



EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION OF FORMER MEMBERS
OF PARLIAMENT OF THE MEMBER STATES OF THE
COUNCIL OF EUROPE

STRASBOURG COLLOQUY
12 October 2018

THE FUTURE OF EUROPE.

STRASBOURG DECLARATION

Adopted by the delegates() representing the members of the
European Association of Former Members of Parliament of the
Member States of the Council of Europe*

70 years after the Hague Conference where all began

The European Association of former Parliamentarians of the Member Countries of the Council of Europe

- paying tribute the Hague Conference of Europe which laid 70 years ago the corner stone for a united and integrated Europe and commemorating the foundation of the Council of Europe in 1949, the European Coal and Steel Community in 1951, the European Economic Community in 1957, the first direct election of the European Parliament in 1979 and the inauguration of the European Union in 1992;
- considering the “European charter of former parliamentarians” adopted by the Association in Strasbourg 2011 and the relevant Association’s declarations, in particular Strasbourg (2000) on “The Strengthening of the parliamentary dimension of the European institutions”, Rome (2002) on “Shared European values underpinning European construction”, Berlin (2004) on “Political Integration in the Face of the International Challenges”, Brussels (2014) on “The Challenges of Democracy in the Age of Globalisation” and Lyon (2016) on “Challenges of Migration” as well as taking into account the results of the Association’s questionnaire on the Future of Europe (2017);
 - a. whereas there are still unsolved conflicts, wars and violations of the Helsinki Final Act in member countries of the Council of Europe;
 - b. whereas the economy of Europe is still suffering from the economic and financial crisis of 2008 as well as recently from sanctions;
 - c. whereas the monetary crisis in certain countries of the Euro zone is not over;
 - d. whereas Europe has to fight against the return of protectionism and, in particular, tackle an adverse position of the US administration towards EU and free trade;
 - e. whereas the ecological crisis and climate change are increasing;
 - f. whereas Europe’s role in global economy diminishes;
 - g. whereas the UK has decided to leave the European Union and its common market;
 - h. whereas the current policies pursued by the EU member states on the migration and refugee issue demonstrates a lack of solidarity within Europe and the inability of finding and implementing common solutions;
 - i. whereas terrorism has increased in Europe;
 - j. whereas member states of the Council of Europe and of the European Union show lack of respect for the common European values as laid down in the Statute of the Council of Europe, the European Convention on Human Rights and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, in particular for the independence of the judiciary, the freedom of association and the freedom of press ;

- k. whereas the Council of Europe as well as the European Union are confronted with constitutional changes in a number of countries ;
 - l. whereas the weakness of national and European politics to cope with the challenges of the so-called 'poly-crisis' has led to increased dissatisfaction among a growing part of the population and to the rise of populist parties and nationalist movements;
 - m. whereas the potential of the Council of Europe as a Pan-European political platform for EU and non EU members is not sufficiently exploited;
 - n. whereas the present European Union cannot today fulfil all expectations of all European citizens for democracy, prosperity, stability and security as well as life-long education and training opportunities;
 - o. whereas these problems, coupled with a lack of a common vision on the part of the national states as regards the future of our continent, has given rise to unprecedented levels of 'Euroscepticism';
1. considers that the time of crisis management by means of ad hoc and incremental decisions should be passed, as it only leads to measures that are often too little, too late;
 2. is convinced that a profound reflection is required on how to achieve greater unity between the countries of Europe for the purpose of safeguarding and realising the ideals and principles which are their common heritage and to facilitate their economic and social progress;
 3. recognizes that greater unity between the European countries was achieved by the Council of Europe and the European Union and notes that closer cooperation of these institutions would enable more achievements and believes that the role of the Council of Europe ensuring the participation of all European countries in the project of peace and common values that should be enhanced;
 4. emphasises the principle of "Unity in Diversity" where the European countries keep their identity and tradition and cooperate for their common benefit;
 5. demands that the competences of the European Union should be strengthened and streamlined in areas where joint actions and policy are needed, such as foreign and defence policy, budgetary and financial matters including the governance of the Eurozone and external trade while more areas should be identified that can be left to the member states and their parliaments following the principle of subsidiarity;
 6. suggests that the EU enters into a special relationship with the Council of Europe and participates in accordance with the provisions of Art. 6.2 of the Treaty of the European Union to fundamental conventions such as European Convention on Human Rights, but also to the European Social Charter and the European Cultural Convention. Convinced that through the Council of Europe all European countries can be included in policies such as European Neighbourhood, migration and combating anti-democratic attitudes;

7. encourages the Council of Europe to strengthen the task as „watchdog” and guardian for democracy, rule of law and human rights especially in those member states where even the independence of the judiciary is in grave danger;
- 7A. calls upon the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe to strengthen the critical eye on the socio-economic and political activities of the Organisation for Economic Development (OECD) and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD);
8. appeals to the Council of Europe, the European Union and the member states to achieve gender equality and to promote the empowerment of women and girls;
9. urges Pan-European efforts to fight youth unemployment, and to better prepare the society for an ageing population which affects, amongst others, healthcare, pension schemes, housing and transportation, respecting the principle of subsidiarity;
- 9A. urges Pan-European effort to take digitalization of the European economy forward and to build a cyber-security strategy to protect sensitive industrial data and infrastructure;
10. proposes that the European Union, and the Council of Europe and their member states should be more active in defending and fulfilling democratic values, dealing with migration issues including more and improved development assistance in particular in the countries of origin with specific focus on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda with its 17 sustainable development goals and the Paris climate agreement;
11. responds to the White Book of the European Commission in supporting a combination of scenarios no 4 and 5, doing more together where common action is needed and respecting the principle of subsidiarity;
12. recommends more presence and visibility of the leading personalities of the Council of Europe and the European Union in the member countries;
13. recommends that the President of the European Commission should be elected by the European Parliament;
14. considers regarding future enlargement of the European Union that further development should have priority, strengthening the Union before enlarging;
15. appeals to the decision makers of the European Union and of the member states, encouraging dialogue between national and European parliamentarians, to study and follow the recommendations laid down in the resolutions adopted by the European Parliament on February 16, 2017 on the evolutions of and adjustments to the current institutional set-up and the functioning of the European Union building on the potential of the Lisbon Treaty;
16. calls for a coherent European policy on asylum, refugees and migration based on our common values of humanity as well as on the principle of solidarity and enlightened self-interest;
17. recommends the consideration of a security architecture for Europe including all member states of the Council of Europe and calls for joint actions to fight terrorism; there is an urgent need of an efficient control of the external borders;

18. urges all parties concerned to update and fully implement the Minsk Agreement to solve the crisis in Eastern Ukraine;
19. hopes for future relations between the European Union and the UK as good and reliable partners including fair conditions for both EU and UK citizens living and working on the “other” territory (including the “Gibraltar case”) and assuring the continuation of the peace accord of the “Good Friday Agreement” of 10 April 1998;
20. remembers that the European project is foremost a project of peace and all European countries have a responsibility for this project, i.e. sustainable peace, therefore:
 - European states should not deliver weapons to crises zones and participate in military actions only within a mandate of the United Nations;
 - European states should always fully respect the sovereignty of other states;
 - European states should avoid, even in times of serious tensions, any Cold War rhetoric and warmongering;
 - should be prepared to solve conflicts by dialogue and compromise;
21. emphasises the need of self-assertion of Europe, united in the Council of Europe as well as in the European Union, facing new challenges such as the emergence of powers like China or a new kind of isolationism in the US;
22. is convinced that mutual understanding, cooperation and solidarity for the common good and the wellbeing of all Europeans will prevail over still existing disagreements, tensions and conflicts.

**The future of Europe: never again war – never again dictatorship,
living together in peace and democracy!**

* The declaration has been adopted by the majority of the votes.