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*In Favour of a Social Europe,
the Developing Countries,
more Humane and
Environment-Friendly Globalisation*

ELECTRONIC VIVANT- EUROPE

N° 17 (April-May 2005)

EDITORIAL

Progress Accelerators for Europe

- are exactly what we are in need of today. The citizens of Europe are capable of going beyond divisive political standpoints given without explanation and without discussion. The Treaty is not an end in itself, simply a stepping-stone. We should want to go further, because the European dream is not over yet.

This 17th issue of the electronic VIVANT-EUROPE newsletter includes a summary of a report that was presented as part of the “Renaissance Europe” programme, which tries to open up new avenues and perspectives for the future.

This is a summary. The unabridged report is available on www.epe.be.

REPORT

*"For me, everything is but a means, Even
obstacles".
Ibn Saoud.*

Accelerators of Progress for Europe



A report presented within the framework of
the "Renaissance Europe" programme

by Raymond Van Ermen

Summary

With the European Constitution and its significant successive enlargements, Europe is yet again in a process of metamorphosis. However, the challenges and risks of the next few months and years are such that Europe has engaged in a race against the clock to persuade its citizens, stabilize the whole project, open up new perspectives and mobilize all its dynamic forces. This is why Europe needs "accelerators of progress".

The metamorphosis of Europe is like a half-full cup. Since the Hague Congress in 1948, Europe has been the product of thousands of "agents of change" playing an active part in the political, economic, environmental, cultural and societal fields and turning 21st century Europe into a unique experience in history. This so-called "transmodern" experience is regarded by some as inaugurating a new phase in the history of mankind. The European Constitution has made human rights and sustainable development into the new cornerstone of the Union. This cornerstone used to be the market, but no more – a fundamental shift of perspective, which acts as major leverage for further progress for the whole of mankind.

But the metamorphosis of Europe is also like a half-empty cup. On the one hand, there have been so much wasted energy and money, so much time lost, so many missed opportunities. We would need a political Europe with ever-greater efficiency, a European Commission and businesses with ever-greater innovatory spirit and a civil society with ever-greater mobilization. On the other hand, if the cup is half empty, it is also because the forces against change are the best organized. The "transmodern" agents present in institutions, businesses and civil society too often lack the ability to exercise collective leadership in a networking Union, to create synergies with a view to a swift implementation of the "transmodern" objectives of the Union, successfully enshrined in its Treaties though their application has been blocked or delayed by their opponents. These very forces will paralyze the process for a "new" European competitiveness and might make the whole Europe project "implode".

The report focuses on "accelerators of progress" in three fields of action on the initiative of three types of players. In previous years we have managed to introduce a number of "accelerators of progress" in the Community machinery, namely the Charter of Fundamental Rights and the sustainable development concept. This report, addressed to "agents of change" and presented within the framework of the "Renaissance Europe" programme, intends to show how the "centre of gravity" of the European agenda has shifted and to identify new "accelerators of progress" that can create trust in the Europe project in this referendum period. The first field of action is shared identity and citizenship. It concerns all that is undertaken in favour of a "European" identity and its next stages through extending the scope of European citizenship. As the Union cannot develop its identity on the basis of a language, a culture, or a religion, the development of European citizenship as an identity factor may be the solution. European identity would be attached to "six new citizenships".

A new field of exercise of citizenship should also accompany the negotiation process for the EU enlargement.

The second field of action is cohesion and competitiveness. The Commission proposes a two-pillared strategy, one on "growth and employment" and the other on "sustainable development". This vision is outdated, as it does not take into consideration the fact that "sustainable development" already leads to new forms of "competitiveness". Competitiveness will imply (i)

social cohesion, (ii) a new approach to both the knowledge-based society and cooperation between public authorities, the market and civil society, (iii) a sustainable development and industrial policy project on the scale of the issues at stake in the world economy (with its new products, technologies, services), (iv) new business models, particularly to meet the needs of billions of poor people, and (v) new forms of synergy between corporate social responsibility (CSR), competitiveness and the diversity of territories. In any case, as regards eco-innovation, the proposals drawn up by the Barroso Commission for an "EU Growth and Employment Strategy" mark a significant step forward which is the fruit of a string of efforts for the past 13 years.

However, this growth and employment strategy will be like a Ferrari with a 2 horsepower engine if the strategy does not define innovatory mechanisms for governance and synergy. The problem of the Lisbon process is said to be a governance issue. This remains true if we make do with the formula: "A plan at the European level, a plan at every Member State level, while the involvement of the social partners" in order to "get mobilized for change".

The third field of action is the next stage in the metamorphosis of the Union, which lies in making a success of its enlargement and its partnerships with and within the Mediterranean Basin. The Euro-Mediterranean region, which is set to become a "free and fair trade area" by 2010 must become a pilot region of the world in terms of implementation of fundamental rights and the human security concept.

In these three fields of action, the EU institutions – such as the Commission and the European Council – as well as Member States and candidate countries, in particular Turkey, civil society and company CEOs need to set up new "accelerators of progress".

Civil society must no longer be the "hidden partner" but the "indispensable ally" in this new phase. The civil society agenda is like a four-leaf clover:

- i. Civil society will have to build "social capital" in Europe, particularly through exchange programmes for all categories of population in Greater Europe, the development of socially-oriented firms and initiatives to enhance the cultural heritage.
- ii. Civil society must give a major place to "the battle for the hearts and minds of Muslims" in Europe and it must work with them and the other philosophical and religious movements to reassert the European "universal" vision, which translates into human rights. Civil society would start with a dialogue with European citizens of Muslim denomination about fundamental rights and their place in the Charter for a Euro-Mediterranean Alliance. We need to cooperate with them to turn Europe into a beacon for the Near-East.
- iii. Civil society must also manage to establish ever closer links between the local, European and universal levels, particularly by initiating a transatlantic dialogue of religions and philosophies and by playing a very active part in the issue on "sustainable development at local level".
- iv. Finally, civil society must work with the European citizen-worker-consumer-investor and its counterparts in the world so that, on the one hand, European public and private social and environmental standards can be used as a basis for a sustainable global industrial policy and, on the other hand, citizens can put into practice the "monetary vote", which is the second most important voting procedure in a globalised world.

European Institutions.

The Commission, as such, has a role as an agent of change that has evolved over time. But its influence has diminished (we now talk of a small OECD) and its running is often associated with the word "nightmare". Conflicts between Directorates General act as a powerful brake on swift progress. The way in which the Commission manages its relationships with civil society and the funds granted to projects must change. Today the Commission must rethink its strategies and practices in order to create a leverage effect and have the greatest possible multiplier impact, for example to meet the millennium objectives or become the "world reference point" as regards respect for human rights. As an agent of change, the Commission should become the driving force behind a *new "spring forward"* on three topics in the years to come: (i) European participatory democracy, (ii) the networking Europe, (iii) the biosphere perspective.

It was proposed in a previous report to set up a *multi-stakeholder task force* attached to the presidency of the Commission and focusing on "partnerships" with civil society and the market. It is this task force, an "accelerator of progress", which should issue a "Second White Paper on Integrated Governance" dealing with relations within the triangle "EU Institutions – Businesses – Civil Society".

The European Council. It will be up to the European Council to create mechanisms to unify "strategies on growth and employment, social agenda, sustainable development, millennium objectives, etc.", which the Commission is wrong to deal with separately. Mechanisms should also be created to produce leadership, dynamism and empowerment, whereas usual mechanisms lead to paralysis. Finally, social cohesion – which acts as "social glue" for competitiveness – should be ensured. Two important occasions and two "accelerators of progress" would be:

- The European Spring Council: a new type of *European Convention on a European Contract for a Global Well-Being Society*, with decentralized phases at Member State level. Today's agendas overlap one another (competitiveness, research, knowledge-based society, social agenda, sustainable development, millennium objectives, etc.), requiring a new work method adapted to this situation.
- At the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership Summit: a *Euro-Mediterranean Alliance for Human Security and Human Rights*, launched at the Barcelona Summit. The "Euro-Mediterranean Alliance for Human Security and Human Rights" would have a Euro-Mediterranean Charter and rely on new institutions (a Court of Justice, a Senate) and new tripartite mechanisms to meet the millennium objectives. Such an institutional process would be our answer to the US initiative for a "Greater Middle East".

EU Member States and Candidate Countries. Schemes for enhanced, tripartite cooperation (public authorities, market, civil society) in the fields that come under the authority of the Member States and constitute an essential lever, for example fiscal powers. The hypothesis of an enhanced cooperation for "sustainable investments" will thus be explored with public authorities and banks from several EU countries.

Turkey. It is proposed that in parallel to negotiations and as soon as these are started in October 2005, a contact committee should convene representatives from the Commission, the Turkish government and the Turkish and "European" civil society. The "peoples" of Turkey and the Union must both be winners when accession referenda are held after the closing of negotiations in Austria and in France.

CEOs in the insurance, banking and mass distribution sectors.

The CEOs of the companies that signed many declarations of intent for eco-efficiency or climate change – and managed to some extent to start on the "technological" change needed in the ranges of products and services – have blocked the political and macro-economic changes necessary for creating a scale effect, a critical mass and transform niche markets into mainstream markets. Since the European businesses with a "sustainable development agenda" have not been willing to exercise collective leadership at a European level up to now – or have not managed to do so – and that representation mechanisms for the social partners act as a brake rather than leverage, we shall have to change methods to support the agents of change at corporate level. The accelerator of progress here will consist in putting CEOs from the insurance, banking and mass distribution sectors in the spotlight. Together with citizens-investors-consumers, they can propel markets into a "new economy".

As a conclusion, we can say that the networking Europe being built is not only a networking Europe of States and Regional and Local Authorities, but also a networking Europe of Peoples and Civil Society and a Europe of the Market. The metamorphosis of Europe will not be the product of political decisions alone. It will result from billions of other interactions among people and within the market. Efficiency cannot be achieved without a three-lever strategy: implementing the *acquis* of the European Constitution without delay, getting citizens-investors-consumers mobilized in order to propel markets forward and establishing action steps at local level.

The full report is available on the Net on: www.epe.be

