



Together, let's rekindle the European Flame!

The most optimistic among us cannot deny that the European Union is often a synonym for “crises”. What has happened to the original European concept? What positive vision of the Union can we entertain in our current environment, spiked with such a variety of contentious images, especially when national governments tend to shift their own responsibilities onto the shoulders of European Institutions?

The European Union does suffer from deficiencies: it is deemed too technocratic; nationalist movements are growing in many places; E.U. actions are not always in accordance with E.U. values; its role in the world is diminishing; its voice is less audible in the global concert of Nations; it lacks ambition and to quote a poet, it could be that with 28 countries “its giant wings prevent him from walking”. However, we must not erase by a single flick of the fingers, its social advances and the scientific, technological and economic successes that it has initiated and supported.

Has Europe simply forgotten that it has, first and foremost, a historic responsibility: isn't Europe the cradle of democracy, of the Rule of Law and of the market economy – to quote but a few of the values and organisations shared in the most advanced countries in the world? Shouldn't Europe take on the responsibility of showing the way to a better and brighter world? Has it forgotten the importance of enhancing the value of its successes instead of leaving that open to its detractors?

What should be done now? European Associations of Education met in Strasbourg on February 4th, 2017, to share their reflections on these formidable and indispensable issues: rekindling the European flame and renovating the European Project. Several areas of actions were identified:

- The E.U. needs a reliable steering policy to guide Europe and the world towards a better future.
- We need a series of strong, symbolic measures to help the European Citizens to realize that they are the lucky inhabitants of the E.U. and that they have a responsibility to ensure that this common good, this Union, can prosper and flourish.
- We need particularly effective policies to reinforce European cohesion, to build a united European society and to sustain a European economy, worthy of its first place in the world.
- In the field of education, we need a series of specific measures to increase European awareness and European entrepreneurship among our youngsters.

A reliable rudder to guide Europe and the world towards a better future

To boost the European project, to bring the Citizens closer to E.U. Institutions, to increase democratic practices, we advise the following reforms:

- Creating a United Federation around the goal of a Common Good, based on a European constitution and uniting the Member States willing to reinforce European integration.
- Electing a European President with real powers, an effective governing body and with a sufficient budget to support a dynamic and enterprising European economy.
- Enacting a more effective democracy at all levels, in the strict respect of the subsidiarity principle, to ensure proximity to its citizens.
- Ensuring clear and straightforward communication between E.U. and national institutions, to put

an end to double language.

Strong, symbolic measures to help the European Citizens to realize that they are the lucky inhabitants of the E.U. and that they have a responsibility to ensure that this common good, the Union, can prosper and flourish

We have been European Citizens since 1992, and, as such, we are granted Human Rights that many peoples in the world would also like to enjoy: Dignity, Liberties, Equality, Solidarity, Citizens' Rights, Justice. Such are the values secured by the *Charter of the Fundamental Rights of the European Union*. It is the duty of every European citizen to make sure that these values are better known, deeply felt and enacted. These values must be implemented in all schools and universities; inscribed on the European flag, on E.U. passports and Euro banknotes.

We must also show how each European citizen can be proud to be European, proud of the European contributions in all domains (sciences, the arts, literatures, histories, etc.), proud of this common good which is the European Union and fully aware of its fragility and that it is his responsibility to protect it and to make it flourish. The feeling of belonging to the E.U. must be enhanced wherever possible. Therefore, we suggest:

- Showing portraits of famous people throughout European history on Euro banknotes, instead of bridges.
- Producing European stamps with famous Europeans and famous events, for trans-E.U. postage.
- Teaching school children to draw the map of the E.U. so that they can visualize the importance of our common territory.
- Establishing a European tax, however minimal, so that every citizen will understand that the E.U. and its policies can be enforced thanks to his contribution, which is a component of the feeling of belonging to this common good.
- Editing a European Identity Card to replace national ones.
- Informing about the beneficial effects and successes of European projects, not only in terms of free movements of people, goods, services and capital, between all E.U. countries, but also in terms of co-operation funds in favour of developing regions and, also, in terms of mobility grants for millions of young people who have been able to study or to train in other E.U. countries.
- Taking advantage of major sport events to promote better knowledge of other E.U. countries.
- Ensuring a European perspective in all subjects across school curricula.

Those are actions which will help European Citizens to realize that they live in a common territory, that the E.U. is their common good, that they, themselves, can contribute to its development, that they enjoy its benefits day after day and that it will make a better and brighter future for their children.

Effective policies to reinforce European cohesion, to build a united European society and to sustain a European economy, worthy of its first place in the world.

With this goal in view, it is necessary to give priority to the following policies:

- Strengthening European cooperation in defence, security, justice and international relations, to speak in one voice on the global stage and to be in a better position to cope with the current threats.
- Building together an effective policy for immigration and asylum, to ensure security along our common borders and to guarantee better social integration of migrants and refugees on our territory.
- Increasing significantly the amount of structural funds during the next term of the E.U.

Parliament.

- Developing an economic strategy equally balanced between competitiveness and employment, which could guarantee the protection of the most exposed to globalisation.
- Accelerating the processes leading to fiscal and social convergence.
- Integrating energetic and environmental policies in the exclusive competences of the E.U.

In the field of education, we need a series of specific measures to increase European awareness and European entrepreneurship among our youngsters

To implement an educational policy, which will develop European awareness and foster the spirit of European Citizenship, we suggest:

- Initiating the « Educational Logbook of the European Citizen” as part of the school report book. Validated at every stage of the school-life in compulsory and higher education (vocational and general), it would reflect the youngster’s European literacy and experience.
- Integrating in all Initial Teacher Training (ITT) courses a mobility period in another E.U. Member State. Based on partnership agreements between Teacher Training Institutions/Universities, these study periods will greatly develop the professional, social, linguistic and cultural competences of trainee-teachers of all subjects.
- Including a European perspective in all subjects of the curriculum throughout the E.U. to make students aware of their shared knowledge. Without such insight in the European scientific, cultural, technological and philosophical heritage, it is difficult for young people to understand their common roots and the future that they must build together. It has become an urgent priority.
- Generalizing bilingual teaching and the sharing of a common culture, more especially in larger Euro-regions.
- Developing among young Europeans of all Member States the practice of interactive tasks and cooperative research to boost initiative, creativity and innovation.

It is by working along those lines that the European Union will recover its bright colours; that the citizens of all its Member States will be proud of belonging to the E.U. and will act to strengthen it even more and that Europe, deeply rooted in its values, will pave the way to a safer and better world.
