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Environment**

**Exit Through The Top of Multiple Crises and the European SDG's Strategy**  
By Raymond Van Ermen, Advisor to the President. 27 July 2016.

EPE is involved in a series of pilots to test a '*new generation of partnerships*' related to private capital financing the SDG's, post COP21 new business models and reporting, partnership between non state actors and state actors to implement on one hand the SDG's and on the other hand the COP 21 agreement in the Mediterranean . The Karl Falkenberg report on the EU SDG's strategy has been released<sup>1</sup>. The Co-Chair of the UN Committee having drafted the SDG's said at a EWP meeting that after the 'green economy revolution' and the 'digital revolution', the SDG's is the time of the 'governance revolution'.

This report is addressing the highly needed '*EU governance revolution*' and a set of proposals to 'exit throught the top' in the midst of multiple crises. It explores new initiatives in 2016 and 2017, in particular in view of a workshop to come, funded by the French Ministry of Environment, on "*Synergies between Non-State Actors Platforms and the European Union and its Member States Officials in charge of the implementation of the SDG's. Methods and Instruments to strenghten the European contribution to a 'virtuous circle' of commitments and partnerships to 'transform our world' in line with SDG 17.16 and 17.17* »

Europeans wether British, or belonging to Central and Eastern, Northern, Southern or Western Countries face a series of threats of 'disintegration' of their values, their solidarity, the way we are living together. They are not the only ones facing this kind of challenge, the parallel with the United States is easy to do. The deep crisis in the UK (where the referendum debate has focused on immigration) is not different from the one who shakes the United States or the European continent. And the reasons of the economic dimension of the crisis are the same: the price of a globalized economy that certainly has lifted millions of people out of poverty in Asia, but was put in the West, in the service of the 1% since the beginning of a movement initiated in the 70's by Reagan and Thatcher. The Roosevelt Institute in New York has launched an initiative "*Rewriting the Rules of the American Economy*". The report billed itself as a comprehensive agenda to ameliorate inequality. First, it said, inequality is a choice, not an inevitable byproduct of technology, globalization and the uneven distribution of personal virtue. Second, it held that the longstanding notion of an economic trade-off between growth and equality is a fiction. And now please read the new British Prime Minister, Ms May :

<sup>1 1</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/epsc/publications/notes/sn18\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/epsc/publications/notes/sn18_en.htm)

*Under my leadership, the Conservative Party will put itself –completely, absolutely, unequivocally –at the service of ordinary, working people. It is why we will make Britain a country that works for everyone. An economy that works for everyone, so we don't just maintain economic confidence and steer the country through challenging times –but we make sure that everyone can share in the country's wealth. A society that works for everyone, so we can bring people back together –rich and poor, north and south, urban and rural, young and old, male and female, black and white, sick and healthy, public sector, private sector, those with skills and those without. A democracy that works for everyone, so we can restore trust and confidence in our most important institutions –and the political process itself.(...) if we are going to make sure our economy truly works for everyone (...) We need to put people back in control of their lives. We need to give more people more opportunity. And we need to get tough on irresponsible behaviour in big business.*

*July 11, 2016 Speech by Theresa May, launching her national campaign to become Leader of the Conservative Party and Prime Minister of the United Kingdom*

From the British standpoint, negotiations related to the Brexit will apparently have one main objective: to keep access to the single market. But this is '*the main - but inefficient – tool of competitiveness and growth while it is a common model of sustainable development that is to be developed*' wrote Pierre Defraigne who was Commissioner Pascal Lamy's chief of cabinet. The EU should not focus on the subject seen through the wrong end of the UK telescope, but indicate that it intends to review the operation of the single market in the light of two complementary objectives to the "*4 freedoms of movement*": stay in '*planetary boundaries*' and ensure that '*no one is left behind*'. And in this context, the EU should announce its initiative '*Rewriting the EU Rules*' ( see below ).

The Brexit, various forms of disintegrations in the Near and Middle East, the threats to Europe's security related to terrorism and potential evolutions in both the United States and in Russia are reasons why the European Union must respond to multiple crises other than to know how the process of 'divorce' from Great Britain will be concluded. : *the crisis of European economic governance and the lack of control of the global financial capitalism ; the crisis of natural resources and the urgency of the energy transition ; the crisis of protection and border management, which highlights the lack of a common migration policy; and lastly, threats to internal security, as the global terrorist threat, against which national resources are structurally inadequate.* As Penelope Debreu emphasizes, "*against three of the priorities we have mentioned - climate transition, border management and internal security, we will have to take note of the fact that the Eastern states do not have the same desire ( on migration ) or the same means ( for energy transition ) to track Western on the way to further integration. On the other hand, it is not sure that Western have sufficient confidence in their Eastern neighbors to share with them an additional responsibility, particularly in the management of borders and internal security*". We must also add another dimension : « *The biggest failure in the past 30 years of European integration is related to the enlargement policy of the ex-Soviet countries. This policy, essentially driven by the greed of Western European companies (and beyond), was carried on at the cost of the continent's political integration as a whole, but particularly of that of the Eastern populations* »

*underlines GEAB*<sup>2</sup>. We should listen much more to the peoples of Eastern Countries member of *Visegrád 4*.

Moreover, the temptation of 'a withdrawal' on a 'hard core' of States - which would be according to some the euro area - is a bad counselor as shown by analysis and comparison of the disintegration of the USSR on the one hand and Yugoslavia on the other. In both cases, an approach to fallback has led to the disintegration.

Finally, we have no time to waste. We must get out of this multiple crisis through the top and fastly! Transforming an extremely dangerous time shaped by hatred that is expressed in many ways in a new civilization, that is the challenge.

The roadmap is clear. We must start with what makes a unanimous consensus of all States: Agenda 2030 *Transforming Our World*, adopted by the United Nations in 2015 and which has been defined as "*an agenda of the people, by the people and for the people*". It is significant that the theme that focuses the attention is '*Ensure no one is left behind*.' "

As written by Ms. Genevieve Pons, who was the environment advisor of Jacques Delors as President of the Commission « *Leaders must now set to work on a new, positive vision of Europe, in order to regain trust and re-engage with European citizens of all ages, social backgrounds and nations. We need to ensure that Europe moves to embrace transformational change, guided by the global 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris climate agreement. These inspirational commitments, in which **people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnerships** play centre stage, now have to result in a decisive shift in political emphasis and direction* »<sup>3</sup>.

Let's propose to the British, the Euro-skeptics governments of the EU, our neighbors from Russia to Morocco, this new joint project in service of which all EU policies, including the single market, would be realigned: to succeed together the implementation of 17 sustainable development goals by 2030 having in mind that '*the idea of SDG's universality encompasses both shared humanity, by providing benefits for all, and shared destiny, by highlighting the interconnections between all countries and people*'<sup>4</sup>.

Such proposal coming from the EU, would be for the EU the effective implementation of Article 3.3 of the Treaty<sup>5</sup> - for which environmental NGOs under the leadership of the EEB

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<sup>2</sup> GEAB teaser: Balkanization and returning empires in Central and Eastern Europe: the drama of the failure of European integration. It would be interesting to assess this analysis with EPE's partner the REC.

<sup>3</sup> Genevieve Pons, WWF-European Policy Office

<sup>4</sup> read more: <http://sd.iisd.org/news/wri-oecd-event-highlights-policy-coherence-for-2030-agenda/>

<sup>5</sup> **Sustainability is a very European brand**, enshrined in Article 3.3 of the Treaty on European Union: it builds on "*balanced economic growth and price stability, a highly competitive social market economy, aiming at full employment and social progress, and a high level of protection and improvement of the quality of the environment*". Implementation requires equal attention to all three aspects: they must be addressed together. Falkenberg.

had successfully campaigned vis-à-vis the Irish presidency of the European Council<sup>6</sup> – and would be in accordance with the Charter of Fundamental Rights - to which the European Movement, under the leadership of Virgilio Dastoli, and the EEB have worked, both when I was the EEB Secretary General. EPE should be proud to contribute to ‘**leadership by partnership**’ since many years and now to be part of those who will build a coalition of state and non state actors to encourage a ‘EU Governance Revolution’ with the 17 SDG’s as the new roadmap and inclusive and sustainable development as the new European brand<sup>7</sup> .

Indeed as underlined by Mr. Karl Falkenberg<sup>8</sup> « **Implementation of the SDGs requires new governance approaches at all levels, including at EU level. In line with Mr. Jean Monnet, institutional decisions will be necessary to secure the longer term validity of the Sustainability Agenda**”. But in this regard, the proposals of the Advisor to President Juncker, if they are likely to fit into the microcosm of the Commission, go completely off topic and missed to address the badly needed ‘EU governance revolution’ . The time has come for innovation to implement *SDG 17.16 and 17.17*. A few observations to build the case:

- The implementation of SDG’s calls for other economic and social policy as that in force in Western countries . The agenda of the IMF, as the speech of the British prime minister herself, highlight this.
- Four of nine planetary boundaries have now been crossed as a result of human activity. The four are: climate change, loss of biosphere integrity, land-system change, altered biogeochemical cycles (phosphorus and nitrogen). Two of these, climate change and biosphere integrity, are what the scientists call "core boundaries". Significantly altering either of these "core boundaries" would "drive the Earth System into a new state"<sup>9</sup>.
- The current process of EU decision is inadequate to secure an integrated set of decisions at the speed required to be the leverage of an energy and ecological transition and a prosperous and inclusive development. Example: the CO2 tax - now called their vows by the business - was on the Commission's table ... in 1992 and failed at the time because of the opposition of ... the same business.
- COP 21 has introduced a new dynamic in international negotiations with new forms of partnerships between non state actors and state actors that should lead

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<sup>6</sup> For the historical record, I wish here to pay tribute to Geraldine Walsh, EEB Board Member at that time and now EPE Board Member, who arranged a meeting in Dublin for Ralph Hallo and myself to present successfully our proposals related to article 3.3 of the Treaty to the chair of the Council committee in charge of re-drafting the Treaty .

<sup>7</sup> **Yes, sustainability can well be a European brand**, rallying Europeans from all quarters around a societal choice that would combat poverty, end hunger, improve nutrition, promote sustainable agriculture, ensure healthy lives and equitable quality-education for all, achieve gender equality, provide access to clean water and renewable energy, secure inclusive economic growth and decent work for all, provide resilient infrastructures, reduce inequalities, build liveable cities, preserve oceans, terrestrial ecosystems and biodiversity within a peaceful, democratic and rule of law based society: **effectively implementing the Sustainable Development Goals’ agenda**. Falkenberg

<sup>8</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/epsc/publications/notes/sn18\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/epsc/publications/notes/sn18_en.htm)

<sup>9</sup> according to an international team of 18 researchers in the journal *Science* (16 January 2015)

to a transformation of many practices of the Commission building on the positive experience of the European Innovation Partnerships.

- The business under the blows of ' tipping points' for resources and ' digital revolution ' that transform modes of consumption , production, traceability, assessment, reporting , launched new coalitions 'We Means Business ' ' CDP ' , changing business models , making commitments (NAZCA platform) , knowing they will be traced and held ' accountable ' and intend to assume a new leadership.
- The approach of the EU private financial resources mobilization to ensure the implementation of the SDOG's remains fragmented and inadequate.
- We must seize the opportunities created by a worrying financial context concerning the finance itself : : long-term interest rates hit record lowest in the 227 year history of the USA, with ten-year bonds offering negative interest rates in Germany, Denmark, the Netherlands, a development without precedent in hundred years of financial history.
- The interdependencies with neighboring countries tells that to address the implementation of SDG's in the EU alone is doomed to failure .

In this context , it appears necessary that , with the participation in various forms of EPE and its members in 2016-2017 :

- Champions of the New World contributing already in the implementation of SDG's meet in 2017 in a form of 'States General' in Florence before the 60th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome.
- In Palermo , in June 2017, MEDCOP Climate for a partnership of all stakeholders of the Mediterranean - local authorities, associations, companies, researchers and citizens - with the states serve as a pilot bottom-up initiative of the Three Seas Alliance . A Convention of the Regions ( similar to the Covenant of Mayors ) would be established with the n Assembly of Europea Regions.
- As part of the preparation of the G7 and G20 in 2017, the Europeans contribute to the establishment of a value based investors and SDG 's platform by the Secretary General of the United Nations. National roundtables 'value based investors and SDG 's would be tested'. A pilot would focus on the FAO mandate and food security. A pilot roundtable in Africa on this issue would be facilitated with the support of Morocco and the Holy See.
- Work with CDP, *We Mean Business*, *ADEME* and several others on the development of new business models and monitoring system
- Following at MEDCOP Tanger, the fascinating exchanges with the Youth representatives, work with young people on a strategy '*Mobilise the power of the Youth in the digital age*'
- Europeans , under the leadership of Sweden and Green Cross, should launch in 2017, and in view of the UN Conference on SDG14, a OCEANS initiative<sup>10</sup> .

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<sup>10</sup> especially when our British friends , under the leadership of their guru and Australian leader Mr Murdoch, are likely to become the periphery of a '5 Eyes' English speaking and white 'elite'

- The European Council should adopt a statement in 2016 calling a 2017 European Convention with a threefold mission :
  - (i) **Rewriting the Rules of the European Economy**<sup>11</sup>
  - (ii) **Accelerate the Energy and Ecological transition** by adopting a package of Decisions to be approved by the European Council and the European Parliament to , towards an inclusive development model and the implementation of the SDG's
  - (iii) **Empower to ensure no-one is left behind** . Action plan inside et outside the EU to build local voices for action and accountability in their respective countries

The European Council and neighboring countries leaders like Norway, Switzerland, Russia, Iran , Morocco should convene a diplomatic conference for 2018 to set up an *Alliance of 3 Seas*, involving the EU and its neighbors from the Northern to the South - including the United States , ASEM , Africa , Latin America , the Holy See as ' associated partners ' - with the implementation of the 17 SDG's as mandaten in line with the conclusions of the report '*Neighbourhoods is a new driver for European growth* ' which underlines the interdependence and synergy between the EU and its neighbors from Arctic to the Mediterranean.

The 3 Seas Alliance would have five ' baskets ' of operations contributing to the implementation of the objectives of Sustainable Development:

1. Peace , human security and inclusion
2. Energy and environment
3. Sustainable and inclusive economic growth
4. Youth
5. Migration and Mobility

Until the State actors want to decide on the creation of the *3 Seas Alliance*, a network for participatory multilateralism of the 3 Seas Alliance made up of state and non -state actors could take bottom up initiatives. It's a little - on the scale of the Mediterranean - what MEDCOP Climate initiated in Tangier in 2016 and will continue in Palermo in 2017 and in Sousse.

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countries including the USA, Canada, New Zealand and Australia, which will have its gravity center in the Pacific !

<sup>11</sup> Inspired by "*Rewriting the Rules of the American Economy*," Felicia Wong, president and C.E.O. of the Roosevelt Institute.

In her book '*This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. the Climate*'<sup>12</sup> the Canadian journalist Naomi Klein calls for a tipping of values, business model and governance comparable to the civilizational change that the abolition of slavery has been.

Faced with the perils of an 'axis' Trump - Johnson - Putin - Orban – Kaczyński - Erdogan and others, it is time to accelerate the transition to a new 'civilization' and to '*transform Europe*'.

This 'new European and global dream' based on a vision based on interdependence, and empathy<sup>13</sup> assumes and builds on new forms of sharing: sharing knowledge, sharing of natural resources, sharing resources financial as well as new forms of use. All these forms of sharing are based on a new vision of the '*common good*' and - as in the case of the abolition of slavery, 'due to a metamorphosis of the moral sense'<sup>14</sup>.

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<sup>12</sup> [\*This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. the Climate\*](#), Naomi Klein.

<sup>13</sup> [\*The Empathic Civilization\*](#), Jeremy Rifkin

<sup>14</sup> [\*This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. the Climate\*](#), Naomi Klein.