economy at fast speed, a “*wartime speed*” ( as Lester Brown writes it). The high urgency of tackling climate change has recently brought EU Commissioner Dimas to refer to a “state of war” which the EU should feel itself while coping with the situation. **So, interestingly enough, the climate change threat, might be a strong push towards an agreement on a new and better EU treaty.** To make a success of the next decade the EU must indeed face three major and inter-connected challenges to which it must adapt: (I) retrieving the citizens’ confidence (by redefining the reasons of living together) (II) becoming the “leader” of a low carbon economy and a society of well-being for all (another way of saying a competitive and innovating economy through sustainable development in a context of climatic change), (III) transforming the Union’s relations with its neighbour and finding a new answer to the enlargement question, the co-operation with Russia, Iran and the pacification in the Middle East.

We hope that Europe will leverage this new momentum to re-enchante Europe with a *New Project for Europe based on 4 Keys*.

- a Resource Efficient Economy. After the *Steel and Coal Community*, after the *Single Market*, after the *Euro*, the “New European Economic Agenda” is to build a *Resource Efficient and Low Carbon Economy*.
- A Well-being society for all. This shift towards a new economy, based on new indicators, should be also the leverage for a well being society for all. The Well-Being Society is a federative project implementing both one of the three core objectives of the Union as defined in the draft European Constitutional Treaty (otherwise referred to as the draft European Constitution) and the EU Sustainable Development Strategy. The Well-Being Society can mobilize people around a positive dynamic that does not negate crises but responds to them proactively. This project provides powerful leverage for “remobilizing” the general public as well as for businesses from the private and public sectors, social entrepreneurship, public services and voluntary organizations; it is a factor of innovation for new products and new services and a “creator of progress”.
- A New Peace Agenda. The war for resources is a risk at our doors. It relates to access to energy and water. The best way to tackle the peace agenda of the XXist century is by launching a second Olympic ring, a new answer to many not resolved questions related to our relations with our neighbours from Russia and Iran, to Israel and Palestine. This is why we are inviting to set up by 2010 the 3 Seas Alliance at a time the EU enlargement is going to fast and to slowly to meet the new challenges. We are proposing to host a second evening debate on this particular theme.
- A Representative and Participatory democracy. The European Union has been built over the past fifty years through the implementation of three "routes": the intergovernmental route (e.g. European Council), the federalist route (e.g. European Parliament) and the functionalist route (e.g. the internal market and the euro).. There is a convergence of interests today around the development of the fourth engine in the rocket "Europe": the participatory route

## **Citizens.**

Whereas we celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the Treaty of Rome, the European elites tremble, they are afraid of their people! The best proof is Mrs. Angela Merkel’s proposal to give up the word “constitution” so that there would be no “referendum” at all neither in France, neither in the Netherlands, nor in the United Kingdom. But the saying says it: “the fear is bad advisor”. Since decades one speaks about the ditch that grows hollow between European elites and citizens. The murmur that swells among the “elites” (i.e. as much the political world, commercial enterprises, some civil society organizations “in Brussels” , including trade unions) is that one must do everything to prevent having again to ask the EU citizens’ opinion over any revised formulation of the treaty, whatever its name: constitutional treaty, fundamental law or anything of the sort.

This fear of the people hides behind the arguments that were hacked to death thousand times (it is too complex, people do not answer the question, we cannot not take again the risk of refusal, etc.) and to which one adds some “security” arguments well designed to frighten the middle-class: yesterday it was the weapons of massive destruction and today climate change. But this does nothing but reinforce the citizens’ mistrust, who know too well what is a lie by the State. But fortunately, there will still be referenda since the Constitution of certain Member States imposes it. Consequently all endeavours to avoid a Pan-European consultation of the citizens in June 2009 - before Treaty ratification – will do nothing but exacerbate frustrations, put oil on the smouldering fire. Today, the greatest challenge for the European Council is to overcome its own fears and show that it has still the capacity to innovate as it did it in the past, for example when it decided to elect the European Parliament by universal suffrage!

In R&D studies done for the Commission <sup>(2)</sup> social quality is defined as “the extent to which people are able to participate in the social and economic life of their communities under conditions which enhance their well-being and potential”. The overall experience of social quality is attributed to four interdependent factors :

Socio-economic security	Financial resources, housing and the environment, health and care, work, education
Social cohesion	Trust, integrative norms and values, social networks, identity
Social inclusion	Citizenship rights, labour market, services (public and private), social networks
Social empowerment	Knowledge base, labour market, openness and supportiveness of EU Institutions

As noted “essential in this process are the rule of law, human rights and social justice, social recognition/respect, social responsiveness and the individual’s capacity to participate”. Several R&D projects highlight the stresses to existing community structures due to rapid socio-economic change (EU enlargement, transition to market-driven economies with ‘globalisation’) and suggest the importance of **governance innovation** and rebuilding communities to cope with new challenges under radically changed conditions. (...).<sup>(3)</sup> This is why we are advocating in favour of a representative and participatory democracy, with new tools, starting with a pan-European consultation by June 2009.

By 2025, the level of global and EU economic prosperity will be 40% higher in an Open-Door scenario of which a Third Convention would be an important element. The Bergamo Forum 2006 underlined that to implement the “principle of participatory democracy” as a “Connecting Citizens with Public Institutions initiative” is a key issue for a new trust as well as innovation and a new competitiveness. The “open doors” approach (described by several Institutes – Shell global scenarios for 2025 as well as Futurible) is a world in which civil societies in different countries are reassured that their fundamental values can be affirmed and strengthened, not only domestically but across borders, and in conjunction with market forces An “open doors scenario” is also the leverage we do propose to shift Europe’s economy at a wartime speed towards a low carbon economy and a well being society for all.

<sup>2</sup> Social, Economic and Governance Aspects of Sustainable Development. Policy Review Series n°3 DG Research EUR 22093

<sup>3</sup> ibidem

## **Radical democracy and Eco-vision.**

Willy De Backer, editor in chief of Euractiv qualified the book “Plan B” as part of the “*Radical democracy “ trend which starts from a diagnosis which highlights the EU’s “democratic deficit” and wants to “reconnect citizens” to the European Union. “Plan B. Changing the European Governance” starts indeed from an analysis of the new “interdependence” of the world as a result of globalisation and demand a more participatory democracy*

But the Permanent Forum proposals do also belong, in my opinion, to the second trend as defined by Willy De Backer, *a new “Eco-Union” According to this eco-perspective, rising material growth and consumption (our current definition of “prosperity”) have not really led to more happiness and new threats such as globalization, terrorism and “ecological overshoot” are undermining this type of prosperity. One version of this eco-vision has been expressed by new UK Labour star David Miliband in a speech given at Cambridge University on 4 March. Miliband, (currently environment secretary - but named by some as the real heir to Tony Blair) has urged the EU to become the “Environmental Union” and to focus on becoming a low-carbon economy that would have shaken off its dependence on oil. (A reason for the UK Government to consider our proposals positively). Our proposals are linking “radical democracy” and “eco-vision”. redefining Europe’s mission.*

## **Conclusion.**

Europe is in a better position than any other region of the world to succeed in turning the Well-Being Society into a project of economic and technological, social and cultural innovation, security and peace, for four reasons: (i) the European Union is the only entity that has defined the goal of promoting the well-being of its peoples AND working for sustainable development as an objective in its Constitution; (ii) Europe has become aware more quickly than the other continents of the importance of these threats and has introduced still embryonic policies and methods which show the way forward; (iii) Europe has “champions and leaders” in these matters, who are already very well connected at a world level; (iv) better than the other continents, Europe is made up of connections between public authorities, businesses, and trade unions/civil society; and it is the partnership between public and private sectors and civil society which will be a source of innovation and of new forms of “competitiveness”. But let’s make no mistake! To be the first in managing to overcome the so-called “evolutionary wall”, we need to change our perceptions and methods in great depth and find new ways of cooperating to fully bring into play the “power of synergies” from partnerships that pool knowledge, skills and resources within a networking society. This is why we are proposing a *Declaration of Interdependence* and a *Third Convention* to build on the new momentum .

For the European Union to be efficient in a world in network, in the globalize world of Internet, it must mobilise indeed all its sharp forces. Participatory democracy is generating more economic well-being for all and more innovation because it produces greater collective knowledge. The “*Social, Cultural and Environmental Compact*” will therefore result in a broader breath to implement the European strategies on sustainable development and innovation. It is a question of marshalling the EU on new stakes and transforming its economy towards an efficient and “low carbon” economy. We must succeed as much as the United States and the United Kingdom did when, at the beginning of the Second World War, they transformed their economy to answer the brutal new challenge they have had to face. But today, the new challenges require the participation of all to build a low carbon economy producing well-being for all. This is what should be on the agenda of the European Council of June 2007 and must be endorsed by all European citizens through Pan-European consultations by June 2009 and 2011.