

EUROPE AND ENLARGEMENT

*Notes made by J.-P. Brasseur
on Raymond Van Ermen's contribution
to the country meeting of the Forum, 9/9/06*

The European Council will meet in December 2006 to analyse the European Union's "**absorption capacity**".

Owing to the growing list of unresolved questions and the difficulties of conducting business with 25 members, both of which are tending to take us far away from a Europe "fount of progress", the analysis will take place in a **spirit of disquiet**.

There are three urgent points on the agenda :

A. The enlargement of the European Union.

Bulgaria and Rumania will become members in January 2007 and Turkey "hopes" to join at a later date.

The British speak of the Union as a "**soft empire**", a light in the world and attracting neighbours like a magnet.

An empire presupposes vassals ... but such a way of working is **no part of the European project**, which presupposes "community".

B. Energy.

Two urgent questions are on the table :

1. Europe's access to **gas and oil resources**. Russia and the Middle East are Europe's main suppliers. At a time when China and India are becoming huge energy consumers Europe must therefore maintain **good relations with neighbouring countries**.

In parallel, global warming is becoming more evident and research into alternative sources of energy accelerates.

2. Access to **(drinking) water*** constitutes a problem both outside Europe (Third World) and within it owing to the demands that increasing pollution puts on the quality thereof.

** In recent decades 50 armed conflicts have been waged over water resources, 35 of which between Israel and her neighbours.*

C. The Middle East issue.

The military and commercial forces of the empire of the USA act **beyond its frontiers** and this poses the problem of the **European Union's own frontiers**.

Some maintain that the absorption capacity of the Union has already **been exceeded**.

At the present time the integration of new countries into the Union is both **too fast** (problem of digestion) and, in view of the urgent problems to be resolved, **too slow**.

Strategically, the spirit of disquiet must be calmed, while priorities are dealt with.

Up to now the European Union has been working in low gear and has not used some tried means which are at its disposal.

Two processes in particular have proved their effectiveness in the past : the Helsinki process and the ECSC (European Coal and Steel Community) process.

a. The Helsinki process.

This process developed the agreements signed by the USA, the EU and the Soviet Union. These included respect for human rights, which so weakened the Soviet regime that the Berlin wall fell in 1989.

b. The ECSC process.

This consisted in bringing under common regulation two levers of war, coal and steel. It was an effective way of nipping armed conflict in the bud and led to the creation of the European space marked by peace and reconciliation.

These two processes without any doubt produced positive results.

Today, following the ECSC example, water and energy should be brought under common regulation, for they are **both causes of war**.

In the spirit of these two processes (Helsinki and ECSC), it is now vital that, within the framework of a new collaboration, members and neighbours of Europe should put under common regulation, matters pertaining to four areas. These are :

1. First area : **water and energy**. Partnership for peace and development.

2. Second area : **Integrated Economic Region (IER)**.

A free trade zone in the internal European market.

For the business world, and particularly for British business, enlargement up to now has meant widening geographical boundaries.

This is actually happening. A report published by the "Round Table of Industrialists"* shows that **political frontiers and the single market zone are in reality already uncoupled**. Iceland, Norway and Switzerland are all three in the single market without being members of the European Union.

This new approach suggests that a **commercial enlargement** within the context of globalisation is of interest.

**In its time this Round Table was greatly influential in the creation of the Union and the Euro zone.*

3. Third area : **the law of persons**.

Up to the present, relations with the Mediterranean countries have stumbled over the status of women.

4. Fourth area : relations and collaboration between and with **the young**.

In this area, the Erasmus Plan has already borne fruit and the project of a civil (as opposed to military) service is envisaged.

Developing these four areas in the way Helsinki and the ECSC developed would lead to healthier relations between Europe and her neighbours.

Today, the European Union still behaves like an empire which entertains **bilateral relations** with its neighbours, regarding them rather like **vassals** and demanding them to bow to the Union and its regulations.

What one can criticise in the ongoing enlargement of the Union is its **lack of depth** in its relations with its neighbours and future candidates for membership (Bulgaria, Rumania, Turkey). To put this

right we propose a “**Three Seas Alliance**” (the Black Sea, the Caspian Sea and the Mediterranean Sea).

Through a synergy of alliances, rather like a succession of interlocking Olympic rings, neighbours like Morocco and Turkey, for example, would not become members of the political European Union but would be “**in (voluntary) alliance**” with the Union, adopting with the Union the common management of the four areas referred to. Similarly, if Israel, the Lebanon and Palestine were to join the “**Three Seas Alliance**” their respective frontiers would become the frontiers of the Alliance protected *de facto* by an armed force and the force of law (tribunals) to exclude conflicts.

Joining the European Union means belonging to a political territory having its own system of government. **Joining the Three Seas Alliance** means managing for the common good the four areas relating to water and energy, the free trade zone, the law of persons, and the cultural and intellectual upbringing of the young.

There are already three special zones in the European Union : the Euro zone (currency), the Schengen zone (frontier formalities) and the Eurocorps zone (military force). A **fiscal zone** could be envisaged.

In the Three Seas Alliance, the European Union (with its special zones) would be a member and in this framework derive advantage from the synergy between the four areas, for example regarding energy, and in this way manage its relations with neighbouring countries.

Europe's interest is to have good relations with her neighbours such as Russia and Middle East countries, while the neighbours profit from the values of peace and reconciliation embodied in the European Union.

To choose the Three Seas Alliance would put an end to the geographical expansion of the European Union, allowing it to work with "the neighbours" **on the basis of common denominators** (the 4 interlocking areas) while having due regard to the social and cultural particularities of each one.

Conclusion : in the framework of globalisation to distinguish between the political and the commercial is essential.

Such a distinction makes it possible to regulate the free trade zones (Olympic rings) for the common good, bringing "the Global and the Local" together.

The construction of the European institutions, born after the Second World War, is based on a desire for peace. This process should be allowed to continue today, while **taking account of the commercial expansion that goes beyond politico-geographical boundaries**, yet safeguarding the place that law and stability should have within a system of regulation freely entered into.

With the Three Seas Alliance project and its way of working, European and neighbouring countries have a future they can build together for sustainable human development.

**The Alliance would have its headquarters in Istanbul, with a "High Commission", a "Senate" and a "Council of Ministers", with, in Strasbourg, a "Court of Justice". It would have "mediators" for armed conflict, water and energy management, and the law of persons and associations. It would possess a military force of intervention and pledge protective assistance to its members. The boundaries of the Alliance, and hence of the second area or*

ring (Integrated Economic Region), would bring all or part of the Middle East into the Alliance.