



## A VISION FOR THE NEW EUROPE<sup>1</sup>

*A cross border, democratic political space as the institutional lever of a new social model based on dynamism and innovation.*

*We have lost too much time in a debate between two models of Europe – an “ever closer” political integration set against an “ever wider” common market – which are, in fact, both obsolete and unfeasible. The common conceptual problem that both these clashing theories share, is that they assume the nation state is the only available framework to govern complex societies.*

*And the divide is now growing even between those who are calling for institutions to be reformed and who are urging economic reforms whereas it should be clear that both agendas need a trans national political space and a political support able to go through the boundaries of the national interests.*

*We need to go beyond this ideological stalemate and realize how wide the change is that globalisation, technologies and new forms of conflict are imposing.*

*The next possible frontier for the European project is to use the potential for innovation that is Europe’s true distinctive competitive advantage in order to develop a democracy which is able to solve problems and represent citizens on an international scale. We can use Europe as a platform to experiment solutions to a crisis which is well beyond the frontiers of the Union and the case of its institutions. We need to democratise democracy and make it the most powerful weapon of social dynamism and economic growth.*

*In order to develop, communicate and implement such a new vision, inner circles of bureaucracy, lawyers and diplomats are obviously not sufficient any longer. We need a generation of young leaders to recognize the importance of evolving into a real “class” and take responsibility.*

*These are some of the ideas that Vision position paper explores in order to launch a much wider debate on the future of Europe. Electoral incentives for trans national political parties and the creation of trans national electoral constituencies. Soft instruments to consolidate as European the most mobile segments of the population like the possibility of watching the national channels of other member states. The provision of a period abroad within the curricula of students as one of a brand new family of “rights” in order to make the citizens of a knowledge based society more able to cope with an interconnected world. European wide consultations designed in order to create a political space that is not divided along national boundaries. Mechanisms able to empower interest groups (consumers, young workers and elderly) that express higher demand for innovation in the social and economic model and that are not represented by traditional political channels. A much shorter set of rules, instead of “constitutions”, to provide the methodology for different institutions to come together in order realize specific projects in a given time frame.*

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*The objective is to move beyond the constraints of most of mainstream discussions. We need a debate that becomes a proper competition of ideas and people on all of the most important issues: the revision of the treaty and the budget, the mechanisms to spend the money on research, the new enlargements and the definition of Europe. We need much more than a “dialogue” with civil society: we need a fair, transparent, competitive problem solving exercise on the future of Europe. We need a debate that is relevant to the decisions to be taken, able to engage large enough segments of the public opinion and to mobilize a big enough quantity of talent and enthusiasm. A competition among different possible ruling classes differentiated by age, mobility, professional background, attitude towards globalization and vision: this is the oxygen whose absence is taking Europe’s breath away.*

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The two referenda that killed the constitutional treaty at the end of May represent the most dramatic crisis in the history of the European project. In fact, the Council of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> June shows that what makes the crisis even more acute is that nobody seems to be in charge or to have a plan. We are most likely witnessing the end of a cycle and that a new cycle, a quantum leap in vision, direction and speed, needs to be proposed if the Europe dream has to survive to itself.

This position paper argues that many of the recipes that have been aired in the aftermath of the referendum shock are seriously flawed in the diagnosis of the situation: the crisis we are witnessing is mainly due to a more structural problem of democracy, of the relationship between individuals and government in developed (somebody call them “mature”) societies.

Something seems to have gone wrong in the procedures and rules that we have used for decades to transform personal preference into collective choices and a large enough number of individuals into citizens sharing some common expectations and contract.

Such a question of democracy is, in our opinion, an even more fundamental problem than the not less worrying issue of current European economic decline, and it is surprising that the relationship between the former and the latter is being overlooked by a “debate” that sometimes seems even worse than the actual referenda’s results. Dynamic institutional frameworks and participation are, indeed, pre requisites for a dynamic social model.

The crisis is, then, larger than the reasons we can find in a single, even sizeable national case, probably even wider than the failures of the Union. Europe is, in fact, just the most visible case of a decline that is affecting the very pillars upon which western cultures were developed: it is paradoxically for these very same reasons, that Europe is once more the “place” where a modern political space can be experimented.

Such an opportunity was not, in our opinion, fully realized by the elite that has managed the constitutional process. European citizens may not have voted on the basis of the reading of the 450 articles long text; but still they may, in our opinion, have perceived that the “method” by which European project has been pushed forward recently is not adequate any longer to a society where demand has grown so differentiated as to surpass most policy makers’ strategic capabilities.

In the short term, the ratification of the constitutional treaty is to be called, the mistakes should be clearly recognized and a new, stronger, more democratic, even more creative action to overcome the problem of legitimacy and efficiency of the European institutions should become the priority. This would require a departure from a process of incremental growth that bureaucrats and experts are used to, and for a new generation of political leaders to take over.

## **THE SLEEP OF REASON**

The referenda message could not have been stronger.

Last week’s treaty rejections came by two founding countries and more specifically from the nation which has influenced most the Union architecture and, even, the organizational layout of the commission.

If we are ever going to be a two or even a four speed Europe, France and the Netherlands were supposed to always be part of the “quickest” *core* of the Union.



The problem is then not at the periphery but at the very heart of the Union and it is not at all new. Last year elections of the European Parliament were very clear (as Vision and the authors of the European Election quick collection explained in the pamphlet produced last July<sup>2</sup>) but the European elites seem to have completely ignored those results. One year later the crisis has become much larger and now it is not even clear where to start from.

But is the European project really dead? Do we, at least, have to consider seriously the possibility that the expansionary phase of an ever larger, ever deeper Union has come to an end? Do we, by the way, really need a supranational framework like this? Is the cost of the EU infrastructure worthwhile when confronted with the real benefits that it delivers?

And if it is true that “variable geometry” and “multiple speeds” are the shortcut to a solution with whom are we going to form the “core group” that any complex project would need?

The problem is probably even multiplied by the absence of a clear explanation as to what is happening. Different views of the crisis have been proposed and opposite solutions have been suggested. One way forward is then to start dismissing the theories that do not make, in our opinion, any practical sense. We have, in fact, been told, according to the mood of the analysts and the day of the week, that the responsibility of the crisis lies with:

1. **the euro that in the case of the Dutch referendum seems to have been crucial to the outcome** (according to euro barometer, half of the population believes it was not a good idea to introduce the common currency); in fact, the dissatisfaction is widespread and even most of the euro enthusiast Italians and Germans complain that it has produced a steep rise in the cost of living, whereas opposite claims (funnily coming from the very same parties lamenting for the cost of living argument) complain that Euro is, instead too strong and so rigid to have, in fact, eliminated devaluation and fiscal policy as a lever of political economy;
2. **the competitiveness policies that seem to have been the main reason for the French result**; once again opposite arguments have the same target and the very same politicians are both claiming that Europe has gone too fast in liberalisation and that the economy is not competitive enough to resist to the “Chinese syndrome” that everybody seems to be scared of;
3. **the enlargement and immigration policies** that for both French and Dutch are too generous and “open” and, here again, the paradox is that such a call for more closeness is justified, in both countries, with the will to preserve the degree of openness and secularisation of those societies;
4. **the budget** that seems to fall very short of the mission assigned to Europe by the Lisbon strategy according to the Dutch Prime Minister but that seems instead to be way oversized in areas like the CAP that the French President is committed to defend, and finally
5. **the trend towards integration** that for many has to be reversed whereas the same people would also easily agree that, without integration, Europe would become the “Europe of the bankers” and a rather unmanageable institution of twenty five veto-holder national partners.

The debate on the referenda “day after” seems even worse for the European cause than the actual referenda results.

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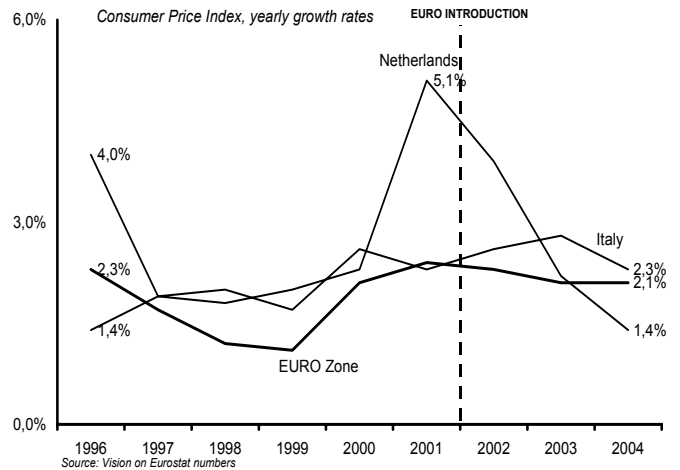
<sup>2</sup> The entire collection can be downloadable at [http://www.visionforum.it/forum\\_en/il\\_giornale\\_di\\_vision/index.php](http://www.visionforum.it/forum_en/il_giornale_di_vision/index.php)

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It is, in fact, clear that most of the claims **falsify each other** even if this does not prevent the same person to add all of them to the same list (and thus accommodate for the frustration of all political segments that he or she may care about)<sup>3</sup>;

in some cases (as for the CPI and the graph reported on the right) factual demonstration of what is being said now seems to be considered a wasted effort and arguments are simply **not true** and deliberately based on perceptions (and fears)<sup>4</sup>; others (such as the claims on the excessive “openness” of European economy if compared to the American one whereas the below chart indicates the size of the problem) expose such an evident **logical contradiction** between problems to be addressed and solutions that have been proposed that they

exceed even the cynicism of those who have long maintained that European politics is irrational<sup>5</sup>.



<sup>3</sup> Like, as mentioned before, for the arguments of the effect of the EURO on the cost of living and the one of its strength towards other currency. The two claims are evidently opposite, in the sense that either the former or the latter can be true but not both.

<sup>4</sup> It is astonishing to see how entire State TV debates on the impact of the EURO on the cost of living can go on for hours without not even one single reference to be made to the official numbers of Eurostat and the other national statistical agencies.

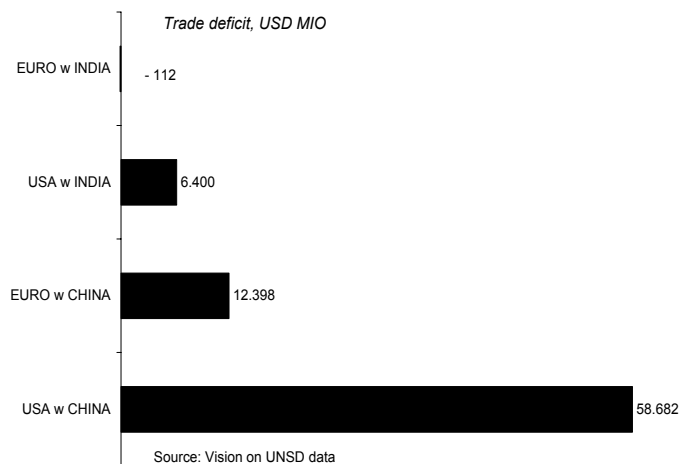
<sup>5</sup> The same falsity and underlying evident irrationality applies to the argument of the competitiveness policies, or even more clearly the openness of the European markets; the argument here is that “we are allowing to the Chinese to do what they want” and that “therefore we should do like the Americans and raise duties to stop their exports”.

We do not need sophisticated elaborations to demonstrate the factual inconsistency of the claim (one could simply remember the dimension of the USA trade deficit to reiterate that a modern economy does not need to become a “fortress” in order to be able to grow).

But even more strikingly, some of the arguments should be rejected on the basis of just basic common sense. The proposal of, for instance, closing one single national European market to China is a pure non sense and you do not need to be an economist to immediately understand that it would be totally ineffective (given that it may not do anything to protect that country’s exports which is where the challenge is played) and even harmful (the Chinese would, in fact, lose the possibility to sell to a 60 million people market and the country by retaliation would automatically loose the possibility to sell to 1.2 billion possible consumers!)

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Some of the “opinion makers” seem to have completely overlooked whether the proposals which have been aired are remotely **feasible**<sup>6</sup>; most fail to remember that **almost none of the**



**above issues have anything to do** with the question that the French and Dutch electors were asked at the referenda<sup>7</sup>;

and nearly all fail to qualify the opinions on the EU with some reasonable **comparison** of its institutional performance with the performance of other institutions at national or international level<sup>8</sup>.

Last and probably most importantly, most critics **seem to assume that there is some sort of European**

Union government, conceived as an autonomous body which can be held politically responsible of its decisions **and to ignore that, on the contrary, all relevant EU decisions** - including the ones on the Lisbon strategy and the immigration - were agreed by all national governments at various Council meetings. The reality, that seems to have been suddenly forgotten, is that one of the strongest reasons why Europe still exists, is that those national governments badly need a “safe haven” where to take the decisions which are considered less popular; and it is rather sad to hear now some ministers even blaming Europe for delivering exactly what Europe was asked to do.

Once again one has the impression that we are witnessing a new episode of the saga of the unstoppable rise of “the sleep of reason”. More disturbing then, is the fact that most of the above claims come from the politicians who were supposed to support the treaty and to lead the continuation of the project. Even minuscule possibilities to use the peoples’ mood for having some more visibility is more important than any serious discussion on something that is important, probably vital to the future of Europeans.

But why did we end up in such an ideological loophole? We probably need to look beyond the sometimes surreal arguments that followed the referenda and go back to the nature of the more long term debate on Europe that we have been witnessing for years: the “problem solving” exercise has been, in fact, long flawed by the assumption that the story of Europe is doomed to be the story of the confrontation between federalists and intergovernmentalists. Such a dialectic has become, in the aftermath of the referenda, one of confrontation between political ruling classes backing a treaty conceived in the tradition of an “ever closer Union” and peoples asking for resurgence of Nations to which powers should be transferred back.

This is probably the most important ongoing conceptual mistake: the two positions are, in fact, opposed yet still equal in mistakenly thinking that Nation States are the only possibility. The only

<sup>6</sup> Just to make the example of not yet accomplished political decisions, like possible further enlargements, how could we stop the process on which Romanian, Bulgarian, even Turkish government have already invested in front of their fellow citizens? Which may be the consequence in terms of attitude towards the Europeans?

<sup>7</sup> It is true that the (rather socialist) second and the (rather liberal) third part of the treaties deal with rights (of the citizens and workers), and with the right to compete (of workers – like the famous polish plumber – and firms – like the multinational ones). However both refer to previous undertakings.

<sup>8</sup> For instance, even if the argument of the excess of bureaucracy has got some merits, it is, once again, rather bizarre that such a claim comes from a prime minister who is heading such an efficient public administration like the Italian one.



difference is that in the former federalist vision a new State, with the same democratic and policy making instruments as the old nation state being based in Brussels; and in the latter ‘national’ opinion, nations are, instead, seen without any alternative in the foreseeable future, and are therefore here to stay, maybe for eternity.

Both visions are wrong: the United Nations of Europe would replicate the limits of the Nation States and would even have the additional disadvantage of the diseconomy of scale of being even more remote from the European citizens; the second vision, instead is simply unaware that institutional frameworks have a life cycle, like products, organisms and species, and that the cycle of the Nation State is, most likely, finished<sup>9</sup>.

Two visions and they are both surpassed, not only, by the reality of the economic, technological and social forces at work, but they are also both equally falsified by the nature of the European “government” that we already have.

The EU is, in fact, peculiar for being a “framework” where powers are not assigned to an institution for ever, and financial and political resources are increasingly pooled around projects supposed to last until the objective is reached or the deadline arrives and with an increasingly differentiated partnership base (in fact, all the main European frameworks from the EURO to the common markets are joined by a sub set or even a larger than EU member base, with thus effectively different groups following different political missions).

It is a modern method to govern a complex society and a successful one if we consider that never before in history so many independent states queued in order to be admitted and, therefore, loose some of their power.

But then why do we now have a crisis that almost seems to go beyond our political and management capabilities?

## **IT’S DEMOCRACY STUPID**

To understand why such a “modern” project has ended up in such a huge crisis, we probably need to go back to the real question put forward by the referenda. Even if for the wrong reasons, the French and the Dutch were, in fact, right to dislike the piece of legislation that was proposed to them. And in fact they were probably also right to condemn together with the treaty, a recently, much more widely applied method of pushing forward the European agenda.

To be sure, the treaty did a great deal to rationalize the previous network of governing bodies and did its best to make the enlarged Europe more manageable, its institutions more visible and stable. It proposed to sanction the juridical personality of the Union as autonomous from its constituting members. It even introduced some elements of flexibility and of “variable geometry” (the “enhanced cooperation). These are all important results which need to be leveraged.

But the failures of the document are probably even more fundamental:

- 1. The treaty largely ignored its first and foremost initial mission established by the founding declaration of Laeken to find “how to bring citizens closer to European design”.**

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<sup>9</sup> The contradictions between the Nation State based institutional framework and the logic of a knowledge based, globalised society are identified by a number of Vision pamphlets including “the paradox of flexible institutions” available at [www.vision-forum.org](http://www.vision-forum.org).

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The treaty almost completely and almost immediately renounced to develop a “European political space”, how to address the absence of any significant political participation at European level.

Out of almost 500 articles, it is frankly astonishing that to the question of “the democratic life of the Union” are dedicated eight articles (of which two, in fact, deal with the “status of the churches and non confessional organizations” and an other with the “protection of personal data”).

But even more disappointing is that

a) no serious provision (apart from very generic recommendations) is made towards the development of European political parties<sup>10</sup>, b) nothing is specified in terms of participatory democracy (beyond an indication that the Union should keep on talking with representative associations and civil society<sup>11</sup>) and c) even the idea of having European wide referenda is transformed into a vague right of one million citizens to ask the Commission to consider the possibility to submit the Council a certain proposal<sup>12</sup>.

Even more absolute then is the silence of the treaty on the even more fundamental question to facilitate the rise of, or the consolidation of some European demos, or at least some Pan European “class” of citizens which may be the forerunner of a democratisation of Europe. Such a larger, all encompassing document should at least mention that priority and suggest options to be further investigated<sup>13</sup>.

2. **The very concept of “constitution” that the treaty pushed forward is obsolete and it seems that the Convention looked more to the (glorious) past of the Nation States than to the present of the European framework and the challenges that the future poses to institutions at all levels .**

The mistake is, as we said before, to continue to look to the European dialectic with the framework of the old, eternal confrontation between two forces equally strong and pulling in opposite directions. In fact, both federalists and inter governmentalists have got the same idea of thinking about the State (either at European or National level) and the whole framework of the State’s instruments (taxation and representation based on geography for instance, stable distribution of power among different levels and between collective and individual arenas) as the only possibility, or at least the only serious one.

The mistake is then to assume that in 2005 we are still in the era when Great Constitutions were drafted for newly born (actually born out of wars and revolutions) States,,when constitutions were supposed to last for ever<sup>14</sup> (or for at least fifty years like the defunct treaty was supposed to according to the President of the Convention).

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<sup>10</sup> Art. 45. The suggestion of, for instance, creating some specific incentives or, at least partially, lifting some specific disadvantages (the region based constituencies) was ignored.

<sup>11</sup> Art. 46 where the continuation of the dialogue with representative associations is advised, but no clarification on “how we measure the representativeness of associations and what do we mean by “civil society” is provided.

<sup>12</sup> Even in this case the treaty seems so scared to leave to the citizens some power to act that such a possibility is immediately limited to “only legal act that are considered necessary to implement the Constitution” (art. 46). Can anybody even remotely imagine in the foreseeable future, somebody to take the bother and the cost to collect at trans national level one million signatures to have the honour to ask the Commission to consider to propose something to the Council?

<sup>13</sup> Here we are referring to those experiences – like Erasmus - that more than much more expensive programmes have contributed to create some sense of common demos especially among young Europeans. If constitutions are not only about hard regulations, those instruments should be more strategically considered as one of the lever to complete the creation of a political space. We will come back on this later.

<sup>14</sup> “For an unlimited period” as in Art. 9 Part IV

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If anything modern constitutions (if we want still use this word) can only be, in a fast changing ecosystem, a concise, clear set of regulations conceived not to design institutional frameworks, but to regulate how institutions continuously change.

Flexibility does, as said, exist in the treaty, and yet pitfalls like the lack of any provision for further revision of the treaty in the future, and even the magnitude of the text - four volumes, 265 pages, 465 articles, 5 protocols and 3 declarations – made it hard to convey such a principle.

### **3. The problem was, at its most basic level, the process that the Member States decided to choose for drafting the constitution and then approving the text.**

Any historian, any political scientist, even nowadays any management consultant would agree that any big change which is initiated and managed internally, uniquely relying on the intellectual and political energies of insiders is likely to fail. This is what has happened in the process managed by the Convention, this is what has happened with most institutional reforms in many European nations, this is probably what is going to happen at UN level.

This is the failure that the rejected treaty even proposed as a practically eternal method for any future further revision of the treaty itself<sup>15</sup>.

The feeling is that the treaty was just the “institutionalisation” of an approach that does not acknowledge some of the features that make the EU such a peculiar arrangement. And that the text disregarded, in fact, the reasons that make the Union potentially one of the most interesting experiment of modern policy making.

It is the attitude towards democracy that is more questionable: the sensation is that the Europe architects have, at some point, become so proud of their creature, so aware of the uniqueness of this model, that they started to think that it should have to be protected, or more precisely, sheltered from democracy and its nasty consequences.

The problem is that a political process needs sooner or later a political confrontation and that paradoxically the later you postpone such a moment, the more likely is that you will get a rejection. The problem is that if political process becomes increasingly dominated by bureaucracy, you end up with the same, unmovable elite of experts and such an elite becomes increasingly unable to bring further life and innovation into the project.

Unfortunately, the treaty seems to make democracy just a nice thing to have or to talk about, instead of referring to it as a set of hard decisions to be taken, a learning process for a community to be developed, a risk to be taken and an absolute priority if we do not want the entire project to be reversed in a way that we still do not think possible.

Whereas the achievements of the process were important, clearly on a more technical ground, the failures were, then, more basic. The underlying assumption was that we can fix either the efficiency or the democracy side of the problem. Not both of them at the same time. This is, in our opinion, a conceptual mistake and the citizens of two of the most democratic countries of the world rejected in a democratic contest such an assumption.

## **BACK TO THE FUTURE**

So what we do next? Here two main strands of thoughts are emerging. Move backward, whereas it is not clear where to stop (and how to prevent the fall out of the failure). Or forward, even if it is still to be decided in which directions (and with which allies and political energies).

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<sup>15</sup> Art 7 Part IV



According to some we should realistically **withdraw any attempt to make the Union more political**, and to bring people closer to each other who rather prefer to live apart. In the suggestion of ultraliberals Europe would, in this case, become a probably even larger, common market without further qualification.

**We do not think this proposal is feasible** (leaving alone the argument of it is good as far as the welfare of the Europeans).

It is not realistic unless we also clearly admit that the Euro should be scrapped all together, that even the notion of common market becomes much less active and that the policies supposed to actively facilitate the growth of competition are downsized, and that enlargement becomes even more qualified to be acceptable to the same people who rejected the treaty.

As said before, the European project is a rather peculiar one, and the visionaries who conceived it fifty years ago were also very astute people. The process they envisaged fifty years ago is such that every further achievement is also a poisoned pill on the way towards integration. It is a process where, in fact, at every cornerstone either we decide to go ahead or we ruinously fall back.

And the costs of the falling backwards were, in the vision of those founders and the ones who followed, so big that, in fact, the only way is forward.

Take the Euro, for instance. Not everything that has been said about its effect is true. But still it is not contestable that Europe – like it has been from the very beginning fifty years ago – is a contradiction, that European monetary and fiscal policy and its democracy are not in equilibrium.

The major lever of political economy has been technically delegated to a level which is not accountable.

We believe that it is this vague notion of further weakening of their power which has, more than anything else, made the Dutch and the French to react so strongly. So, again, as Delors forecasted either we go forward or we really move towards the dismantlement of everything. And since nobody can really afford such an outcome we still need to find a way to move forward.

Forward but then where to?

Certainly not towards the creation of a super state at European level. This was the huge mistake that in a more or less educated way the latest generation of federalists and Europe leaders made. We do not need a Super Nation State because it will end up being as obsolete as the older ones.

And we do not need to consider the European proposition as a zero sum game where whatever we add to the supranational framework is subtracted to the national or sub national ones.

We need to add an identity to the national and regional ones that already exist. We need to create some sort of political space, and we need to engage at least some segments of the European public opinion in order to make Europe democratic enough.

We do not envisage a new Nation State and we would not ask for the direct election of the President of the Commission (like some of the federalists have done in the past) or consider the creation of a common foreign policy as the acid test to measure the progress of the idea.

We need to find a new synthesis and instruments adequate for the times we live in.

Times where the reduction of the costs to access, elaborate, transmit information renders no longer viable the hierarchical, state-like, geographically based policy making procedures that we are used to thinking as the only ones which are possible.

# Vision

Times when either we expand the scope of democracy and accept the risks of doing so (like the French and the Dutch – and, by the way, the Spanish government has done before) or if not, witnessing democracy striking back and sweeping away years of difficult, good quality diplomatic compromises.

Times when institutions must become flexible (it still seems physically impossible, a paradox that we can not solve) otherwise they would become increasingly unable to deliver and incapable of surviving to themselves.

Times when institutional changes become an almost everyday occurrence and when the boundaries between institutional levels change according to the policy (or rather projects), the space (we will have to accept that different policy makers at the same level may present different capabilities and that the more efficient be rewarded with more responsibilities) and time (technologies will continue to do what was not possible until a short time before). Constitutions (we will probably need a new word) will only regulate how these changes happen in a legitimate and thus efficient way.

We need, in fact, to just leverage what we already have and **make the European institutional framework even more explicitly flexible and more democratic.**

We would probably start immediately from where the European ship seems to have come to a halt. We would call the ratification process, but we would not call the wider attempt of making the European policy making processes adequate to the reality of the Euro and the enlargement.

We would probably make the text much shorter and sharper, specifying that it is not a monstrous, all encompassing document, but an act having the specific objective to improve the political performance of the Union, its capability to solve problems and to engage citizens in the decisions.

We would confirm most of the achievements of the convention as far as most of the first part of the treaty, but we believe that much more should be done on the democracy issue and for instance we would consider:

- the possibility should be considered of creating **incentives to parties to act as transnational<sup>16</sup> parties** in the EP elections;
- an **European** (or at least a number of trans national) **wide electoral constituency** could be even considered as an option that some citizens may opt for as an alternative to traditional region – based ones<sup>17</sup>; likewise
- **European wide referenda** should, in our opinion, be introduced and regulated so that they become political discussions able to divide European public opinions not according to national boundaries.

In addition, as we said before, modern “constitutions” are not only made of hard regulations: they have to be seen as process (in this case the process of creation of a continental scale political space to be gradually filled with citizens’ participation, shared values and collective choices) and this process is made also of softer incentives so that society can move towards a particular direction.

We then need to strive to create instruments to consolidate **some form of European public opinion** without which any political space would be left empty and meaningless. Here we do not need to create overnight an European people and to make such a claim as has been used just too frequently to make even more difficult the creation of a European political arena. We need a marketing plan and such a plan, as any strategic effort, has to identify segments to start with.

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<sup>16</sup> One indicator of such “trans nationality” is the number of MEPS elected in country other than their own. Parties may then be rewarded (through an electorate prize, for instance) for having increased their trans nationality.

<sup>17</sup> Current arrangements make almost impossible for new, truly trans national, pro European parties to emerge and they tend to paradoxically favour anti European, locally based ones which tend to be concentrated in a certain area. Here the possibility could be to have either a stratification of constituencies (where the European wide one forces some choice at European level) or the possibility for individuals to choose which constituency they want to vote for.



A monumental mistake was this claim to create a European demos (demos are not created out of some law), but we would, then, look for specific actions able to make more visible, more politically relevant the segments of the European population who have already, because of their job or studies, added an European citizenship to their national one.

The option of a European wide constituency that young mobile citizens may opt for, does, in fact, respond also to such a need.

We would also (for an action on a wider target) go back in a more solid way to the question of using **media<sup>18</sup> and education<sup>19</sup>** as the only long term options able to facilitate the creation of an European identity: once again we do not need to invent anything from scratch and we even have important examples to be leveraged and transformed into a mainstream feature of the European society.

If we need a vision for Europe, this is probably the one that Vision would suggest. Let's use Europe, let's stop treating it as something which has to be prevented by being exposed to the clash of an idea with the public opinions. **Let's use Europe's potential, its diversity and the intrinsic flexibility of its institutional framework to launch the next, big project which has to be about saving democracy from becoming increasingly irrelevant, about how to create instruments able to govern the globalization that we are scared of.**

We would probably start from Laeken again and we would take those recommendations more seriously, with a different method, with different people, with a "convention" able to draw expertises from levels outside the inner circles of the EU experts and beyond the logic of the representation of the nation states only.

We would try to leverage as much as possible on a silent, but still existent generation of young political advisors and consultants, academic that never became leaders.

We would probably consider options for "forcing" them/us to become, eventually, grown up. And the older leaders to consider the renovation of the elites and the asset of ideas that Europe has, not just as a nice thing to do but an absolute priority.

We need to democratise democracy and not only at European level<sup>20</sup>. We need democracy meaning by democracy not some sort of transfer of the "power" to an undifferentiated "European people" that probably does not exist. Such an impossible proposition is the argument that just too often has been used to stop any serious modernization of the processes through which political decisions are developed. We need democracy as a regulated conflict between elites contesting their share of public opinion approval.

This paper and the collection present some very preliminary ideas that Vision will develop and present within the Lab of European think tanks that we launched last year. The Lab can, in fact, be already part of the solution we are looking for.

*Rome/London, 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2005*

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<sup>18</sup> In this sense, Europe should certainly and more explicitly develop a strategy for Television as one of the very few things that historically has demonstrated the ability to create "a demos". If trans nationality, the creation of a citizenship more prepared to globalisation is a common good, then it is somehow bizarre that private, multinational operators like Sky provide a much less parochial service than most of State Televisions. One possibility here would be to use the money going from tax payers to public television for, at least, providing the very minimum right that any European citizen should be able to see at least x number of other member states public channels.

<sup>19</sup> A difficult and yet very significant move would, here, be to consider the gradual introduction of an international component (for instance, through a number of short stays) in the student curricula as a mandatory part of the reforms of the education system that a number of countries are considering.

<sup>20</sup> The project on Europe is, in fact, closely related to Vision project on democracy at [http://www.visionforum.it/forum\\_en/globalizzazione\\_e\\_democrazia\\_en/il\\_futuro\\_della\\_democrazia\\_en/index.php](http://www.visionforum.it/forum_en/globalizzazione_e_democrazia_en/il_futuro_della_democrazia_en/index.php)