

Europe and the Spectre of Post-Growth Society



Piotr A. Świtalski

Debates
at the Council of Europe
Schools of political
studies
2012-2013

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



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Introduction: Europe and the crisis of values

By the end of 2013, Europe started to see light at the end of the tunnel with regard to overcoming the most serious crisis it had experienced in many decades. In public discourse, economic and social pressures have overshadowed the other dimensions of the crisis, including societal values. The fact is that Europe has been facing its most serious crisis of values since the fall of communism, a crisis aggravated by the fiscal and economic weaknesses of recent years. Obviously, some of the social tensions underlying extremist political behaviour can be attributed to economic hardships. However, the crisis of values would appear to be more than simply an effect of the recession. In addition, the developments in and around Ukraine in November and December 2013 showed that the question of values could once again assume a geopolitical dimension.

Europe is primarily perceived as a political project. It is in fact a political project that was born of history. The founding fathers of the European Union had one basic ambition in mind, which was that Europe should be freed once and for all from the spectre of national rivalries and wars and be liberated forever from oppressive regimes and ideologies. In this respect, the European identity was shaped by a common desire to turn away from the dark sides of European history and, judged on this basis, the project has been highly successful: Europe has experienced an unprecedented period of peace and stability, and the Nobel Peace Prize awarded to the EU in 2012 was clear recognition of the success of the European project.

However, besides being a political project the European identity is above all about values that are the foundations of political institutions and economic co-operation, and this applies to a bigger family than the EU. Europeans have every reason to be proud that Europe is perceived as being synonymous with democracy, human rights and the rule of law. Indeed, it has built the most advanced and effective system for upholding these values.

The recent crisis has had a serious impact on the vitality of the European model of democracy. As observed by Amartya Sen (2012), the crisis of Europe is a crisis of democracy. Many people have lost confidence in democratic institutions at all levels: European, national and local. Electoral absenteeism is one of the most deplorable symptoms of this disease, and populism, demagoguery and political extremism are on the increase. Political institutions are being held hostage to personal wars, and majoritarianism has led to a temptation to abuse political power. It is a very sad reality that, 20 years after the fall of communism, Europe must face the fact that in certain countries there are still people who are considered political prisoners and that European institutions are powerless to deal with this phenomenon. Millions are deprived of basic political liberties such as freedom of speech or assembly, while elsewhere oligarchic circles manipulate political and public life. The outcome of elections is heavily influenced by different interest groups.

The European model of tolerance, understanding and mutual respect faces serious challenges. Rising xenophobia, discrimination against Muslims, anti-Semitic rhetoric and intolerance towards lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) minorities are serious blows to the European identity. Openly anti-Semitic politicians are to be seen in some parliaments. Muslims have become the minority most discriminated against in many European societies, and anti-gay legislation has been passed in a number of countries. Hate speech is rife, and not only on the Internet.

Europe is not coping well with managing its diversity, and some fatalists see this as the curse of European geopolitics: too many widely differing nations squeezed into too little space. Some politicians have begun to warn of a return to fragmentation and the re-nationalisation of European politics. Intolerance can quickly turn into violence.

The key component of the European identity, which Europeans are so proud of, is the rule of law. Indeed, Europeans have developed a strong catalogue of rule of law principles. Nevertheless, a virus is spreading throughout Europe, with devastating repercussions for the health of democracy and human rights: the virus of corruption. This virus, to which no country seems to be immune, is capable of mutating, rendering our remedies to combat it powerless. As a result of corruption scandals, several European governments have recently been brought down. Furthermore, the justice systems of many European countries are subject to growing criticism. In some instances, this is still mainly due to political control over the administration of justice, but in most cases it has to do with inefficiency. The continuing high number of applications lodged with the European Court of Human Rights is testimony to the lack of public trust in the functioning of national systems.

The human rights protection system based on the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms is a joint achievement that Europe can be proud of. The European Court of Human Rights is pivotal to this system. With the accession of the EU to the Convention, currently pending, this system will soon become even stronger. However, with the changing identity of our societies we are faced with new challenges, mainly the relationship between collective and individual rights. Resolving the increasing tensions between majorities and minorities, as well as the rights of groups and the sovereignty of the individual demands new efforts.

This relationship goes far beyond national or ethnic issues. It transcends cultural or religious dimensions and it has implications for many aspects of human rights.

The assault on European values cannot and should not be underestimated. It is legitimate and logical that the attention of politicians and political institutions is now focused on overcoming the recession and boosting economic growth in Europe. Some believe that once Europe is back on the path of growth many problems of a social nature will disappear. This belief is based on a tried and tested approach. But growth, which is seen as the most effective instrument for solving political, social and economic tensions, has become something of a fetish. It is quite a natural tendency to believe that once people have good and secure jobs, become wealthier and once again aspire to career opportunities, they will become more self-confident and thus more tolerant, more liberal and more empathic. Coupled with sustainable growth, political, social, ethnic and cultural divisions will lose their significance, according to this perception. But even if it is true that Europe needs growth like a fire needs oxygen, it would be totally naive to believe that growth is a panacea that can cure our societies of all their dysfunctions.

Some economists predict that human productivity in Western societies will stop increasing. Growth in Western societies will be exposed to serious “headwinds”, they say, including those resulting from demographic trends, and Europe will not be spared from the effects of these factors. Demographers forecast that Europe’s population will stop increasing, and may begin to decrease. Europe also suffers from rising income inequality, which inhibits economic growth. The environmental sensitivities of European societies are high, adding to the technological costs of production. Taken together, this means that the era of unlimited economic growth may soon come to an end in Europe, and Europeans may become members of the first post-growth society. Perhaps the current prolonged economic crisis is only a sign of a much more strategic challenge, and economic growth will no longer be a miraculous formula to be used when addressing societal challenges. Already now pundits predict that the return of economic growth in coming months will not produce tangible impacts on social issues; the link between economic growth and family incomes has been broken. For the first time in more than 250 years new generations will not enjoy better living standards than the previous generation.

The crisis has turned Europe into a scapegoat: it is mentioned whenever certain politicians have to explain difficulties and tough decisions and it is rarely seen as the solution. More and more often, “Europe” is associated with the European Union and for many reasons it is assumed that the future of the EU will determine the future of the whole continent. What is significant in itself is that today, more than 50 years after the Treaty of Rome, European politicians are asking themselves the very existential question of why we need Europe. Why they are doing so is clear: the economic crisis has shaken confidence in the European project. Paradoxically, much of this is the fault of pro-European forces. We took Europe for granted, but, like every beautiful and noble idea, it needs constant nurturing. All those concerned (not only politicians) need to talk about this in order to give the European project renewed meaning as circumstances change and new challenges arise.

One thing is certain: only in unity can Europe face the challenges resulting from this paradigm shift. Europe as a concept is therefore of significant strategic importance. As we know, historically European integration proceeded on two tracks. The defining element was economic and political integration, as reflected in the model of the EU. However, Europe is bigger than the EU and the European agenda is bigger than the economy and politics. The Council of Europe is the embodiment of the second track of European integration, and both facets of European integration are needed to provide responses to present and future challenges. If Europe is in fact the solution and if “more Europe” is needed, we also need it through the Council of Europe. It is obvious that one cannot revive the fine spirit of Europe without first proving the benefits of closer economic co-operation. The European project can regain credibility if it manages to put Europe back on the path of stable and sustainable growth, but it must be accompanied by a restoration of faith in European values. More political investment is needed in the Council of Europe, the guiding role of which is crucial to achieving this.

As stated earlier, the European identity is bigger than the economy and Europe is more than the EU, so we need to revive the idea of pan-European co-operation based on specific values. Can the pan-European dimension be attractive when Europe is increasingly identified with the EU? Some experts say that the EU is like a leviathan, and it will have to institute and develop new powers, including in the fields of human rights and democracy. It has the necessary political and economic instruments to have a much bigger potential impact when it comes to persuading states to apply European standards and uphold values. However, even a strong EU cannot shoulder the burden of fostering a European identity on its own. Whatever its geographical scope, it cannot go it alone. Europe needs a bigger coalition: we need the Russian Federation, Turkey, Ukraine or Switzerland in their respective leadership roles.

In many countries, some people perceive the European identity as a threat to the values that make up their nations. They fear that the European instruments and European institutions serve the purpose of projecting external values that could damage the cohesion of their own societies. They keep forgetting the fact that Europe is and will remain multicultural. European standards are not aimed at imposing cultural homogeneity and there is no political agenda behind them, but common standards can make Europeans feel much more comfortable about their lives in this age of globalisation. Europe’s harmony depends on how strong these values can be.

Human rights, democracy and the rule of law are mentioned like a mantra when defining the European identity. Values will be the key issue in a post-growth society. Tzvetan Todorov (2008) has put forward the thesis that justice is the primary European value. Hence a post-growth European society will preserve its harmony only if it is able to find a stable institutional and legal framework for the principles of justice. Justice is deeply embedded in the European identity and has many facets, the functioning of courts being just one. However, all other values must contain a strong component of justice: democracy must be just, the economic system must be just and the rule of law must be just. We must be prepared for the increased demand for justice when approaching the post-growth age. Already now, the demand for justice, both in its retributive and distributive dimensions, is growing. Justice will be the organising value in the Europe of the post-growth age.

One of Europe's great paradoxes is that we declare our regional identity on the basis of values, which by our own definition should be universal. Zygmunt Bauman (2004) explains that this is very European. We believe in our capacity for discovering values and then in our responsibility to convey their universality to other civilisations. The political dilemma today is: does this approach make sense in an increasingly globalised world? Will discussions on the European identity lead us to defensive reflexes against the influence of other civilisations? Will it lead to the concept of "fortress Europe" in a global world? Will it produce a syndrome of a detached, idealised but irrelevant European island? These scenarios are most probably unfounded, since Europeans have always been open to the world and have tended to spread their consciousness across the globe. Nevertheless, there is one conclusion that Europeans must draw for the functioning of their institutions: a European identity based on values is increasingly exterritorial. Motivated by this perspective, Europeans must remain open to countries in their neighbourhood and beyond who want to live by European standards.

We sometimes hear that the European soul suffers from *akrasia*, by which is meant a tendency to know what should be done combined with a persistent reluctance to actually do it. In times of such crucial tests, it becomes imperative to prove that this diagnosis is wrong – provided that we are sure what to do.

Based on presentations at Subotica (Serbia) in May 2013, Pristina (Kosovo)¹ in December 2012 and Podgorica (Montenegro) in June 2013.

This publication is based on several talks and on my presentations held at sessions of schools of political studies from 2012 to 2013. The views expressed in this essay are purely personal, but the thrust of these contributions reflects the strategic explorations conducted within the Directorate of Policy Planning at the Council of Europe Secretariat. The Directorate is responsible for providing day-to-day support to the schools.

Over the past 20 years, in close partnership with the Council of Europe, 19 schools of political studies (SPS) have been established in countries in transition to democracy.²

1. All reference to Kosovo, whether to the territory, institutions or population, in this text shall be understood in full compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 and without prejudice to the status of Kosovo.

2. The 19 European schools of political studies are (in order of their founding): Russian Federation – Moscow School of Political Studies; Georgia – Tbilisi School of Political Studies; Bulgaria – Bulgarian School of Politics "Dimitry Panitza"; "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" – School of Public Policy "Mother Teresa"; Bosnia and Herzegovina – School of Political Studies Bosnia and Herzegovina; Moldova – European Institute for Political Studies; Kosovo – Pristina Institute for Political Studies; Serbia – Belgrade Fund for Political Excellence; Romania – "Ovidiu Sincai" European School; Croatia – Academy for Political Development; Armenia – Yerevan School of Political Studies; Ukraine – Ukrainian School of Political Studies; Azerbaijan – Baku Political Studies Programme; Albania – Academy of Political Studies; Montenegro – School of Democratic Leadership; Belarus – East-European School of Political Studies; Tunisia – Tunisian School of Politics; Morocco – Citizens' School of Political Studies of Morocco; Visegrád (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia) – Visegrád School of Political Studies.

Today, the model is well established and plans are underway to include western European countries as well as additional countries in the European neighbourhood.

The schools of political studies offer an open and impartial space where dialogue and exchange are encouraged among upcoming leaders involved in the political, economic, social, cultural and environmental spheres, as well as the media. In many countries, the schools bring together people who would otherwise rarely communicate with each other, for example members of opposing political parties or politicians and representatives of civil society.

Each school selects a group of participants (approximately 35) on an annual basis. The activities supported by the Council of Europe comprise a basic programme of at least three national seminars per year covering a broad and ever-evolving range of themes relating to democracy, the rule of law and human rights. Emphasis is also placed on developing practical leadership skills, for example in management, communication and public speaking. Throughout the year, the SPS and their network organise additional events, such as bilateral and regional meetings.

Each school's annual intake comes to Strasbourg to participate in the Council of Europe's World Forum for Democracy. As well as providing stimulating, youthful input into the Forum debates, their presence in Strasbourg affords an opportunity for the students to meet their peers from the other schools. For the Council of Europe, the schools function as a significant multiplier for the values, objectives and standards promoted by the Organisation. For the schools, the Council of Europe offers an umbrella that enables them to adhere to the high standards set by the Organisation, particularly in countries where they may be subject to political pressure. This "safety net" role also helps the schools attract young leaders from all sectors of society to participate in their programmes.

Recognising this mutually beneficial relationship, the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers has identified the schools of political studies as a priority area for the Organisation, and a continuous effort is being made to involve them further in the activities of other parts of the Organisation, for example standard setting, monitoring and capacity building.

A well-functioning network of schools is in place and serves as a platform for exchanges of experience between schools and for the organisation of bilateral and regional activities. Such exchanges facilitate informal, in-depth dialogue between countries in the same region (for example Russia and Georgia; Armenia and Azerbaijan; Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Croatia) and thereby can contribute to reconciliation in divided regions.

The network also facilitates opportunities for partnership projects and joint initiatives. Recent examples include: the Regional Academy for Democracy, which comprises the seven Western Balkans schools of political studies; the Eastern Partnership University for Democracy, which brings together the six schools of the Eastern Partnership region; and the Tunisian and Moroccan schools, which are joining forces to organise regional seminars in the Maghreb region (North Africa). Moreover, the Visegrád School, which brings together young leaders from the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and the Slovak Republic, is the first genuinely regional school.

In recent years an ever-growing network of alumni has been developed and serves to strengthen co-operation and links both between current and past participants. Many of the schools' alumni attain high-level posts, either in their own countries or internationally, and are in a position to act as multipliers for the values that the schools, the Council of Europe and, ultimately, Europe itself represent.

In 2008, the directors of the schools founded the European Association of the Schools of Political Studies in order to strengthen ties, stimulate development and support the Council of Europe's activities to promote the schools' network. Endowed with a legal framework, the schools now have a tool that allows the network to communicate with a voice of its own.

This essay by Piotr Świtalski is a tribute to the schools and their valuable activities.

The quest for a European breakthrough

The depth of the crisis can be measured not just by the scale of the decline in economic output, the gravity of the social consequences or the degree of political instability. Its seriousness is clear because Europeans have once again started asking themselves fundamental and rudimentary questions: why Europe? What kind of Europe? What alternatives?

It is significant in itself that more than 50 years after the Treaty of Rome we are asking ourselves these very existential questions and testing the soundness of the old axiomatic answers. The reasons are clear: the economic crisis has shaken confidence in the European project. Much of this is the fault of those who have made Europe a success, since they simply insisted on taking Europe for granted. Even if it did not work properly, the European project was meant to be always secure since it had reached a level where abandoning it would be much more costly than sustaining it. As long as rationality prevailed, Europe would always escape dire scenarios. However, it turned out that nothing could be taken for granted and that Europe, like every fine and noble idea, needs constant attention. Europeans have to discuss the idea of Europe in order to give it renewed meaning as circumstances change and new challenges arise.

Ulrich Beck (2013) recently observed that Europeans are experiencing the finitude of Europe. Is Europe really on the precipice? Can its identity be revived?

In its long post-war history, the European project has acquired a mythic significance. The canonical definition of Europe as a community of interests and values turned Europe, as described by Tony Judt (1996), into a surreal entity, a Europe of reason. Have our emotions today, those of frustration and perhaps fear, eclipsed the power of reason?

The irony is that today, like 60 years ago, the big question is not so much “what kind of Europe?” but “whose Europe?” In many countries and circles, the obsessively asked question is how to manage the newly revealed “German might”. Gideon Rachman is one of many columnists bold enough to note that growing German power and the growing resentment of that power have become the main themes in European politics. This obsession has become another European “dèjà vu all over again”. After all, the purpose of the European project was to remove the subject from the list of Europeans’ concerns. Rachman rightly states in an article in the *Financial Times* (2013a) that “[t]his Germanophobia is unfair”, but why did it come about? His explanation is quite convincing. It partly came about because “the stakes are now so high that Germany can no longer be shy about asserting its national interests” and partly because “[t]he Germans also have a clear and consistent analysis of the problem” (profligacy is the problem, austerity is the solution). However, it also came about because other European countries (the UK, Italy, Spain and even France) are weak and vulnerable and do not have a clear vision of what to do. The Franco-German engine has not been working as in the past. This concludes Rachman’s description of the present situation, which commentators in some southern European countries would paint in even more emotional colours. However, the strategic question is whether the situation will stay as it is. Even the Germans “hope that all this is temporary”, but “that is probably a pious hope”. One cannot disagree that it is quite “a dangerous situation for Europe – and ultimately for Germany itself”. The reasons are obvious. Imbalance of power would in the long run derail any integration project.

Conventional wisdom dictates that an integration project can be politically successful and viable only if it is pursued among countries balanced in size and power. Federalist endeavours with one overly dominant player, as was the case with the USSR or Yugoslavia, are doomed. For many smaller members (particularly those not big enough to count but not small enough to accept the fact without a lot of pain) the perennial fear in the integration project was the fear of a directorate. The Franco-German engine was too weak for the post-2004 Union. The Franco-German-British format put invisibly into operation on foreign policy issues has hit the reef of conflicting visions of integration, but now even the critics of directorates seem to miss their impact. The fact remains that, in all obvious calculations, the centre of gravity is where Germany places itself. It would be enough to consider the question of a two-speed Europe. This idea only started becoming a reality because of the UK’s default position (indifference to the issue). However, any “first speed” (narrow circle of states) in the EU is feasible only if Germany is part of it.

Beck, who coined the term “Merkiavellian Europe” (2013), sends a placating signal concerning Germany’s role in Europe: Europe became German by default and Germany is an “accidental empire”, an unwilling leader. Germany’s strength is obvious, but, as Beck states, it is economic in nature. It is based not only on the size of the economy but on its soundness and, last but not least, on its huge current account surplus (comparable with China’s). Germany is the only EU nation with a surfeit of cash. Since the emergence of Europe’s recent fiscal and economic problems cannot be resolved without cash, the owner of the surplus money is central to the solution. However, Germany is not aspiring to play a central role, for instance by developing new military expeditionary capabilities or by trying to impose on other European

partners a particular view on key strategic issues, such as the question of intervention in Syria or, in 2011, what action to take in Libya. According to Beck, Germany's role is exaggerated by the country's habit of being the last in making up its mind. Germany has the last word because in most cases it is the last to speak. As he observes: "This art of selective procrastination, this mix of indifference, mingling a rejection of Europe with commitment to Europe is behind Germany's position of strength in a Europe badly battered by the crisis". The resulting conclusion could be that the policy of hesitation, based on a desire to do nothing, dithering and postponing any action until it becomes unavoidable, should preferably not constitute the kind of mindset that should characterise the leadership of any grouping of states.

Whatever the emotions in and outside Germany, Thomas Mann's "European Germany" as an alternative to a "German Europe" has today, to quote Timothy Garton Ash, undergone a surprising twist: "a European Germany in a German Europe" (2012a). Germany has no doubt once again become an obsession in European political studies, and no one can escape the German question today when discussing Europe.

Is a "Merkiavellian" German Europe, as described by Ulrich Beck, really the fate of the continent? Beck is not a defeatist. According to him, the unwanted outcome can happen essentially only by default, since – as he suggests – European leaders in their political imagination are incapable of stepping out of a "national frame of mind". A "German Europe" would indeed be a transitional stage towards the total unravelling of Europe, so he suggests that action be taken. Europe should take a qualitatively new step forward.

However, the other view is: do not worry about German hegemony but "make it beneficial for everyone". Mark Mazower (2013) believes that although German strength makes neither Germans nor anyone else comfortable, nothing can be done about it. Mazower sees that the basic difference between today's Germany and all the previous hegemonies lies in its rejection of exceptionalism. It would be probably the most benign hegemon ever known. All dominant powers (recently including the US) have been keen on imposing norms and rules on Europeans while protecting a comfortable margin of manoeuvre for themselves, and none of them have behaved as though they were just like everyone else. Germany is different. It wants to observe the rules that it wants everyone else to follow. However, as Mazower points out, leadership is not only about rules but also about responsibilities. The big question remains: is Germany ready to accept the responsibilities of leadership?

Then there are those many views from Germany and abroad predicting the inevitable slowdown of the German economy and a growing performance gap between the German and other economies (Dullien 2013; Barber 2013a; Rachman 2013b). According to a report from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD 2012), "Looking to 2060", Germany is expected to achieve average annual growth of 1.1% from 2011 to 2060, which puts it next to Luxembourg at the bottom of the 42-nation survey. Experts recall that for roughly a decade now German public investment has been lower than the depreciation of public capital. Infrastructure is ageing, and productivity is slipping down to 2007 levels. The rising markets of China and India are weakening, which is reducing the demand for German-produced machinery, tools and cars. The price competitiveness derived from capping wages

is being eroded because the current global austerity measures have led to a drop in wages everywhere in Europe. In addition, growth will be slowed down by the long-term impact of a fragmented education system and low investment in research and development (Germany spends less on education and research and development as a percentage of gross domestic product than Austria, Belgium, France or the Netherlands). However, the main factor for Germany will be demography: by 2060, its population will drop from 81 to 71 million and it will be overtaken by the UK and France in terms of the size of its population. The fertility rate for the past 30 years has been below 2.1 (the figure needed to maintain the size of the population) and is now at 1.36. "*Schrumpf-Nation Deutschland*" (Germany, a shrinking nation) is how those who issue warnings on the subject describe the looming danger.

Whatever the considerations – lofty European or tribalist/nationalistic – many see Europe as having arrived at a crossroads. On the level of hypotheses three scenarios are possible. One is the reversal of the integration process. In the hot summer of 2011, there were politicians of ministerial rank who warned Europeans that the collapse of the euro would mean a return to wars in Europe. Today, the fear of the "re-nationalisation" of European politics is still strong but it probably does not extend to a fear of new wars. However, any serious economic crisis quite naturally fuels tribal sentiments, not only among politicians but also the population at large. Despite the European factor deeply embedded in any national political code, the political instincts of European politicians are tribal – and pragmatic. A politician's future is decided in his or her home country and chances of re-election depend on how well one responds to the expectations of the national electorate and not on how well-liked one is elsewhere or whether one has any vision, in particular for Europe. Is the lack of the European spirit and the lack of a European political vision equivalent to succumbing to the impact of market forces on national political institutions?

The crisis has fuelled nationalism everywhere. Today, the feeling of European solidarity is quite weak, with no one prepared to offer savings to buy out struggling southerners (Barber 2013b). There has been a clear surge in support for populist anti-establishment and anti-EU parties. The Dutch paper of June 2013 (NL 2013) heralded the end of the concept of "ever closer union". The Polish historian of ideas Marcin Król (2012) asserts that nationalism is quite a European feature (a somewhat doubtful assertion, however, if you look at some Asian states). It has had a negative impact on European history (again, one can dispute this when looking back to the 18th or 19th centuries and the fate of such nations as the Poles, Lithuanians or Czechs and the role of nationalist feelings in the preservation of their identity), and it is holding strong. It is true that the nation-state concept predetermined European politics of the 19th and 20th centuries. A state doctrine was not enough and had to be supplemented by a national myth. But tragedy occurs when populism becomes an integral part of nationalism, and we may be finding ourselves quite close to this point today. Populism and nationalism are seeking synergy. On the margins, it is impossible to overlook a strange phenomenon that confirms the old thesis once proposed by Tony Judt: separatists everywhere (in Catalonia, Scotland, Flanders, etc.) have become the model Europeans, needing Brussels to counterbalance and oppose their own central administrations.

The fetish of growth has generated a moral vacuum in the hearts of many nations. At the same time, the abstract, materialist notion of Europe is not enough to generate legitimacy for institutions, and people are tending to revive national affiliations – national interests as an absolute principle are back. The nation state has proved to be the only instrument for ensuring social coherence. Some even contend that the nation is perhaps the only source of a collective identity. The big mistake of the pro-European doctrine has been to use the European identity to oppose and neutralise national identities.

Jürgen Habermas called nation states “lasting achievements”. They are indispensable agents for attaining the historic objective of eliminating violence from international and domestic relations and they are instruments for achieving justice. The entire structure of the international and domestic political order will continue to be firmly based on the concept of nation states, and underestimating their role would be a huge mistake. As Habermas says: “The nation states are more than just embodiments of national cultures worthy of preservation; they *vouch* for a level of justice and freedom which citizens rightly want to see preserved” (2012).

However, overestimating the potential of nation states can be equally fatal since the number of problems that escape resolution by the application of traditional fragmented nation-state policies is growing. During the recent crisis, some public pronouncements reminded one of the final scenes in von Trier’s apocalyptic film *Melancholia*: some politicians sounded like they were telling their citizens that they could build a national magic teepee to protect them from a coming global catastrophe. However, national measures are less and less relevant today when dealing with transnational phenomena. In any case, *Melancholia* so accurately captured the state of the European psyche that it fully deserved to receive the top prize at the European Film Awards in 2011.

The impact of political tribalism may result in putting on hold the idea of “ever closer union”, but expecting it to be buried altogether, as demanded by some Dutch politicians, is hardly realistic. The crisis may prompt some devolution of powers back to national authorities but not on the scale discussed by many British politicians. The total re-nationalisation of European politics would only come about as a result of a collective European “march of folly”. Barbara Tuchman (1984) showed that such foolish policies, although hardly imaginable today, can take hold of even the most sober and rationalistic European nations. Anti-European, extremist parties may make gains in many countries at the next European elections but their policies will quickly become discredited if put in practice simultaneously in several of these countries. Tribalism sometimes works in isolation but kills itself when applied universally. As a worst-case scenario for Europe, what would be quite possible is partial re-nationalisation, with some European countries dropping out from the path of integration for a period. At any rate, it is at least a theoretical possibility that the development of Europe will be put in neutral gear, if not in reverse, as a result of the crisis. In the context of European integration, the “reverse gear” possibility would materialise if the British politicians advocating either a renegotiation of the European treaties with a view to repatriating at least some powers from Brussels or a British exit from the EU altogether were to get their way. The “neutral gear” possibility is sometimes associated with the Dutch proposal for a European Governance Manifesto, whereby the treaties would

remain intact and there would be more Europe in some areas and less in others. The European Commission would be made leaner and national parliaments would be given the right to object to the Commission's legislative proposals.

Selecting "drive gear", which some even call a "fuite en avant" strategy, would be a bold jump into the future. As one example of this logic, Ulrich Beck (2013) calls for a "quantum leap towards a capability for transnational action", as the only alternative to a "German Europe". He emphasises the urgent need to take up the challenge and launch "a period of great politics". His vision of a "bottom-up Europe" is based on the recognition of "a Europe of individuals who have yet to become the sovereign stakeholders in a European democracy".

This prompts a question: even if it is agreed that the way to release Europe from its possible situation of decline is for it to make a leap forward, who should take the lead?

Luuk van Middelaar (2013) recalls that there have always been three basic discourses on Europe: "the Europe of States", "the Europe of Citizens" and "the Europe of Offices", known also as "Confederalism", "Federalism" and "Functionalism". The Europe of States is driven by co-operation among national governments, while the Europe of Citizens is mainly based on the vision of transferring at least certain powers to a European government, parliament and court, paving the way for a federation. Legitimacy of power derives from European elections.

The Europe of Offices talks of transferring specific functions to a European bureaucracy. The dogma of this Europe is that European unity can arise from gradual changes to the habits and concerns of millions of individuals; a rational bureaucracy is sufficient to steer the process. Such functionalists believe there is no need for any visionary goal.

It is sometimes assumed that Europe's history is that of the political battle among the Europe of States, Citizens and Offices, regularly resulting in new power relationships, new ideological constellations and new terms.³ This battle is taken to a new dimension when discussing the future of Europe after the present crisis.

The supporters of federative Europe are making their case with new vigour. On 4 October 2013, four Members of the European Parliament from the Spinelli Group (Guy Verhofstadt, Andrew Duff, Jo Leinen and Roberto Gualtieri) and the Executive Director of the Bertelsmann Foundation (Thomas Fischer) presented a 300-page

3. Van Middelaar describes how, over time, three hybrids have been developed: supranationalism (Offices and Citizens), intergovernmentalism (Offices and States), and constitutionalism (States and Citizens). The first two sometimes overshadow the latter. The recent discussion surrounding the Lisbon Treaty centred on the tension between supranationalism and intergovernmentalism. The three hybrids are tied to specific normative vocations. The Europe of Offices is propelled by scholars of integration. The Europe of States draws on academics who talk of co-operation. The Europe of Citizens lacks strong ties to an academic community but draws on the concept of construction professed by intellectuals, writers and lawyers. The fortunes of the three narratives have fluctuated. The Europe of Offices was at its height between 1952 and 1957 (until the Treaty of Rome). Politics did not matter. What mattered were purely economic and technocratic solutions. The Europe of Citizens found strong recognition by the mid-1980s. Jürgen Habermas (2012) concluded that European democracy cannot be made a reality "unless a European-wide public sphere develops in the ambit of common political culture: a civil society with interest associations, non-governmental organisations, citizens' movements, etc." The high tide of the Europe of States – once linked to de Gaulle – is rising again right in front of our eyes.

proposal entitled *A Fundamental Law of the European Union* (called the Treaty of Bozar after the Palais des Beaux-Arts in Brussels, where it was presented). The proposal revives the idea of a federative Europe and tries to galvanise the waning debate on the EU's institutional and political future. According to the proposal, the European Commission should become the EU government, appointed by and answerable to the legislature of the European Council and Parliament. The Council itself should function as a second chamber of the European Parliament. Politically, the European Council and the European Parliament would obtain a right of limited legislative initiative and the rotating presidency would be abolished. Some MEPs would be elected by a pan-European electoral district, on the basis of transnational lists. On the economic side, the proposal provides for a separate eurozone budget. This would create a *de facto* second-class membership, and an "Associated Member [State]" status is envisaged. The common budget would be accompanied by the strengthening of the powers of the European Central Bank. The much-debated mutualisation of the debt would become structural within a framework of strict budgetary discipline. EU tax revenue would fund the Union's expenditures. Governance would be enhanced by the extension of ordinary legislative procedure and by abolishing the requirement of unanimity for a treaty change. The opt-outs in justice and home affairs would no longer be allowed, and the ban on the approximation of national laws would be lifted.

Federalists believe that Europe is hindered by its old constitutional discrepancy: despite the existing principle of primacy of the application of EU law over national legislation, the EU institutions lack the authority to rule on questions of jurisdiction. Europe cannot decide on its own powers, and without resolving this discrepancy it will never be able to release the brakes slowing down its movement. Doing away with unanimity on treaty revisions is seen as getting the necessary reform, currently stalled, moving again.

However, the vision of a United States of Europe is hardly a realistic one. Some commentators sarcastically observe that the present crisis can only be the agent for a push towards a federation if national leaders have a sense of history and a view of the future that extends beyond tomorrow. But it is not so much about the quality of leaders. Most importantly, the public is not now in the mood to encourage more power transfers to Brussels. Even if some still believe that Brussels is the future of Europe, they do not think that the European Commission, even if it is strengthened, has the ability to deal with the immediate task of overcoming the crisis. It is not so much about the lack of trust (in the intentions of the Eurocrats) as about a lack of confidence (in their ability to cope with the crisis).

Can the Commission be blamed for a serious failure to deal with the crisis? Some pointed out that the problem was its failure to stress the weaknesses of the euro system and its lack of support for the banking union before the crisis broke. Some criticise it for initially seeing the crisis through the prism of fiscal profligacy.

Commission President Barroso has promised to put forward a comprehensive proposal for the deepening of the integration process. It will be no surprise if this is built around the idea of strengthened Commission powers, and it may get a friendly reception even from across the Atlantic, where such commentators as Fareed Zakaria (2012) believe that only technocratic elites working for Europe can generate

a long-term, strategic vision for the continent. National politicians by definition go for short-term gains and think in short-term categories (four- to five-year election cycles). Ordinary people have lost interest in becoming mature citizens, especially of European calibre. According to this logic, the only hope lies with the Eurocrats. In short, it sounds like Max Weber redivivus! Alas, the public is not very much inclined to embrace this philosophy.

As observed by the Charlemagne blog in *The Economist*, confidence in Europe is determined in a fragmented way – through national perspectives. This makes it natural that “[n]ational leaders always claim glory for Europe’s successes, and pour scorn on Brussels for its failures” (2013). If Europe’s image is deteriorating then the Commission will always be the primary scapegoat. The Commission has a strong belief in its mission as the guardian of the European spirit (not only the treaties). But what comes as a consequence is sometimes seen as too far-reaching a conclusion. First, it is an automatic reflex to consider that “more Europe always means more power for the Commission”. Second, any democratic deficit on the Commission’s part is made up by the so-called “output legitimacy”, that is the real benefits for the citizens of Europe stemming from the Commission’s regulations (reduced roaming charges, etc.).

Another path, albeit with a similar vision of the ultimate goal, is suggested by the proponents of the Europe of Citizens. Daniel Cohn-Bendit and Felix Marquardt (2013) have recently repeated a plea for a “transnational, transgenerational, transpartisan grass-roots movement to take European integration to the next level”. The starting point for this movement would be to determine Europe’s best practices in every field (education, health care, employment, gender policies, environmental protection, etc.) and to universalise them in a pan-European format. They argue that measures like the popular election of the President of the Commission would hardly make for a quality change in European politics. More change would be brought about if European-minded politicians were elected to national offices. However, the well-known problem with Europe is its weak demos. Neither flags, an anthem, a currency, elections, campaigns nor titles (for example the President of the European Council) have sufficiently helped to consolidate the notion of Europeanness. Van Middelaar (2013) describes the three model strategies pursued to consolidate the public legitimacy of the European project: the so-called “German strategy” stresses identity and destiny, the so-called “Roman strategy” is based on practical benefits (security, well-being), and the so-called “French strategy” promotes a strategy of “our concern” and is based on citizenship and institutions. All have produced tangible results but have not solved the fundamental problem, which is the lack of trust in Brussels. Accordingly, the logical conclusion is to reverse the approach by moving trust-building strategies away from Brussels. But the problem is that European citizens are not longing for power but, rather, do not want to be bothered by it. The vision of a “People’s Republic of Europe” is thus quite distant.

There are conceptual proposals that merge the different approaches. For Jürgen Habermas, Europe is more than ever a constitutional project (2012). The objective of “ever closer political union” should be replaced in his view by the constitutionalisation of international law. He criticises the current status quo, calling the growing powers of the European Council “executive federalism” (based on majority voting), which he sees as a post-democratic “intergovernmental undermining of democracy”. It

reflects in his view the reluctance of elites to replace a “behind-closed-doors” *modus operandi* with public debate. He believes that it is only mental blocks that continue to hinder the transnationalisation of democracy. The European project should be seen against the background of a democratic legal domestication and civilisation of state power. The ultimate goal of this process should be quite universal and not stop at the borders of Europe. The international community of states must develop into a cosmopolitan community of states and world citizens. However, that is still a long way off.⁴

Habermas is probably right when he contends that to speak about Europe’s system as neither federation nor confederation is not “sufficient as an answer”. The starting point should be the concept of Union citizenship. Although citizens of the Union do not enjoy the status of citizens of a state, it is expected that they will achieve a transnational form of civic solidarity through the process of integration. The balance has shifted within the integration process in favour of the European citizens, with sovereignty now shared between citizens and states. Integration should thus not be only about “ever closer union among the peoples of Europe” but about creating a new type of citizenship. In Europe citizens should have two identities: that of a citizen of a state and a citizen of the Union. The Union may therefore become an entity with two identities, of states and of citizens.

The third possible strategic avenue for Europe and, it would seem, the most probable one, would follow the approach of what was described by Habermas as “executive federalism”. The Final Report of the Future of Europe Group of the Foreign Ministers of Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Italy, Germany, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal and Spain (2012) essentially follows this reasoning. Their vision of the future of Europe encompasses measures to strengthen economic and monetary union, reinforce the common foreign policy, restructure the European Commission and, possibly, institute a new model of the separation of powers among the European institutions. There was no unanimity on the possibility of treaty revisions based on a super-qualified majority, but the essence of the proposed deepening of integration is clear: it is the member states who stay in control of the process throughout the changes even if some new powers are added to the role of the Commission or the European Parliament. Executive federalism may be strengthened within the narrower circle of the eurozone. As proposed by some politicians, the eurozone may get its single economic policy and government as well as other institutions. That would, however, be the beginning of a two-speed European Union, which may have deep strategic implications for the whole of Europe. The entire concept of European integration would probably need deep revision. It would at least mean that the ultimate objective of a federal Europe for the entire continent has to be abandoned, at least for the time being.

Whether any of the strategic avenues will see an ambitious attempt to deepen integration remains an open question. Probably the most realistic scenario will be to move forward the safe way, by solving concrete and pressing problems on today’s

4. Habermas believes that the prospects of the growing fragmentation of Europe are “at variance with the systematic integration of a multicultural world society and [are] blocking progress towards civilizing relations of violence within societies and between states through constitutional law”.

EU agenda. Today, the two most pressing problems are to save the euro and restore growth. The additional political challenge is to keep the Union intact by preventing a possible UK exit as well as to avoid the creation of a two-speed EU. Therefore, we should expect a very determined effort with regard to more budgetary and economic policy supervision, a banking union, growth-generating initiatives like the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, a major public-private infrastructure partnership, etc. There will be pressure to avoid the deepening of divisions and steer clear of treaty revisions that would require a referendum in any member state. There needs to be a cautious, step-by-step approach. Nothing more, nothing less.

That would be nothing new for the Union. Some say that muddling through has become its mode of survival, so there will probably be no new official grand vision to guide the Union, and many will feel frustrated. Cohn-Bendit (2013) has compared European integration efforts to Søren Kierkegaard's "leaps of faith": European leaders "give the impression of advancing by leaps into the dark, piously hoping to eventually end up somewhere". Indeed, in retrospect it is difficult to avoid the impression that "the European leaders let themselves be overtaken by 'events'". Cohn-Bendit's statement that leaders lack a deeper political vision is probably unfair. There were Europeans, including politicians, who had such a vision, but it is a fact that the leaps forward in the European projects look like the result of decisions made under the pressure of immediate and sometimes quite insignificant circumstances. What is worse, they appear to have been distorted by functional constraints. Wolfgang Münchau (2013) sarcastically notes that all discussions on Europe suffer from "perspective distortion", and officials in Brussels get too "obsessed with those inter-institutional dogfights". By the same token, national leaders are naturally obsessed with the domestic perception of their performance in Brussels. According to Münchau, "In addition to seeing the world from a distorted perspective, officials also care little about deep causes, and focus mostly on technical, legal and institutional aspects". The problem with the European management of the crisis is not therefore "a general lack of reaction but a busybody technocratic response that can be relied upon to miss the point". Intellectuals and civil society leaders are focused on visions and frustrated with the lack of a vision on the part of leaders, and the public seem at times to be so totally disoriented that they do not really know what they want.

All those complaining about a lack of vision must be reminded that Europe was, after all, born of pragmatic motives, not a sterile vision. The pan-European ideologists and activists who were so vocal after the Second World War did not take part in creating the European communities of the 1950s and were not even consulted.

Historians of European integration like to stress that after 1945, for many countries and especially France, Europe was most of all looked upon as a conceptual answer to the German problem. French politicians needed "Europe" to control German economic might. Germans greeted "Europe" as a chance to regain "normality" in international relations. The Benelux countries needed a safety net to limit the consequences of a future US withdrawal as well as a broader framework to counterbalance France. The UK stayed on the sidelines at the beginning, keeping a cautious eye on developments. Concrete initiatives, starting with the European Coal and Steel Community, were the result of small coincidences. The initial desire behind that grouping was to be able to control the supply of German coal to the French steelworks. Later, a similar economic

and social imperative dictated making the Common Agricultural Policy one of the foundations of the European project. Tony Judt (1996) has called this a metaphor for the whole of European integration: concrete national interests defined the shape of the European project and the path of growth made its implementation possible. Only then was the common policy incorporated into the overall political philosophy of integration. A reverse approach would never have been so effective. Today, when the real benefits of co-operation are not sufficiently persuasive, this deeper ontology of co-operation (in particular “ever closer union”) is still invoked to explain the need for further steps, but this ontological explanation always comes *ex post*.

It is true that Europe now finds itself at a decisive juncture. Some believe that a common sense philosophy (of the type reflected in the famous Yogi Berra bon mot: when you come to a fork in the road, take it) should guide Europeans in their choice. And they should have faith in their luck.

After all, in Judt’s perception Europe was simply about luck. In addition to the post-war catharsis of history, with the unique windows of opportunity for growth in the 1950s, five out of six founding members were the richest countries in Europe. Integration is smoother by far when carried out by the rich, but the additional factor of success was the expansionist theology of the founding members, which wanted their Europe to keep on expanding to include new members. These factors of luck are no longer there, but the success of integration has produced a new bonding agent: the invisible glue of sticking together when in crisis. One should feel optimistic about the future of the European project even if faith in it is so irrational.

Every discussion on Europe has to start with the European Union. The future of the EU will obviously determine the future of the entire continent. Whether and how much the rest of the continent matters will be discussed later. The starting point for a discussion on Europe is the current crisis in the EU, especially the eurozone. For many, the future of the EU is in jeopardy, but there should be no reason for the rest to engage in *Schadenfreude*. The EU’s collapse, if it happens, may hurt the rest (or at least some of them) more than anyone else, but this crucial role of the EU is no reason to assert that it already equals Europe. In fact, would it really be a good idea to make the whole idea of Europeanness dependent on the fate of the *finalité* of the Union? Probably not. Not yet.

Based on presentations made at Palić (Serbia) in June 2012 and Pravetz (Bulgaria) in October 2013.

The imperative of growth

The priority for Europe is for it to be put back on the path of growth. As observed by Roger Cohen (2013): “Europe needs a persuasive idea of its future that can rebuild democratic support. It needs growth. For that it needs competitiveness”. It is probably worth repeating that the hangover of the European crisis, compounded by austerity and feelings of injustice, has pushed Europe to the Hamletian question: what is the purpose of it? What should be its mission? The traditional mantra has been peace, but nobody fears wars nowadays even though some politicians warned that the collapse of the euro would push Europe to the brink of war. The mission ascribed to the European project in the 1960s and 1970s was prosperity, but critics say that today’s Europe has failed to prevent the decline in living standards. A global role is seen as the mission for tomorrow, but the sceptics hasten to question even this endeavour: for them, competing with the United States or China is hardly a goal worth pursuing. These are genuine existential torments, and the only uniting theme is growth. Sometimes unfairly contrasted to austerity, it now looks like the only coalescent factor that can bring Europe together.

All practical political minds, including those of the leading elite, are focused on pro-growth measures. The transatlantic free trade zone has become a priority because of its potential impact on growth. Difficult aspects that have prevented its serious discussion in past decades have been set aside. New major public-private partnerships have been blessed by Brussels. Here, mention need only be made of the €22 billion stimulus proposal by the European Commission involving five public-private partnerships focusing on boosting innovations in medicine, electronics, aeronautics, bio-based industries, and fuel cells and hydrogen. All hands on board to jump-start growth!

Growth will come back, but the problem is for how long? For 10, 20, 30 years? And then? Robert J. Gordon (2012), using the example of the United States, questions the axiom that economic growth is continuous growth that will last indefinitely. He recalls that there was practically no economic growth before 1750 and suggests that the impressive growth rates of the past 250 years may be just an episode in human history.

The growth over the last 250 years was propelled by three industrial revolutions. Before that the pace of growth was essentially flat; British economic historians estimate that the UK's per capita real gross domestic product (GDP) grew at 0.2% per year for the four centuries through 1700. The first industrial revolution (the invention of the steam engine, etc.) accelerated the pace of growth by the beginning of the 20th century to slightly more than 1% a year. The second industrial revolution (electricity, the petrol engine, etc.), measured by its impact on the US economy, resulted in the "explosion" of the growth rate during the period 1930 to 1950, when it reached 2.5% a year. Growth then began to slow. The third revolution (computers, mobile phones, the Internet) helped to sustain growth but only at around 1.5% at the beginning of the new millennium. Gordon's forecast sets the growth rate at 1.4% for the period 2007 to 2027 and 0.2% up to 2100.

It is obvious that intensive growth is powered by the discovery of improved ways to use workers and resources. It allows the economy to expand and income to increase even with a decreasing population and labour force. Experts differ in assessing the gap between investments in information and communication technologies and improvements in productivity, but it is assumed to be between 5 and 15 years. Have the improvements in information technologies run their course, as Gordon suggests? His basic assumption is that technological advances are already having a decreasing impact on labour productivity. The innovations of the digital age are more focused on entertainment and communication than labour-saving technologies, and their impact on the quality of life is also dwindling.

It is hard to go along with Gordon's assumption at times when our imagination is roused by the explosion of new technologies. We know now that several innovations may revolutionise our manufacturing and production capabilities. 3-D printing is the first to come to mind. Today, cheap 3-D printers account for just 5% of the market. In 2012, more than 25% of the items emerging from 3-D printers were finished parts, but this industry, now worth US\$2.2 billion, will already have grown by 28% in 2013. And that is only the beginning. 3-D printers in poor countries will help people to access tools, while in rich countries they will boost advanced manufacturing. 3-D printers are already posing challenges for international copyright law but the technology will have implications and repercussions far beyond that. Environmental concerns are no less relevant in this case, particularly as a substantial proportion of 3-D printing is now carried out using plastic (Al-Rodhan 2013).

Or take driverless cars. Who could predict that in just three years from now cars that are at least partially self-driving will appear on the market? Not to mention robots taking care of household chores and looking after the elderly population. Technology will take care of our "to do" lists and monitoring tasks, but the biggest improvement will, of course, be linked to health care. Our neurological limits to attention and memory will be compensated by digital systems, and there will be significant advances in new diagnostic capabilities and permanent health monitoring. New treatment technologies will emerge. The first electronic pill was approved in 2012. Tissue engineering will revolutionise organ transplantation, and genetic testing will permit personalised medicine (Schmidt and Cohen 2013).

Erik Brynjolfsson and Andrew McAfee (2011) fear that some of these innovations could have a disruptive effect on the labour market, resulting in a rapid surge in unemployment. In the last decade, millions of people in Western societies have lost their jobs due to robotisation and this has had a profound social impact. As observed 100 years ago by Georg Simmel, the products of human creativity have reached the point where the spirit bringing them to life can no longer absorb them back. However, life knows no vacuum and new ways of gaining access to income and occupations in the face of a shrinking traditional labour market have had to be invented. The new phenomena of the “sharing economy”, “makerspaces” and “time banks” are the spontaneous reaction.

Thus even with a diminishing impact, innovations will propel the economy and society. Innovations will not dry up, but Gordon (2012) predicts that their impact will be offset by the role of what he calls “six headwinds”:

- the demographic factor: the ageing of our society will result in per capita output growing more slowly than productivity;
- the rising costs of quality education will produce a growing educational gap in society;
- growth will be held down by widening income inequalities;
- globalisation will further equalise labour and production costs;
- environmental considerations will increase production costs through more expensive technologies and heavy taxation;
- the debt factor (both household and government debt) will increasingly hamper growth.

Gordon assumes that at least some of these factors (factor price equalisation) are simply inevitable. The environmental aspects also seem certain to come about. Demography and education are easier to address and turn around.

Gordon’s prophecy is focused on the United States. He even presumes that Europeans may have a more optimistic assessment of their economic future. However, if we look at the impact of Gordon’s headwinds on the European economy, the prospect of the end of growth may become an even more probable scenario for Europe.

For the time being, there are probably a few who share these pessimistic scenarios. Not surprisingly, the official institutional forecasts seem to ignore Gordon’s gloomy analysis. Take the OECD. In “Looking to 2060” (2012), it seems to stick to the continuity of growth paradigm, predicting that per capita GDP (in 2005 purchasing power parity terms) will grow by roughly 3% annually in the non-OECD area, as against 1.7% in the OECD area. By 2060, the per capita GDP of the economies that are currently the poorest will more than quadruple, while it will double in the richest economies. Although China will be elevated to 25% above the current income level of the United States and India will reach half the present US level, the per capita rankings will remain very much the same.

Growth in the rich West will therefore slow down but not to the extent that it might be expected to cease altogether. What clearly emerges from the OECD report is that, due to unfavourable demographic trends, European countries will see a widening of the income gap with the United States, despite continued convergence in productivity and skill levels. The main message from the report is not about the end of growth but about global convergence – the fact that the developing countries are catching up with the West.

This has been the case for a decade now. Arvind Subramanian (2013) recalls that between 1960 and 2000 around 20 poor countries grew faster per capita than the United States by 1.5% on average. Japan and Korea were the clear leaders of this group. At the turn of the millennium a strategic shift occurred. There are now at least 80 states, located not only in Asia but also in Latin America and even in sub-Saharan Africa, where per capita growth exceeded the US rate by nearly 3.25%, and the crisis of 2008 and the current slowdown did not stop the process. The convergence is a stable trend. What Subramanian suggests is that while the global economy is based on growing independence, there will be a structural decoupling between the rich and poor worlds in the medium and long term. The rise in living standards in the poor countries depends mostly on what they themselves do and less on the external environment.

The world is experiencing increasing growth thanks to the non-Western world. From 1982 to 1987, the developed countries still accounted for 69% of world growth (US 29.8%, Japan 10.3%), but their share has been falling ever since. It is estimated that this share will go down to 26% in the period 2012 to 2017. The engines of growth will be China (33.6%), the US (13.9%) and India (9.4%). On the list of the top 10 growth contributors from 1982 to 1987, there were still some European countries (UK 4.2%, Germany 3.5% and Italy 2.9%). By 1997, all (except for the UK) had dropped off the list. From 2012 to 2017 the only European countries expected to remain on the list are the Russian Federation (2.5%) and Turkey (1.3%) – both non-EU countries. Rich Western European countries have disappeared from the growth map (Giles and Allen 2013).

The slowdown experienced in 2013 by China, India and Brazil should not be a reason to revise future global growth scenarios. Experts admit that earlier booms in emerging markets inevitably led to busts, but this time it is different. Growth will be broken and less reliant on the BRICs (Brazil, Russia, India and China). And the Beijing Consensus (growth being possible without democracy) will have to be revisited. State capitalism and authoritarian modernisation are reaching their limits, but even if fragmented growth continues in the emerging world the West's slowdown will probably not be accompanied by developing world decadence. Quite the contrary: the rich-poor divide may be replaced by a post-growth/growth social dichotomy.

Another aspect is the growing discomfort, in particular in the West, with the traditional means of measuring growth. More and more experts agree that GDP figures will be more or less meaningless. Simplicity is the advantage of GDP; it is all about economic output. Since its timid introduction after the Great Depression, it has steadily improved as an indicator. Today's critics focus on its failure to include the value of home-provided health care and education, but that is not the only point. Equally, there are obvious difficulties in measuring the value of work-related activities.

The main problem is, however, the very limited role of GDP in reflecting the impact of the economy on individual well-being. Joseph Stiglitz, Amartya Sen and Jean-Paul Fitoussi (2009), at the request of the President of France in 2008, prepared a report containing a number of recommendations aimed at shifting the emphasis from measuring economic production to measuring people's feeling of well-being. They suggest measuring income and consumption rather than production, and focusing on the household while considering income and consumption together with wealth. Other recommendations focus on distribution, the inclusion of non-market activities, the quality of lifestyle indicators and environmental pressures.

A recent study under the auspices of the London School of Economics suggests that GDP should be supplemented with a broader indicator of economic well-being – ideally tracking median household incomes (Lambert 2013). GDP fails to reflect the economic well-being of most citizens, while median household income gives a sense of what people receive out of national income and is an indication of the living standard of the typical household. This indicator has also prompted a discussion on the models of distribution.

A new systemic approach not only to measuring growth but to its very conception has been suggested for years. The essence of the new approach is encapsulated in the term “sustainable development”. As Jeffrey Sachs (2013), its main advocate, puts it: “Standard economic policies aim for growth [whereas] sustainable development aims for growth that is broadly shared across the income scale and that is also environmentally sound”. Mainstream economics makes a distinction between short term and long term. Sustainable economics cares for long-term values (e.g. the environment).

One thing is clear: the changing paradigm of growth will have a big impact on European societies. This possible future social change gives rise to much speculation. Tyler Cowen is one of the most well-known prophets of the post-growth society. His preoccupation is the US but his findings can also be applied to Europe. His starting premise is that economic growth is levelling off and rates of return are decreasing because all the “low-hanging fruit” (innovations and investments that have high returns) have been consumed for growth (2011). The stagnation in GDP and median income in recent decades in the US (and European societies too) is evident.

Cowen concurs with Gordon that the pace of technological development has slowed and the general population is benefiting less from new ideas. The trend is towards decoupling the material quality of life from monetised measures of economic growth and income, since improvements in the quality of life, although very real, do not show up in conventional econometric terms. If anything, we can expect an implosion in metrics like GDP in the coming years, even as quality of life improves enormously, though recent innovations have been mostly incremental. The exception is the Internet, which may be important in terms of personal happiness – particularly for the well educated and curious – but not for generating either revenue or employment.

Beyond the income slowdown, there is an additional slowdown factor: an increasing share of the economy consists of education and health care. Cowen uses this diagnosis to attack the wrong policies pursued today in the US: instead of facing up to this scarcity, politicians promote tax cuts and income redistribution policies to benefit favoured constituencies.

Stagnation will produce a new society. It will be run by the tyranny of merit. In his new book, Cowen (2013) depicts how the future society will be organised on the basis of an ever-expanding array of rankings. The big divide will be between those who can master technology and those who will be rendered useless by it. An elite 10% to 15% of Americans with the ability to run high technology will enjoy wealth and a comfortable life, while others will face stagnant wages, work stress and long-term unemployment. The state will be unable to offer the previous level of welfare, and many will accept worse public services in exchange for lower taxes. However, the have-nots will not be in the mood for revolt. An ageing population will be more conservative. Aid for the poor will be slashed but benefits for the old preserved.

Is this a vision applicable to Europe? There is no doubt that many would think that Europe's prolonged struggle to overcome the slump initially started by the 2008 crisis is a sign of more troubles to come in the future. Europe may start facing the post-growth syndrome even sooner than the United States. Unlike in American society, Europeans are no longer obsessed with the material accumulation of wealth. Their pursuit of a better quality of life is more focused on free time and non-material pleasures. However, Europe is no less addicted to growth as a tool for solving social and political problems than the United States. In fact, the European model of a welfare society would be unthinkable without rapid growth.

It is true that Europe's rapid growth in the 1950s and 1960s was produced by unique circumstances – the need to rebuild its economies devastated by the war, to catch up after decades of pre-war stagnation, and to face the communist threat, including as a social and economic model. In this connection, the rapidly improving welfare of Europe was a unique element in facilitating integration. The success of the European project was made possible because it was incorporated into a mutually reinforcing link between growth and integration. Growth was so rapid that it could generate a loss of reality. The future was perceived to be based on endless growth, and this paradigm probably has to be seriously revisited. It would perhaps be too early to start alarming Europeans about the inevitable coming of perpetual stagnation. At the same time, Europe should begin to learn how to solve social tensions, diversity challenges and intergenerational relations without the blind hope that growth is the answer.

One risk of stagnation in Europe, and probably the most serious one, is the result of demographic trends. Europe may become a society with a very old population, with all its consequences for dynamism, innovative thinking and mobility. Europe has every reason to feel nervous.

By 2015 more people will die in Europe than are born, and by 2030, most European countries will have a median age exceeding 40 years. Several, practically all of them in central, eastern and southern Europe (Germany, Poland, Ukraine, Italy, Austria, Switzerland, Romania, Bulgaria, Greece, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Serbia, Slovenia and others, even Spain and Portugal) will have a median age above 45 years – the threshold for what is known as a “post-mature society”. In Germany the median age will reach 50 in 2037.

The most pessimistic projections suggest that in order to have a stable age dependency ratio (the relative size of the working and non-working populations) Europe will have to admit a potentially destabilising 1.3 billion (!) migrants by 2050, which would hardly be possible from a political, social and even logistical point of view. The destructive impact of a bad age dependency ratio can best be seen in the last two decades of the economic development of Japan, where ageing (together with the bursting of a financial bubble) put a brake on the country's dynamism.

Europe will have to face the "pensioner bulge". People at or over 65 (the standard retirement age) will constitute more than 30% of the population by 2060. In the 1980s, UK National Health Service workers retiring at 60 years of age could expect to spend one third of their lives drawing a pension. Today, retirement is closer to 45% of their lifespans. The French spend more than 25 years of their lives in retirement and the Italians and Spanish more than 20 years. Retirement will increasingly last longer than the time spent paying into pension schemes, which naturally makes the economy unsustainable and dramatically changes social patterns.

Some people say that there is enough wealth accumulated in Europe to provide the necessary cushion for many generations to come. After all, wealth generates wealth, so a post-growth society in Europe does not mean a poor or impoverished society. But it may definitely mean a post-work society.

Ross Douhat (2013) points out that we are witnessing the advent of the old utopian dream – life spent on leisure and occasional work without a rigid regime. Yet the Utopia is not coming in the way one expected: from the top down. A life without work was thought to be the privilege of the rich. From the upper classes it was supposed to spread down the social ladder, but it is happening the other way round. People from the lower strata drop out of work and find ways to live more or less permanently without steady employment. They will return to the workforce from time to time and then drop out again. This will develop into an entire post-employment lifestyle, but, as evidenced by the Stockholm riots in 2013, a post-work mentality has its limits. The immigrant community, in particular, is prone to social frustration, since many of its young people seek careers, material consumption and social advancement.

The post-work society is analysed with worry and concern. Most sociologists associate the phenomenon with other aspects of the dismantling of community bonds: family breakdown, empty churches, hedonism, the crisis of democracy, etc. It is believed that the post-work lifestyle cripples the economy and further restrains growth. It also hampers social mobility – in Germany there are now many families with three generations living on Hartz-IV social benefits. Professional and social aspirations have been abandoned by many, and the feeling of rejection is compensated by an abundance of free time. However, this does not apply to all: more than 30% of Hartz-IV recipients report psychological problems.

Europe is already full of people with plenty of time for tourism, sports and family duties. They seem to be discovering the pleasures of one of the most hard-won freedoms of the age of the empowerment of the individual: the right to not have a boss. Regimented working weeks and long working hours are increasingly the prerogative of the upper classes.

The practical manifestations of these phenomena are seen in many societies. Maureen Dowd deplures, for example, the “gaze de navel” that seems to have engulfed France (2013). People there, she believes, have entered into a state of mind Camus described as “should I kill myself, or have a cup of coffee?” and are too exhausted even to be rude. “It is not that they have lost faith in their superiority. They have lost faith that the rest of the world sees it.” Gaspard Koenig (2013) believes that the real problem there is the conflict of the generations. Baby boomers are fearful, risk-averse and inward looking. On the other side of the line is the D-Generation (deficit generation): people who, living 40 years after the last balanced budget was adopted in France, have their mentality shaped by the deficit paradigm. They live without job prospects or hopes of climbing the property ladder and without illusions about the efficiency of the health care system or pension scheme. Half of all French people aged 18 to 24 would like to live abroad! The problem is that in most European countries the social mood is not so very different.

Another of the headwinds referred to by Gordon that may have an impact on the characteristics of European societies is growing income inequality. Crises always expose the class nature of societies. Class divisions are regarded as the main concern, primarily in the UK, although income inequalities are rising everywhere in Europe, a trend that became widespread in the late 1980s. In the last decade, inequality has even grown in traditionally egalitarian countries like Sweden, Denmark or Finland. The Gini coefficient of household incomes has risen between 2007 and 2011 by 6.6 percentage points in Ireland, by 6.0 percentage points in Spain, by 1.9 percentage points in the United Kingdom, by 1.5 percentage points in Italy. This all shows that inequality is not imposed by macroeconomic forces, technological change or the globalisation process but is mainly a result of policies as noted by Joseph Stiglitz (2013). And it is not the effect of a crisis. Stiglitz has shown that even with GDP growth most citizens in the US have seen their standard of living erode in the last decade (2011).

The price of inequality is slower growth and a lower GDP. Stiglitz’s analysis proves that inequality weakens democracy, undermines the rule of law and diminishes the sense of fairness and justice, leading us to question even our identity. In the US in 2007 the top 0.1% received in a day and a half about what the bottom 90% received in a year. Income inequality impairs equality of opportunity: in the US, the bottom fifth of the income scale can see only 58% of their children moving up to higher groups (in Denmark the figure is 75%). However, Europe is unfortunately catching up as far as these trends are concerned.

The Dēmos think tank, in *Stacked deck* (2013), made a strong case proving the impact of income on political life. Whenever the views and policy preferences of the less affluent diverge from the views of the rich, the government will certainly take account of the views of the rich. The super-rich are “supercitizens with an outsized footprint in the public square”. Rising inequality hampers social mobility. Some call the phenomenon the “Great Gatsby curve”. The super-rich opt to pull up the opportunity ladder behind them. They promote elite education and meritocracy instead of social solidarity instruments (Freeland 2013). And rich people will always resist changes in income patterns.

However, along with all the need for the right policies for distributive justice, growth remains essential. According to a World Bank report (2013) study, four fifths of the improvements to the incomes of the poorest 40% in 118 countries can be attributed to improvements in average incomes. That is, distributive justice comes mainly from general economic growth, not redistribution. Growth is still more important than equity.

One of the headwinds described by Gordon (2012) interplays with the problem of inequality: the growing educational divide, a serious problem in the United States. Thanks to the affordability and good quality of its public higher education system, Europe is less vulnerable in this respect. Its problem is the total fragmentation of the education system. With the help of the Bologna system, congruence has been introduced in the organisation of higher education. However, the curricula and systems at lower education levels reflect the old parochialism of European education. Luckily, education is on the threshold of a major revolution. Opinions differ on how the digital age can change education and help to bridge the gaps, but adaptive learning programmes are already being developed and virtual university programmes are being put in place. Europe should use the change as an opportunity to build new synergies to improve educational output.

Europe is preoccupied with the sustainability of its welfare state model. However, policies to address the challenge of rising inequalities must go far beyond dealing with the issue of the welfare state. There needs to be the right economic agenda, including curbing the financial sector and adopting better competition laws and principles of corporate governance. Democratising access to justice and increasing its efficiency should be an important part of the agenda. Education and health care reforms are also essential, as, last but not least, is the right employment policy.

Finally, preventing new divisions within society has become as important as preventing divisions between nations. This should be a serious signal to the European institutions, in particular the EU.

These divisions and tensions are inevitable. Moving from a society of abundance (if not saturation) to a society of (at least relative) scarcity will be something that no previous social revolution in modern European history can be compared with. Previous social revolutions involving the mass movement of people from the countryside to the cities (from agriculture to industry and then to services) or the baby-boom revolution of the 1950s and the 1960s were successfully tackled thanks to economic growth, but now this possibility will be no longer available. How much will this transition influence people's mindsets? Will European societies be taken over by the psychology of scarcity? It is clear that there may be a relative scarcity of certain opportunities (e.g. jobs) or even services and goods. This may not be severe enough for one to speak of poverty but it may have an impact on mindsets, an impact likely to be comparable to that seen in the shortage societies of the former socialist countries in eastern Europe. Whether this feeling of scarcity can be balanced by the abundance of private time is another matter. As some suggest, the scarcity mindset can have a very debilitating effect. It creates tunnel vision and weakens willpower and mental capacity (Mullainathan and Shafir 2013).

Whether a new mindset of the post-growth society can trigger social revolts is doubtful. There are prophecies about the coming of the age of rage but there will most probably be no ideological or political platform to organise the feeling of anger on a mass scale. Nevertheless, the question of whether the new society will be forced to make sacrifices with regard to some of the rights and freedoms enjoyed so far should be given serious thought.

Sociologists are busy trying to diagnose the state of our changing society and chart out the direction of change. The change affecting our societies is far-reaching, deep and rapid, so it is no wonder that it is so difficult to capture. What is striking is our lack of confidence in predicting its direction. The only point of reference in our descriptions is the past. We avoid juxtaposing the transitional patterns with the future final shape of the change, which is why there are so many “post” prefixes used to describe the present: we talk about the post-industrial society, post-modern society, post-consumption society, post-growth society or post-mature society. The list is so long that we naturally end up with the term post-society without an adjective, but that would probably sound too decadent even if true.

The term “post” has become so important in defining the future that one wonders whether this type of society needs a dynamic political structure in the form of the European Union at all. But it will definitely need it when the EU produces an attractive vision of the future society, one that will enable us to start referring to the present state of affairs using the prefix “pre-”.

The European project will be regarded as important when it is seen by the citizens of Europe as steering them through the challenging transition phase towards this new society. This is a common test for all European organisations, whose problem is that they are conservative by nature and their agendas and approaches tend to reflect past problems. In times of rapid change, their relevance depends on their ability to read the future.

Based on presentations made at Tuheljske Toplice (Croatia) in June 2013 and Palić (Serbia) in June 2012.

Europe and the diffusion of power

The European Union is an international entity forming an integral part of the global political order both in its domestic and international dimensions. The interesting aspect of almost all detailed analyses of the European project is that they look at Europe in its microcosm, hardly touching on the international dimension.

At the same time it is difficult to discuss the strategic purpose of the European project without taking into account the broader global perspective. This perspective is sometimes not optimistic. Disoriented, anachronistic, powerless, resigned, irrelevant – that is how Europe is often seen, in particular through the global prism. This is a mostly unfair assessment, although it does have a mobilising effect for those who feel the basic rationale for the deepening of European integration is to make Europe competitive and powerful on the world scene. The argument is that Europe has to integrate further in order to count as a global player, and the engine of European integration, so far mainly driven by intra-European considerations of ensuring peace, fostering prosperity and providing solidarity, must now be driven by external considerations – the need to make Europe globally competitive. The rise of China and India are now the rationale for more Europe, and this approach is reviving the understanding of integration as a power project.

Internationally, the most hotly debated aspect of international politics is the power shift on the global stage. This shift is associated with the demise of the West and the ascendance of the East. The rising profile of China, as well as that of India or Brazil, appeals to the geostrategic imagination and political emotions and prompts much speculation about a power-sharing formula that would give solid assurances of the stability and predictability of international relations in the years to come.

The future management of global affairs is sometimes reduced by scholars and commentators to the size and composition of a group of powers that will take responsibility for leadership on the world stage. In other words, it boils down to the size of the “G-format”. Experts spend most of their time speculating about what G-format is desirable and appropriate, that is how many states it should include and which in particular. One thing is clear, the G1 formula as practised in history, including under the title *Pax Americana*, no longer looks viable. Will it be a G2, 3, 4 or even G20 arrangement? Or perhaps, as predicted some years ago, will a formula reflecting confrontational tension between the West and the rest be the most probable scenario?

Future outlooks of the world vary, starting from dark dystopian prognoses suggesting the inevitability of a G-0 world full of chaos, rivalries and conflict. This forecast is based on the assumption that the weakening of the West will result in a political vacuum. The demise of the United States will provoke global chaos, with the world having to cope with the challenges it faces without a global “sheriff”. No state or coalition of states will be able to compensate for the American exit, and the world will nosedive to a state of decadent anarchy (Kagan 2012; Kupchan 2012). There are, of course, more optimistic scenarios. According to Zbigniew Brzezinski (2012), the West, even if overtaken in terms of GDP volume by China or India, can sustain its leadership role, but to be a leader it must become stronger. Brzezinski suggests that the first step in this direction should be to embrace Russia and Turkey as integral elements of the Western family.

In the East, the end of the Western-centric model of the management of world affairs is not exactly feared. The existing pattern of Western leadership has many critics there and has to be replaced by a new, more balanced arrangement. Many new ideas for a better world order are inspired by the concept of “great convergence” – a “one world” logic based on the merging of the political capacities and philosophies of East and West (Mahbubani 2013).

What many of these futuristic analyses have in common is a vision of the world ruled by big entities. In the West the feeling of angst comes from the prospect of a world led by poor giants (China or India), and the response is seen in the consolidation of liberal empires, as suggested in particular by Niall Ferguson (2011). Even Timothy Garton Ash believes that the 21st century will be the century of giants (2012b). His conclusion is simple: if Europe wants to have a strong role in the management of world affairs, it has to become a giant itself, a liberal empire in its own right. This is debatable. A world ruled by big entities is hardly a vision that appeals to everyone – it is also contestable whether Europe should shape its common identity simply by the drive to become big. A world driven by giants acting in concert may carry a promise of more stability and predictability but would imply the continuation of a management model based on the paradigms of domination, balance of power or hierarchy. What if the future of power relationships is based on a different premise?

The period between 1998 and 2008, which is regarded as the longest uninterrupted period of growth, is also seen as a golden time for small and mid-sized states. The backdrop of the financial crises of 2008 to 2009 can be seen as proof that size is key to economic survival in times of adversity, especially from the perspective of the small countries that were seriously affected, such as Iceland. Pressure to join the EU increased substantially in Iceland during the crisis but subsided once economic development was back to normal.

Will size really matter? The size of a state in today’s political situation gives it considerable bargaining power in trade talks, where, incidentally, the EU already acts as a single entity. The size (of arsenals and defence capabilities) matters in disarmament and hard-security related international negotiations, but small and mid-sized states can otherwise navigate quite safely in the waters of international politics. Their voice, as a solo performance, is of little consequence most of the time but at least their

sense of dignity and independence is not compromised by a sanctioned diktat from a concert of global giants. Who knows, the future may well belong to small states and size may not matter anymore.

However, the main factor that would make size irrelevant is the changing nature of power, which is now being influenced by two mega-trends: the growing cosmopolitanisation of our societies, which is reflected in the ever-deepening process of the erosion of the nation-state model, and individual empowerment. The latter was referred to as being mega-trend number one for the next two decades in a recent report published by the National Intelligence Council (2012). This trend, the most important of all trends since it is both a cause and effect of other global trends (including the diffusion of power but also demography and access to food, water and energy), is set to change the existing paradigms of power and politics. Obviously the increased role of the individual may generate new threats (private cyber-disruptions or terrorism), but experts also see the potential for greater individual initiatives to solve global challenges.

Individual empowerment is mainly the result of increasing income. Taken en masse it is linked to the rise of the world middle class. People free from poverty and the fear of poverty are freedom-conscious and develop autonomous civic and political identities. Universal education and the entry of women into the labour market were traditionally seen as factors for empowerment. Today, the main catalyst is the Internet and new wireless communications. The Internet gives access to information and has created unprecedented opportunities for action. For many vulnerable groups, including women in traditional Muslim societies, social networks have turned into “safe spaces”. Individuals can organise themselves without the state or any other intermediary. Their interaction constitutes a parallel platform of international relations. Sometimes, individuals organise themselves across borders against the other parallel world – the world of the nation states. A good example of this was the international campaign against the conclusion of the Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement. The empowerment of the individual will be reflected sooner or later in the ideological sphere. New doctrines of political order will emerge, and the relationship between individual and group identity will be increasingly tense.

Both trends – cosmopolitanisation and individual empowerment – will have a deep impact on the notion of power. Both already have a considerable impact on the viability of understanding the European Union as a power project.

The notion of power is still central to the political order both domestically and internationally and is a core element of the political role of the European Union. In simple terms, it means the ability to induce desired behaviour by others and, as pointed out by Jared Diamond (2012), it has always been integral to human civilisation. People have been ready to accept hierarchies and dominance for two basic reasons: to ensure security and to guarantee justice. Power everywhere is based on human vulnerability and uncertainty.

The global order maintains its hold on power. As Joseph Nye (2011) suggests, “global politics is power politics”, but the way in which we measure power has changed significantly over the centuries. We used to measure it by the size of colonies and the weight of gold reserves (Spain in the 16th century), the volume of trade and the

health of finances (the Netherlands in the 17th century), the size of population and army (France in the 18th century), the strength of industry and the navy (the UK in the 19th century). By the end of the 20th century, power was mainly measured by the size of GDP, but today, as Nye asserts, power in international relations lies in the ability to persuade others. It is the country with the best story that wins.

The changing nature of power in international relations is defined in terms of switching from “possession goals” to “milieu goals”. This transformation means that instead of possessing territories, resources and infrastructure states now prefer to have effective access to material and non-material goods. What counts is the ability to satisfy their needs and values through access. The scope of what is considered a public good is growing.

But some hold strong views that the concept of power based on the system of nation states is increasingly irrelevant. Nation states, even when acting in concert, are powerless to tackle the global challenges that pose a growing threat to the existence of human civilisation. Global warming, the depletion of resources, nuclear fallout and demographic trends escape traditional approaches to power and inspire new utopian visions. The idea of a world government, as outlined for example by Jacques Attali (2011), is still alive.

However, the two mega-trends of cosmopolitanisation and individual empowerment have an even more profound impact: they result in power diffusion and, as shown by Joseph Nye, power diffusion is more consequential than a power shift.

The international environment resulting from these trends restricts the power of states even more. The real world of international politics increasingly resembles the world of the Internet – everyone is connected, but no one is in charge. The ascendance of the individual as an actor on the world stage is sometimes seen through the prism of the end of the state’s monopoly on international action. This applies in particular to the end of the state monopoly over the use of force, but we are also witnessing the end of the utility of force. This can partly be explained by the excess of force potential (mutually assured destruction linked to the existence of nuclear arms as well as today’s uncontrolled proliferation of light weapons). The Iraq War made everyone aware of how prohibitive the costs of a military operation can be – wars and occupations have become too expensive. More importantly, the societal conscience of Western civilisation does not accept pointless victims even in small operations, and public support for military operations is waning.

The dark side of the diffusion of power is the dwindling capability of governments to control the state of affairs within their own territories. The phenomenon of failed and rogue states has escaped resolution for more than 20 years now and is undermining the world order. There is also the general problem of the economic sustainability of states. Parag Khanna (2011) reminds us that more than 130 states regularly receive food assistance. He describes several states as orphan states, which are states in which foreign aid accounts for more than 50% of the budget and the annual income per capita is less than US\$500.

The two mega-trends, cosmopolitanisation and individual empowerment, are also eroding people’s sense of loyalty to the state. Those with multiple identities do

not want to be bound by exclusive loyalty, and patriotic commitments are acquiring new meaning. In the past, states used to tell us who our friends and foes were abroad, which foreigners were to be liked and which to be hated. The state had the mandate to tell us when and how much we should be ready to sacrifice for the sake of our homeland.

National identities, however, still constitute the basic point of reference in defining our affiliations and nothing is in a position to replace them. New class tribalism as suggested by various neo-Marxist schools is unlikely to take root. Likewise, cosmopolitanisation has its limits – we remain local in our perception of the world. Local horizons are widening and change location as we move from place to place in our increasingly mobile lives, but remain locally defined.

The diffusion of power has such a mesmerising effect that it has triggered prophecies about the end of power as such. Moisés Naím (2013) asserts that pyramids of power are collapsing and micropowers frustrate macropower. It is a fact that the political scene in many countries is becoming increasingly fragmented. Naím recalls that in 2012 only 4 out of 34 OECD countries had a government with an absolute majority. At the same time, developments in Hungary and Turkey have provided enough fuel to stoke anxiety about the threat of majoritarianism.

Civic initiatives for new forms of democracy as manifested in the “liquid democracy” concept are still too ephemeral and it is too early to judge their long-term impact on the existing democratic model. However, the voice of citizens is becoming increasingly audible outside the traditional channels. Naím explains the weakening of power by reference to three revolutions: the “More Revolution”, the “Mobility Revolution” and the “Mentality Revolution”. In what he calls the “Age of Profusion”, people have access to more wealth and wealth gives them more self-confidence. Mobility is reflected in the number of 220 million migrants and 1 billion short-term foreign residents crossing national borders every year. The Mentality Revolution is increasingly individualistic. In many European capitals, singles constitute close to 50% of households.

Even if the assumption of the end of power is overestimated, one thing is clear: the world is increasingly difficult to manage and control, and unpredictability and chaos have become the norm. This observation has become the starting point for the “antifragility” theory proposed by Nassim Nicholas Taleb (2012). The theory, even if speculative, should be seen as an aid in redefining our order-obsessed mindsets. Instead of preventing unavoidable changes we should start using this inevitability to make the best use of them. Some things can gain from disorder. Can the world become more manageable through alternatives to the traditional approach based on power hierarchies and power politics? New ideas in this respect came from Anne-Marie Slaughter some years ago. Her solution was to base the new world order on the disaggregation of states and on direct networks of co-operation among state institutions and bodies on the international stage (2004). The vision of replacing a hierarchical order with networks is, however, based on an illusion. As we know from the example of cyberspace, even in networks some participants are always more equal than others.

With respect to managing a post-growth society in Europe, an even more relevant aspect is the changing paradigm of power as seen from the domestic perspective and the impact on power of the empowerment of the individual.

As already pointed out, the future shape of political institutions and the character of political processes will increasingly be decided along the state/individual axis. Never in the past have both the state and the individual been so strong, and the strengthening of these two poles of the axis will inevitably produce tensions and conflicts that will have an impact on many aspects of social and political life.

The governance gap will mean that, while states will be increasingly able to monitor the lives of their citizens, they will be less able to control their choices. The nation state will not disappear, but the phenomenon of “hybrid” coalitions involving state and non-state actors will be more common. The empowerment of the individual will complicate decision making, and views will be increasingly fragmented due to the specific interests of variously defined minority groups. The empowerment of the individual is increasing citizens’ autonomy vis-à-vis the state to a point never witnessed in the past.

The state is also now more powerful than ever before. It seems to be present everywhere, although this presence is increasingly refined, polymorphic, and non-transparent. In many ways, we have to deal with an invisible state. Citizens are increasingly doing business with the state through a virtual space: we pay taxes, obtain permits and apply for various administrative documents via the Internet and do not associate the state with its physical presence – buildings, offices, etc.

Paradoxically, both the individual and the state want each other to be stronger. The individual wants the state to be effective and his or her expectations are quite high. At the same time he or she does not trust the state. Citizens’ expectations are manifold. A study conducted in Poland by Jacek Raciborski in 2009 (after the financial crisis had started sweeping across Europe) confirmed that their expectations, especially in times of adversity, are quite high (2011). Almost all citizens want the state to be effective in protecting law and order as well as ensuring their defence. In other words, in ensuring internal and external security. With regard to the second tier of expectations, 90% of citizens interviewed want the state to ensure health care for everybody, provide housing for the poor and pay welfare benefits to the unemployed. A smaller but still quite considerable consensus concerns the role of the state in supporting the economy and controlling markets. The individual wants the state to assist failing industries and extend guarantees for private bank savings. People also want the state to ensure the coherence of society and, in particular, defend public morality, as well as apply pro-natalist policies. Citizens’ expectations also extend to the state’s participation in public life, especially with regard to protecting basic freedoms like freedom of speech and freedom of assembly.

In turn, the state wants the individual to be stronger but it also wants to control the individual. It wants the individual to take care of his or her own needs for the simple reason that it is increasingly incapable of meeting expectations. Globalisation is imposing on the state the burden of preparing national answers to challenges that will never find an effective national response and can only be dealt with on a transnational basis.

The trend of cosmopolitanisation is changing citizens' identities. Combined with the effects of migration, this is resulting in the phenomenon of multiple identities, and the virtual space is amplifying this multiplicity even more.

The state is no longer in control of the loyalty of its citizens. This relationship has never been symmetrical, but when the individual was disloyal to the state it was called treason. When the state was disloyal to its citizens it was called *raison d'état* (nowadays it takes the form of "national security considerations"). Perhaps referring to the loyalty issue as the "*ibi patria, ubi bene*" phenomenon would be too much, but the tendency is clear. The individual wants to feel free in deciding his or her state affiliations. In 2012, 950 Americans renounced their citizenship, but in the first half of 2013 the figure had already reached 1 800. The numbers are small but the tendency is transparent even if the explanation is quite simple: the wish to avoid paying double taxes.

The tension along the state versus individual line is reflected in two topical challenges that are currently being hotly debated. The first is the security versus privacy dilemma, and the second is the security versus justice dilemma. The former has become quite an emotional issue due to the snooping affair that came to light in 2013. Suddenly, it turned out that even Americans who seemed to be preoccupied with security were starting to cherish privacy more. People began demanding transparency from the state, but probably without realising that transparency does not necessarily generate trust. While people want the boundaries of privacy to be clearly defined, few remember that privacy for most strata of the population is a relatively new right – it came with the bourgeois revolutions. However, privacy in the years to come will be a precious asset. Without it, it is impossible to develop a strong identity, and having a distinct identity will be a personal goal of the individual. The data revolution may strip citizens of much of their control over their personal information and thus disrupt their efforts at identity building. States will try to recover control over individuals. The phenomenon of "hidden people" may remain, but the cost of this invisibility will increasingly be the irrelevance of those hidden people.

Let us recall again the futuristic vision depicted by Cohen and Schmidt in their book *The new digital age* (2013): "Identity will be the most valuable commodity for citizens in the future, and it will exist primarily online ... Periods of people's lives will be frozen in time, and easily surfaced for all to see." Our lives will be transparent at any given time, as will our personal histories. "Virtual honour killing" may become the most popular type of violence in society. Destroying a reputation will count more than depriving a person of freedom or property.

The new relationship between the state and the individual prompts many questions. If it is not a zero-sum game, are there any losers? In fact, there is a loser, which is the invisible part of the equation: the loser is the community. The stronger the state and the stronger the individual, the weaker the community.

This new relationship also gives rise to much speculation about the future of the state. Inevitably, the recent crisis has amplified extremist positions. Libertarians have found convincing proof in the argument that the welfare role leads the state to bankruptcy, so in the present circumstances they say the indebted state should first of all recover financially. The recovery should be based on limiting the role of

the state to being a guarantor of positive rights. On the other hand, the crisis has also emboldened a new type of anarchist, and the empowerment of the individual has sometimes degenerated into extremism. The United States is now seeing the strengthening of the movement of “sovereign citizens”. Their new method of warfare is so-called paper terrorism, illustrated in the extreme case of the American couple who filed more than 250 billion dollars in liens, demands for compensatory damages and other claims against more than a dozen state or county officials, including a sheriff, county attorneys and others. Even if laughable, these claims are intimidating and, what is more important, dealing with them is expensive and time-consuming. In several states, any lien – even totally invalid – must be accepted for consideration. The “sovereign citizens” movement is therefore one that tries to paralyse the state (Goode 2013).

A total assault on the privacy of the individual should also be called an extremist policy. Deeply felt emotions were stirred by the recent snooping scandals. Most would probably agree that the danger is not surveillance per se. Intrusive surveillance by the state is inevitable and serves a clear public interest. The danger is the absence of an impartial arbiter, and a system of vigilant oversight of the activities of state organs to prevent abuses of power (Keller 2013). The individual today is too strong to tolerate the return of a police state, but there should be clear and inviolable boundaries of privacy to be respected by the state.

The traditional debate on the future of the state has been dominated by two opposing currents. One school predicts the socialisation of the state – societies will humanise the state machinery. The other school believes that the increasing capacities of states will lead to the “nationalisation” of societies, which would submit citizens to nation-state ideologies. Although it might be thought that cosmopolitanisation would make the latter thesis less convincing, it is still holding strong. The recent explanation by US President Obama that National Security Agency (NSA) snooping was conducted only against foreigners is a manifestation of this tribal approach.

Striking a balance between the two schools, a hypothesis has emerged that we are moving towards a hybrid state, which is a state that would combine the role of the traditional nation-state model with the growing role of international institutions and new forms of individual activism.

For the European Union, it may all mean that the tension between the “Europe of States” and the “Europe of Citizens” will grow. It may also happen that the emergence of a parallel world of the individual will render all the disputes over the powers of the Union quite irrelevant.

Already now, for quite a number of Europeans the problem with the EU lies in its failure to gain sufficiently strong acceptance from its citizens. One has to agree with Luuk van Middelaar that collective European acceptance will not result from power or habit. In all discussions on how much real power is vested in Brussels, people very rarely ask themselves a question that is of paramount importance when seeking public confidence: is Europe real? It would be tempting to call it a paper reality while the only real reality is the Europe of states. After all, money or governments exist because we believe they exist, and it may be the same with the abstract notion of Europe. In the narrow sense, the Europe of Offices does, of course, exist. It exists

as brute facts. However, does the Europe of Offices exist as an institutional fact? Do people believe in the European functional role of Offices, and do they acknowledge their “status function”? In many countries the European elections are seen primarily through the prism of selecting people to enjoy privileges (salaries, pensions, travel) and not to wield any particular power. Institutional facts rarely have a physical basis and often stem from a speech act or convention. Institutional facts can exist only on the basis of acceptance, as European politicians and functionaries have quickly realised. In seeking the status of institutional fact, Europe switched early on from “we the states” to “we the citizens”.

The original sin of the European project was, however, to believe that traditional European power games could become irrelevant. Following Weberian logic, the EU’s founding fathers tried to de-dramatise European politics. The first years of the European project are often called the “flight from history into bureaucracy”. In the European Community conceived by Jean Monnet, traditional diplomacy was emphatically resisted. Problems were expected to be technocratic and the partners were imbued with a community spirit. Thus, the common Europe created at the beginning of the 1950s limited itself to economic and legal policies, with no need for a public. “Public indifference was the least of the resulting evils. An invisible, anonymous power arouses distrust in the public”, says van Middelaar (2013). This original sin still haunts the European project today – the European public distrusts Brussels.

Power politics, despite hopes that bureaucracy would make it irrelevant, have continued. The manifestation of this power struggle was the dispute over the role of the political engine in the European project. Contrary to the wish of many smaller member states, it is the Council that has taken precedence in the hierarchy of power over the European Commission, and the Commission does not have the power to forge ahead with integration without it. Further, though since 1972 the Commission has expanded its powers (without formal changes to the Treaty of Rome), the obligation to comply with European law has been watered down. For instance, since 1984 the German Constitutional Court has had a doctrine of precedence according to which European law normally takes precedence but does not do so automatically over clauses in the German Constitution or the protections offered by German law. The Europe of States thus does not want to lose control over the European project either in how it is chartered or in how it is interpreted. In 1961, the practice of holding European summits began, institutionalised as the European Council in 1975 and then entrusted with a foreign policy “monopoly” in 1993, legitimising states’ control over European integration. The role of the Council was further strengthened with the Lisbon Treaty (2009). The European Council is the central place to take integration further. The outcome is clear: power rests with the Council and, in case things go really awry, directly with the member states.

Another battlefield of the power game concerned the voting rules in the Council. Sometimes, in the heat of the moment, the entire future of Europe has been identified as hanging on these rules. All European treaties, contrary to most federative models, require a unanimous decision. The first attempt to introduce a majority provision came in 1984 with proposals by Altiero Spinelli (whose idea was that in order to be adopted a decision needed the support of 6 out of 10 states,

including the biggest 4). The 1985 Craxi coup made at least one assault on the tyranny of the consensus: a process to amend existing treaties could start without unanimity. Some experts believe that the 1966 Luxembourg Compromise on when to switch to majority voting in the Council, a compromise prompted by French intransigence, was the decisive turn leading to a new European order. It is probably based too much on wishful thinking, and some would say that since 1984 Europe has at least had to live with the ghost of a veto. However, it is still there and can still block further integration. The proposals made from 2005 to 2007 that only those who ratified the European Constitution (a minimum of four fifths) should be required to abide by it failed to take real shape. It is no surprise that even now the question of how much is enough to proceed further with integration is seen as central to projects defining the future of the European Union.

It all boils down to the level of confidence among member states that the project is not driven by any particular national interest (of several member states or even just one). If this confidence is still lacking among at least some member states, then how can it be expected from the even more suspicious public?

All this may become irrelevant when power becomes really diffused. The European Union's further development may be greatly facilitated by it.

A utopian ideal seeks to replace the concept of political power, of which a modern state is the emanation, with that of meritocratic power. This would result in a society organised and ruled by people chosen on the basis of merit. The European Commission in particular has been seen as a supranational agent of meritocratic rule and is still seen as such today by some observers who, on this basis, call for its powers to be strengthened. If the concept of the non-political meritocratic management of European affairs still has a future, then the European Commission's role should grow.

The recent economic crisis caused much political turbulence across Europe. It removed from power more than 20 governments and undermined the credibility of political institutions and the political class. To recreate political stability, political leaders had to set up technocratic governments. Greece and Italy were among those countries that experienced the re-emergence of the idea of technocratic governance.

Technocratic governance is not a political novelty, however. The Earl of Aberdeen's government, which lasted from 1852 to 1855, was called a "government of all talents" and provoked Karl Marx to write: "We are promised the total disappearance of party warfare, nay even of parties themselves" (1979). This first significant attempt at technocracy ended in irrelevance, but today, the situation is different. In Italy and Greece, the new governments were not meant to simply play a caretaker role but expected to launch deep reforms. Politicians had their own agendas in giving way and inviting technocrats to chart a path of reform, but in both cases technocratic governance was quite successful. Are these types of government a manifestation of the strengths of meritocracy?

The concept of meritocracy has deep roots.⁵ The discovery of meritocracy in the West came with the Enlightenment, with the advent of capitalism or, in other words, with the dawn of the age of growth.

Robert Gordon has been quoted above as saying that until the middle of the 18th century our civilisation did not know the meaning of growth. The first industrial revolution glorified the idea of growth and the values of creativity, efficiency, dynamism, performance and mobility. A career based on birth and class affiliation contradicted these values and had to be replaced. Quite naturally, Voltaire called meritocracy an alternative to the *Ancien Régime*.

Intellectual and political support for meritocracy grew. John Stuart Mill suggested plural voting (more votes for educated people). From 1828, the new American republic developed a civil service system based on democracy, and Napoleon proclaimed a “career open to all talents”. Meritocracy became a part of Western growth-based civilisation. It posited that power should be vested in individuals according to their merit, competence, intelligence, credentials and education, the meritocratic value to be determined through examinations and assessments. In simple terms, meritocracy was based on a high IQ plus great effort.

The apogee of meritocracy came with postmodernity, globalisation and the cyber-age. Postmodernity is often associated with the tyranny of achievement and the need for recognition. Francis Fukuyama predicted in *The end of history and the last man* (1992) that when our civilisation had satisfied all our basic needs there would be only one need that would remain difficult to meet: the need for recognition. This led him to believe that democracy and liberal capitalism were the best systemic tools to satisfy that need. Democracy offers equal opportunities and capitalism the promise of success, but recognition is a complex phenomenon. Philosophers speak of its “thin and thick dimensions”. “Thick” recognition – recognition by role models and leaders – is impossible to satisfy universally, and the futility of this endeavour has prompted Peter Sloterdijk to claim it has turned us into a society of losers (2012). Recognition is from the outset impossible to satisfy universally.

Zygmunt Bauman describes this phenomenon in terms of his post-modernist “hunter’s utopia”: the need for recognition has made all of us go in constant search of it (2007). Our lives have become a process of attaining goals and pursuing them one after another, and it is this pursuit that for us constitutes the meaning of life. In international relations, the situation is reflected in the statement that the choice for a state today is to be “either at the table or on the menu”.

Meritocracy has turned itself into a caricature. This was precisely what was prophesied by Michael Young, who coined the term in his 1961 novel *The rise of the meritocracy*, set in 2034. His prophetic warnings have been confirmed from the point of view of our experience today by Chris Hayes, whose 2012 book *Twilight of the elites: America after meritocracy* provides a very critical assessment of how this system works in practice.

5. The oldest recollections are traced back to ancient China and linked, notably, with Confucius. Based on his teachings, the Middle Kingdom introduced an obligatory civil service examination that was fully adopted during the Han dynasty. Today’s legacy of the system is the model of education practices in many Asian countries where the main objective of schools and universities is training.

The problem with meritocracy is twofold. First, it turns into oligarchy over time. The pyramid of power starts reflecting the pyramid of wealth. Michael Young tried to explain this by reference to the strength of family ties: we are hostage to blood kinship preferences, that is we say yes to meritocracy if it works fine for our children. Meritocracy promoting oligarchy subsequently results in the concentration of wealth. Experts say that intelligence explains only 10% of income differences in the United States. In addition, in societies like the United States money comes firstly from owing and not from working, which itself perpetuates inequality. However, as described earlier in this essay, the Gini coefficient is on the rise in almost all Western societies.

The knowledge-based economy is in fact widening the differences in income between the better and less educated and education has become a factor of the fossilisation of society. The role of social and cultural capital, including friends with resources and power, has become decisive. If you are rich, your children, even those that have a “medium” IQ and put in an average amount of effort, have better opportunities by far than even the most talented children from poor families. As a result, many assert that we in the West have developed a model of society built on rejection, a society built on division between successful meritocrats and the superfluous stolid mass. Only the fear of rebellion is pushing the elites to remedy the situation.

The second problem is that meritocracy is turning into “mediocracy”. The best example of this is probably provided by international organisations. They were conceived as a model for meritocracy, with open competitions, public vacancies, strict job requirements, transparency of procedure, appeal mechanisms, etc., but the public perception is very critical – and most of the time unfair. International bureaucrats are seen as arrogant, busy with intrigues, lazy at work, narrow-minded and focused mainly on defending their labour rights. How was it possible for this image to emerge?

The problem generally starts at the top. The situation in recent years has been such that strong and colourful political figures who provoke considerable disagreement in government circles tend to lose out in competitions for appointments to a large number of international organisations. The conventional wisdom is that governments are generally not interested in strong leaders of international organisations. There are of course exceptions.

Then, among senior managers there are additional factors that determine selection, such as geography, political hue, age or gender. Another piece of conventional wisdom says that down the pyramid of hierarchy, weak leaders are instinctively not interested in having staff that are too strong. These problems are also visible elsewhere, such as in the national civil service or even in business. Too often, those who select staff opt for cost-efficient talent over the most deserving applicants. Thus, meritocracy is paralysed by the Peter Principle: people are stuck at the first level of incompetence. In the era of the Internet and public scrutiny, there is an additional complicating factor: who should decide on the quality of merit? Should it be the credible mass (the voice of insiders, experts) or the critical mass (vox populi, crowdsourcing)?

However, the most troublesome aspect of meritocracy is that only those who apply can get a job – you cannot win if you do not show up. Only those who are very keen are selected, but in some professions (in the first place, probably in politics), it should probably be the other way round: people eagerly seeking power and positions of

command should be excluded from selection. Fortunately, there are still areas where talents are actively sought, such as in sports, where scouting is a widespread practice. Generally, however, shy or timid people, even if talented, may never get a deserving job. Another example of collateral damage caused by the meritocratic system is the CV fetish: a good CV becomes the objective of your life, and without an impressive CV even the best professional and moral qualities are of no use.

Meritocracy has promoted social mobility based on competition with the result that competition is becoming increasingly dirty – corners are cut, cheating is rewarded and whoever outsmarts the next man wins. The best survival strategy is routine competence, which means that papers are prepared, meetings held and budgets spent – but nobody asks where the real benefit is.

Meritocracy has reached its limits, but what is next? If it is true that the growth era is coming to an end, that the consumer society is facing its demise together with the promise of delayed satisfaction, then how will our hierarchies be organised in a post-growth society? To be sustainable, any society must lift people and reward their effort. Economic stagnation can only be acceptable with social dynamism. Some say that the equality on which the concept of meritocracy is based is a myth and that inequality and hierarchy are the natural state. After all, the most trusted institutions in most societies are the military and the church, which are both hierarchical and quite undemocratic. The least trusted are those ruled by democratic and egalitarian principles, such as parliaments and courts. The meritocratic society has become a parody of democracy, producing rising inequalities, destroying the moral fabric of society and leading to corruption and nepotism. Meritocracy has absorbed the phenomena of lookism and luck: we are judged by the way we look and rely on luck.

The recipe for dealing with the negative consequences of meritocracy comes mainly from the left of the political spectrum. It includes calls to reduce discrimination, redistribute wealth, (especially accumulated wealth), introduce progressive taxation, provide equal access to education and health, and share luck with others. It works with slogans of democracy with the aim of introducing more and more government by lot, based on change, with no dynasties in elite professions and with transparency and creative meritocracy.

It is becoming evident that the post-growth society will hold together only if it embraces justice as its organising principle. It should be the kind of justice that will not be about future promises. It will be justice now. Post-growth society must be about the promotion of moral qualities: it must be about empathy and about solidarity. In a way it may be a society of losers.

Paradoxically, there are still societies, even in Europe, for which meritocracy is still a dream. In these societies elites lack self-confidence, and this will always make them prefer loyalty over competence. This loyalty may be based on different criteria: class, tribal allegiance, professional or local affiliation, etc., but it will count more than professional qualities.

Can the European project be of any relevance to these challenges? If not, the danger may arise that a parallel process driven by common sense – partly virtual, partly real – will develop. It will be driven by the individual and aim to satisfy his or her basic desire for personal freedom and protection from excessive control by state or supra-state structures.

Based on presentations made at Golitsyno (Russian Federation) in April and July 2013 and Pravetz (Bulgaria) in March 2013.

The challenge of identity

Dominique Moisi (2009) has described globalisation as having the strongest impact on identity. Globalisation has compelled individuals, societies, states and even continents to seek an identity. In Europe many nations, as clearly seen in election campaigns, ask themselves the fundamental question of who they are and where they want to belong. This happened quite recently in France, the UK and Russia. The emotional impact on Europe of this quest for identity is a state of neurosis. Zygmunt Bauman, in his book *Liquid Fear* (2006), characterises the nature of the threat experienced by Europeans as a derivative fear, an abstract fear that is impossible to predict, comes from unknown sources and is of unpredictable magnitude. This neurosis, which the present crisis has aggravated, has a global background, and Europeans are unsure whether in the world of tomorrow they will be able to feel really at home.

The essence of the European identity is a constant pursuit of identity. Tzvetan Todorov, like many others, believes that Europe is defined by values that are broader than its Judaeo-Christian heritage (2008). If Europe needs power and strength then it is mainly for the purpose of protecting its values. Todorov puts rationality at the top of the list of values that constitute the European identity: Europeans are rational (even if their history is full of irrationality); they believe in the ultimate judgment of reason in resolving any dilemma. The residual elements of rationality are criticism and frustration. Then comes justice. Europeans have developed a special paradigm of justice: a society is just only when it is able to consider itself not fair enough and tries to change. Justice is a value in itself and cannot be instrumentalised. It serves as a measurement of other values. Finally, there is democracy. European democracy is based on the idea of an autonomous society based on a belief in itself and its vital forces. However, for many Europe starts with tolerance.

The tiny Italian island of Lampedusa has become a symbol of Europe's shame and impotence in dealing with immigration. Since the October 2013 tragedy, many proposals have been made to start a serious dialogue with the countries of origin of immigration, improve patrols and monitor activities in the Mediterranean, and offer more support to countries like Italy, Malta or Greece, which are bearing the brunt of the impact of irregular immigration. The tragedy of Lampedusa overshadowed the fact that more irregular migrants end up in Europe by illegally extending the period allowed by their visas than by taking the risky journey across the sea. The pressure of immigration will always be there, however. The flow may diminish in times of crisis but once growth is back the statistics will go up again. There are today more than 220 million migrants in the world, their number having risen by 40 million in the last decade. More importantly, more than a billion people are ready to move to another country in search of a better-paid job. Over half a billion would move abroad for good if it meant a better life. Europe is too attractive and too close to poor regions to escape the flow of immigrants.

The problem, however, is not the large number of migrants, because they are needed to sustain labour competitiveness and counterbalance negative demographic trends. The problem is Europe's inability to handle their integration.

In recent times, this difficulty in dealing with diversity has been epitomised by the discussions on the wearing of headscarves (burkas) in France and the banning of the construction of minarets in Switzerland. The emotions displayed by some participants in these debates were a clear reaction to the growing number of "others" in our societies.

No wonder that some leaders of the most important European countries declared by 2011 the end of the policy of multiculturalism. The management of diversity has become the most serious strategic challenge for Europe and is more important than the economy, the environment or defence. If the European structures, especially the European Union, prove unable to help cope with the challenge, the usefulness of the European project will be seriously impaired. Today, the problem is that too many European states believe that the challenge is too important for it to be left to the European structures.

It is obvious, however, that the traditional concept of a nation state is increasingly incapable of dealing with the challenge of diversity. For Bauman, it is a classic example of the futility of seeking national or local solutions to globally generated problems (2007). Nation states are in crisis. They have lost both their capability for action and the illusive identity holding it together, as once remarked by Habermas. The role of nation-state governments is declining. This is now mostly reflected in the tactics of locations that compete with one another to attract capital and make maximum use of it within the country. The role of the nation state is now about accommodating external pressures and making maximum local gains.

The EU has been an agent for the cosmopolitanisation of Europe, and this process is proceeding with ever-increasing speed – with many different consequences for existing, well-established state institutions.

Just as the Enlightenment, and the French Revolution in particular, turned our ancestors from subjects into citizens, a similar tectonic change seems to be taking place right in front of our eyes. The traditional notion of citizenship, which flows from the traditional concept of the nation state (a concept that linked citizenship with nationality) looks like it is reaching its limits. The mega-trend that we are witnessing right now, that of the cosmopolitanisation of our societies, is testing the boundaries of the concept of citizenship. The number of countries tolerating, if not explicitly allowing, dual citizenship is growing and has reached a total of more than 120 states worldwide. There are attempts to reverse this trend, even in Europe (as in the case of the Netherlands). But situations where citizens are forced to renounce their rights to all possible citizenships, as happened in Zimbabwe some years ago, are an exception.⁶

Europe has always been the most diverse of all continents. Nowhere else does a change of language, religion or culture occur within such a short distance. Some call this the curse of European history: too many too different nations crowded in too little space.

After the fall of communism and of the Yalta division of Europe, Europe was obsessed with the spectre of ethnic strife. There were tensions in most of the post-communist area, from the Baltic and the Caucasus down to the Balkans. Several bloody wars occurred, and Europeans, including the European institutions, developed new legal and structural instruments to prevent and manage ethnic conflicts. The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) established the office of the High Commissioner on National Minorities; the Council of Europe adopted the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities with its monitoring mechanisms; and the European Union launched the initiative of the Stability Pact, participation in which was considered to be an important element of the EU pre-accession process for the former communist states. Despite the wars and related tragedies in the 1990s, Europe was quite successful in containing ethnic strife, and none of the local conflicts escalated into a regional or all-out European war. Emotions, including those of a political nature, were constrained by the existence of a rich international inventory of instruments.

Many politicians hoped that the gradual accession of the post-communist states to the West's structures, economic growth and rising income levels everywhere in Europe would eventually resolve ethnic animosities. However, it did not, not only because economic growth in eastern Europe was not fast enough. The global economic crisis even aggravated the problem by triggering new waves of separatism. Catalonia, Flanders and Scotland top the list of the reversion to ethnic particularism.

These problems related to old national minorities are now combined with a new type of cultural tension: they are linked to the growing number of migrants and religious groups coming to live in traditionally homogenous societies. Migration is changing the face of Europe: more than 8% in Europe as a whole but more than

6. The case of Zimbabwe is known as the "Story of Room 100". In 2002, all people whose fathers were from outside the country, or were themselves born outside the country, or who had "funny looking" surnames had to pass through Room 100 and renounce all future rights to all nationalities of all the countries in the world. See P. Gappah, "Where Citizenship Went to Die", *International Herald Tribune*, 25 March 2013.

10% of the total population in several countries are now migrants. In Austria, foreign-born inhabitants constituted 15.2% of the population in 2010, while in Sweden the figure was 14%, in Germany and Spain 12%, in Belgium 12.9% and in France, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom 11%. For the EU as a whole, the foreign-born population accounted for 9.4% of the total. These numbers are significant, but the problem is not the absolute figures for migrants but the dynamics of their rise and the visibility of the “otherness”. Several governments want to curb migration, such as the present UK Government, which has set a target of halving annual net immigration from 400 000 to 200 000. France would like to reduce it from 200 000 to 100 000 a year. However, migration is unstoppable. In addition, Europe is experiencing a huge wave of migration within its borders – two million Poles have left their country since it joined the European Union in 2004.

If diversity is the biggest challenge for Europe from the strategic perspective, the inevitable impression is that Europe is not coping well with the challenge. In fact, there are two narratives when it comes to diversity. Firstly, the narrative of facts: Europe’s demographic trends will over time make the economy unsustainable without a substantial influx of new labour, and it is believed that the present level of welfare, especially pension schemes, can be sustained only if Europe absorbs more than 100 million migrants up to 2050 (or raise the pension age above 75). Immigrants contribute to growth – in the UK, they are as a rule better educated than the native population. Three quarters of European immigrants in the UK are employed, which is higher than the proportion for the native population. They are keen to pay taxes and help to distribute the debt burden more evenly.

However, there is also the narrative of emotions, in which migrants become a source of fear. The public perception of them is cruel and unfair: they take our jobs, steal the future of our children and cheat on our social benefits. To conclude the list of fears on a lighter note, for too many Europeans migrants simply work too hard.

From a historical perspective, just as Europeans have always been exposed to diversity, they have always had a problem with otherness. Jared Diamond (2012) recalls that human beings have from time immemorial divided all the people around them into three categories: friends, enemies and strangers. We used to know friends and enemies by name and always knew what to expect from them. The most stressful category was always strangers. Bauman (2006) places the problems of dealing with diversity into his construct of a “liquid fear” society. As members of Western societies, we tend to channel our fears into strangers, and the other becomes the agent of proxy fears. Moisi (2009) recalls that, centuries ago, Westerners used to treat the other as an anomaly, a deviation from the norm, and then, when Europe embarked on the mission *civilisatrice*, these others were treated as people in the process of becoming us. They were supposed to change to resemble us, but now the problem is that we know they will not change and simply become us. In their ability to preserve their identity, they have started challenging our identity.

Umberto Eco (2011), in his essay *Costruire il Nemico*, puts it very bluntly: we need enemies. We need them to consolidate our own identity and values. If we believe that our identity is not strong enough, we start looking for enemies, even where they

are not present. If we cannot find them, we invent them. If we cannot invent them in a credible personalised form, we try to turn them into abstract events.

In the present situation in which we cannot manage diversity, there are several disturbing elements. Firstly, the treatment of Muslims in Europe: some recent public remarks on Islam and Muslims may indeed remind us of the shameful discourse of the 1930s. The rise in anti-Semitism, which even involves members of political elites, including members of national parliaments who resort to anti-Semitic rhetoric, may indeed be a very serious warning sign for Europeans. What is particularly worrisome is the phenomenon of anti-Semitism without the presence of Jews witnessed in some countries. The mistreatment of the Roma population of more than 10 million people across Europe is a truly systemic problem. The list of negative phenomena goes on: the surge of hate speech, the existence of parallel societies or the ghettoisation of migrant communities.

In 2011, on the initiative of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, a group of eminent persons prepared a special report on living together (Council of Europe 2011). Their message was simple: we need a European response to deal with diversity. And we need a broad coalition involving not only governments and institutions, but also civil society in all its forms. The conceptual approach advocated by the group implied that the basis for managing diversity should be the notion of multiple identities. The eminent persons suggested accepting that individual human beings can have many identities. They can feel Turkish and German at the same time, and they can call themselves French and Algerian or Belgian and Moroccan. Instead of pressing them to choose and declare their preferred identity, we should accept their many identities. The notion of multiple identities naturally has its limits. It hits a wall when it comes to religion: you cannot be both a Muslim and a Catholic any more than you can be a Jew and an Orthodox Christian at the same time. Apostasy is never encouraged and is even forbidden by some religions; changing religion is sometimes at least dangerous if not impossible. The big question surrounding the present discussion on diversity and how to manage it boils down to this: why do politicians and opinion leaders engage in the narrative of emotions rather than moving this discussion to the narrative of facts? Why do they follow public opinion instead of leading it?

Politicians have no illusions that diversity can be a winning doorstep message when campaigning in elections. Most Western societies have psychological problems with embracing diversity. The obvious problem is that these societies or their members want to feel at home where they live. Migrants would prefer to feel at home wherever they go. The impression is that most of the political establishment would prefer to wait and see, hoping that the return of growth will solve the social and political problems related to diversity. However, that looks like a risky strategy. Some people say that the lack of readiness and ability of the political class to face the challenge of diversity reflects a deeper problem: the weakening of the democratic spirit. Democracy today fails to produce true leaders, leaders who, instead of pandering to the mood of the population, could try to change it and shape it in the desired way. The only salvation is often seen in the concept of a cosmopolitan Europe, which Ulrich Beck initially linked to cosmopolitanisation from within countries. This process is happening already and the success of the Erasmus Programme is often

cited as the best example. It led Beck to propose extending this Erasmus spirit to all generations and walks of life, but we should be realistic. Cosmopolitanisation is progressing, but it so far embraces only a very small, and sometimes insignificant, proportion of the population.

Will our inability to deal with the problem make open conflicts inevitable? Most probably not. The threat of new religious wars or ethnic conflicts based on the effects of migration in Europe is not high. Even riots, like the 2013 disturbances in Stockholm, where the cultural-ethnic dimension was clearly visible, are attributed rather more to other, mainly socio-economic, factors. European societies have probably moved past the stage of organised anger. If so, social injustice and the income gap would be the organising principle rather than religious-ethnic divides. Moreover, one should probably agree with Jeremy Rifkin (2011) that Western societies have embarked firmly on the path to the “empathic civilization”. The probability of an open conflict driven by diversity seems very low, but, as suggested by Bauman (2006), cultural security will probably become the objective of the management of diversity.

However, the problem of the lack of a strategy remains. There is no common EU or pan-European document to which European leaders have subscribed. What could be the elements of such a strategy? The “Living together” report (2011) outlines possible directions. It is about Europe embracing the notion of a non-territorial European identity, a Europe open mentally and politically to contacts with its geographic neighbours. This strategy should clearly encourage mobility and provide incentives for people who would be ready to move from economically non-performing states in Europe to places of opportunity. A European strategy should enhance the importance of the concept of citizenship based on civic criteria. It should probably draw up, in the long run, even a new concept of citizenship based on a modern understanding of the nature of the relationship between the state and the individual. Finally, Europe needs a common immigration policy. Common asylum rules are already almost a reality, but that will not be enough. We need a comprehensive policy with clear immigration rules.

Krzysztof Pomian (1992) has observed that Europe has since early times been able to manage differences and absorb them. Every European is different and at the same time remains himself or herself. Pomian calls Europe a “transgressive civilisation” or a “civilisation of transgression”. Europe is a way of life denouncing the existence of borders, rejecting stability and finality. Will Europe be able to prove these truths now in the unprecedented eruption of diversity it is facing in modern times?

During the negotiation of the Constitutional Treaty for Europe, one of the most emotional stumbling blocks became the reference to Christianity in the Preamble.

The countries advocating this reference, led by Poland, failed to get their way (all they got was a reference to religious traditions), but the question of the extent to which Europe’s identity will be determined by the religious factor in the future is still quite emotional. Paradoxically, many of those who opposed the idea of a reference to Christianity based their objections to Turkey’s membership of the European Union on the possible distortion of the religious balance within the EU. More importantly,

the religious element can be seen as a good illustration of the fact that the future of the human rights debate in Europe will increasingly be determined by the mutual relationship and sometimes conflict between different freedoms.

What provoked discussions in several European states in particular was the issue of the relationship between freedom of religion and freedom of expression. Can you perform an anti-government song in an Orthodox cathedral? Can you publish satirical cartoons with the image of a prophet? Can you burn the Bible at a heavy rock concert? Can you inscribe the figure of a naked male body into the form of a cross?

National courts and the European Court of Human Rights have had to deal with these and other, similar cases in recent years. There was a heated discussion in Germany in 2011 and 2012 concerning the relationship between the right to bodily integrity and male circumcision, and in Poland recently, there was a similar case involving the relationship between ritual slaughter and the obligation to ensure the humane treatment of animals.

The other area where religion comes into play is the relationship between the state and the individual. Many nation states in Europe used to consolidate their identity through religion. The number of states with an established religion is declining, but even in Europe there are states where links between the state and religion (all Christian denominations) are still very close. For the Catholic faith, such a close relationship still exists in Malta and Lichtenstein, and for the Protestant denominations this is still the case in the UK, Denmark and Iceland. In the case of the Orthodox Church, Greece is a good example of very close links between the state and religion, but the elements of state or societal identity based on religion are increasingly coming into conflict with the trend towards the empowerment of the individual.

Several countries have experienced divisive debates on the presence of religious symbols in the public sphere. These discussions are the tip of the iceberg. The religious dimension of the identity of the individual sometimes challenges the secular nature of the state, and this tension results in many practical questions: what are the limits of a religious dress code in the public space? How legitimate is the religious argument when refusing to perform certain medical duties (such as an abortion)? Should public activities (such as state examinations and sports competitions) take into account restrictions practised by various religious groups (such as Jews or Seventh-Day Adventists) and bans on certain activities on Saturdays?

It is obvious that religion has played a decisive role in determining Europe's identity. The political organisation of European societies is based on democracy, the rule of law and human rights. If one accepts the findings of scholars like Fukuyama (2011), all the pillars were decisively shaped by Christianity, and religion was the midwife of the European political order.

To start with democracy: John Rawls warned about the futility of discussing the relationship between democracy and religion – religion is metaphysics, democracy is politics and they belong to two different worlds (Dombrowski 2001). However, Peter Sloterdijk (2009), citing historical evidence, has tried to prove that all religions born in the Mesopotamian-Mediterranean area were political projects. They are based on the concept of *deus politicus*. They are universal in vocation but proved to

be prone to tribal affiliation. Thus, God had to intervene not only in spiritual, cultural and social life but also on the political level.

For Bauman (2012), politics and religion are quite similar and share a proclivity for monologues. They function in the same space – the space of human uncertainty. They compete and fight against each other but also co-operate. Today's ailments of democracy can therefore be explained by the crisis of religion. Liquid modernity is about accelerated individualisation, and the individualisation of beliefs and faith is a natural consequence. This is how a private God is born. Private religion does not need a community. The lack of community spirit in turn kills democracy.

Europe proves that democracy is not possible without citizenship. And citizenship is not possible without the separation of church and state. This separation could not happen in Byzantium, which was taken over by Caesaropapism and where the church became the state from the year 313 onwards and remained so until the end of the Byzantine Empire in 1453. In the West, as we remember from the turbulent story of Gregory VII and Henry IV, the church and the state had to part ways.

However, much more important for the success of democracy was the elimination of the kinship principle in determining political order. The Catholic Church pushed for the prohibition of marriages between close kin, for the ban on levirate marriage and on divorce, but for the development of the concept of citizenship the primary role was played by the introduction of women's right to property and inheritance, as advocated by the Church.

Another European principle is the rule of law. Early European states dispensed justice, but not necessarily law. Law was rooted elsewhere, mostly in religion, and had a divine origin. There was a distinction between law and legislation. Rulers could legislate but could not overrule the law. Early on in the European tradition, even kings understood that they were not above the law. This axiom was reflected in the Magna Carta and habeas corpus acts and other documents. The concept of the rule of law was able to put down firm roots because two different sets of laws, the canon law and the civic code, were taken as separate bases for regulating the spiritual and the civic spheres.

Europe was born, as Nietzsche reminds us, out of the clash of Christianity with the culture of the German tribes: peaceful saints and martyrs had to confront heroes and warriors. The universality and equality promoted by Christianity had to contend with the hierarchy and honour of the traditional tribal societies. Hierarchy and tribalism prevailed until the Enlightenment but not without some level of compromise: people were essentially considered equal but not necessarily so in practice in the "here and now". Justice was considered important but it might come only after death. The Enlightenment changed the situation and gave birth to the concept of natural rights and all human beings were finally considered equal. As we know, this was not the end of the story as the concept of human rights had to make its way along a path fraught with difficulty. Its true revival did not come until the 1970s, and the difficulties are still far from over.

What will be the role of religion in the post-growth society? We must be humble considering the wrong predictions we made in the past, when many foretold

“the death of God” by the end of the 20th century. Then, just a few years later, the prevailing view was the inevitability of the clash of civilisations based on religious identification. Europe is sometimes seen as the stage on which this clash is taking place. In the Netherlands, Islam is already the fastest growing faith – 250 churches have been transferred for use by Muslims living there – but half the population say they have no religious affiliation. In England, 10 000 churches have closed since 1960. This secularisation is a general trend but Europe is extremely diverse in terms of the role of religion in society. In the Catholic world, two neighbours, Poland and the Czech Republic, represent two opposite pictures of religious practice. The Poles go to church in large numbers but the Czechs stay at home. These countries belong to the same Western Slavic family but their historical experiences have resulted in different patterns of religious behaviour. In the Orthodox countries, there is a surge of religious feeling in Georgia and Russia, whereas in Moldova, no parallel process has been observed. Religion may be healthy – scientific evidence proves that religious attendance boosts the immune system, decreases blood pressure and may add as much as two to three years to a person’s life (Luhmann 2013) – but the trend towards secularisation in Europe looks unstoppable.

Bauman (2006) writes that God is another name given to the experience of human insufficiency: ignorance, impotence (inability to act with success), humiliation and frustration. He recalls that according to Émile Durkheim, God is a social fact and cannot be removed by reason or desire as long as human uncertainty exists – that is until the end of humanity. There will always be tension between religion and secularism. People will continue to look for solid anchors of identity in times of rapid change, and religion is the strongest marker of identity. At the same time, the impact of “liquid society” will be more and more visible. People will try to reinvent their identities and pursue happiness here and now, seeking immortality in mortal life. Easy stereotypes should be abandoned. Religion will neither be a threat nor a remedy.

Europe will strive to foster growth and restore its economic vitality in the coming years but not necessarily by reviving Protestant ethics, as suggested by Niall Ferguson (2011). Perhaps Bauman is wrong in assuming that Europe will remain either a territory for religious conflict or religious indifference, but if he is right it is likely to be in the latter sense. However, Europe is a good example of religious faith or non-faith becoming a matter of free personal choice, and this choice makes us more conscious and self-fulfilled persons. It definitely drives us away from fundamentalism.

Alain de Botton (2012) deplores the fact that “secular society has been unfairly impoverished by the loss of an array of practices and themes which atheists typically find it impossible to live with”. Today’s secular person, in his description, is frightened of the word “morality”, sceptical of art or work with an ethical mission, unable to express gratitude, resists mental exercises and avoids bond-strengthening rituals. At the same time, Western societies have “allowed religion to claim as its exclusive dominion areas of experience, which should rightly belong to all mankind.” For de Botton, “the challenge facing atheists is how to reverse the process of religious colonization.” And it is happening: Christmas is being detached from the story of the birth of Jesus and is about festivities, the family and compassion. This is irreversible.

The loss of community is the most consequential loss for modern society, a society of ruthless anonymity where social contacts are pursued for individualistic ends, financial gain, social enhancement or love. The loss of community has deprived democracy of substance.

The narrative of postmodernity has made us accept the idea that we are living in societies where there is a surplus of everything. This has certainly been the case as far as information is concerned. Alvin Toffler (1990), when predicting the impact of what he called the “information wave” more than 30 years ago, must have foreseen the surplus face of the wave, but we are still coming to grips with how quickly it materialised.

Schmidt and Cohen (2013) claim that “[e]very future generation will be able to produce and consume more information than the previous one, and people will have little patience or use for media that cannot keep up”. “Information impatience” will be the normal state of mind. Eric Schmidt, Google’s Executive Chairman, has revealed that even today, we create as much information in two days as we did from the dawn of humanity until 2003 – that is, five exabytes. We produce more information than we consume. Two billion people are connected to the Internet, there are 325 billion websites, 100 000 tweets are sent per second and 72 hours of video clips are uploaded on YouTube every minute.

All this has a big social impact. People are connecting to the world more and more via cyberspace and the electronic media. In the United States, individuals watch 35 hours of television and 2 hours of DVD a week, and 60% of them use the Internet to watch television. This results in the phenomenon of new global para-social links: when billions of people are watching the same event on television at the same time, they inevitably start to resemble a community. Social constructions are being perceived as less hierarchical. People are succumbing to the illusion of a network, but, as Jürgen Habermas observes (2012), flat structures do not guarantee a sense of equality. Habermas complains about distorted communication: what matters is who said something and not what was said. The source defines its credibility since people still believe the source rather than the views expressed. However, the selection of sources is becoming increasingly unpredictable. An anonymous blogger can become a trustworthy source within weeks, if not days, but he or she can just as quickly lose this credibility and position of leadership. The information revolution blurs the division between the public and private space. The permanence of stored data and information, magnified by cloud storage, will pose an enormous challenge to security and privacy. People will have to live with an undeletable record, and everyone will become a public figure.

The cyber-revolution has helped to empower the individual – the Internet is seen as the apotheosis of freedom. However, every accumulation of freedom has its dark side. The Internet has given people an unprecedented possibility of enjoying freedom of expression, but at the same time it is serving as a channel for and catalyst of hate speech of a magnitude unknown in modern history. The Internet makes it easier for people to enjoy freedom of association, but at the same time it allows extreme movements and terrorist organisations to escape physical restrictions on their activities. It has given people an unprecedented possibility of accessing information,

with search engines personalising the outcome of an information request, but at the same time it has made it easier for states and companies to manipulate it. The Internet is also seen as the apotheosis of freedom of action. Sometimes we use it for good purposes, for example when we avail ourselves of new economic, commercial, educational or artistic opportunities, or when it is used to mobilise flash mobs to resist autocracies – the Google doctrine assuming that the Internet will give the champions of democracy the edge over the agents of oppression. Evgeny Morozov (2011) asserts that the opposite may be true. States, especially autocratic regimes, are more and more versed in promoting their messages and curbing the democratic wave. Authoritarian regimes will no doubt try to apply digital repression to control their citizens' behaviour, but let us hope that more people will fight for privacy and security than seek to restrict them.

The NSA affair provoked a new temptation to introduce control over the free flow of information on the Internet, this time to protect the citizens of our states from the surveillance activities of foreign governments. The Brazilian Government has published ambitious plans to promote its own networking technology and set up a secure national e-mail service. Previously, it was Iran that had discussed plans for a national "halal Internet". China is also mentioned in the context of the nationalisation of the Internet with its "great firewall" filtering system. North Korea and Cuba use their own national "walled gardens". Pundits warn against the threat of "balkanisation" or of the national fragmentation of the Internet.

It is not the first time that the freedom of the Internet has been threatened. The list of threats is long: spam, phishing, Trojans, child pornography, cybercrime and cyber war. This time, however, what is being used as an argument is the protection of each and everyone's precious asset: "our privacy".

To quote Schmidt and Cohen (2013) again: "The Internet is the largest experiment involving anarchy in history." It "is the world's largest ungoverned space" and its universal and open character should be preserved by all means.

The most significant impact of computer technology is the relocation of the concentration of power away from states and institutions and its transfer to individuals. Digital empowerment may either make the world safer or more dangerous.

We, as individuals, will live in two worlds. States, too, have to implement two versions of their domestic and foreign policies, one for the physical and another for the virtual world, and they will sometimes even contradict each other. For the individual, the two worlds paradigm means the possibility of and temptation to assume multiple identities.

The empowerment of the individual has several implications for the health of democracy. First, there is a view that individualism has killed democracy. The present crisis of the liberal model of democracy in the West is explained by the weakening of community links. It is assumed that democracy has been weakened by its clash with the philosophy of liberalism. Liberal emancipation is undermining the democratic communitarian spirit. The atomisation of society is seen as the primary source of the demise of a sense of community. As mentioned above, Alain de Botton links the crisis of community with secularisation. Religious practices, especially the ritual of Sunday Mass, used to cement the territorial dimension of identity – we used to meet

the same people at the same time in the same place. Others have explained that our departure from religion is closely linked to the crisis of the traditional family model. Sensibility to religion and habits of religious practices are born and consolidated within families – a society of singles is not fertile soil for religious behaviour.

There is no democracy without a democratic community. For the critics of the present shape of democracy the conclusion is brutal: what is left now is a democratic state without a democratic community. It cannot be replaced by networks as a network is not a community. A community offers secure and stable relationships and it implies more constraints and responsibilities. It watches over the behaviour of its members and leaves them little room to do what they want. A network does not care about the obedience of its members. It offers more freedom and never punishes anyone who leaves it. Without strong democratic institutions, a community becomes an empty shell. Democratic procedures, including elections, become a ritual, if not political theatre. In addition, the newly empowered individual has discovered the attractiveness of Isaiah Berlin's theorem about two kinds of freedoms: "freedom from" and "freedom to". Most of the time, we prefer to be "free from", in particular free from politics. We flee from politics, and even the architects of managed democracy know how to exploit this. The practice of managed democracy is increasingly seen as a troublesome anomaly in the European space, but it is based on an unwritten contract: more personal freedom in exchange for freedom from politics.

As empowered individuals, we now cherish our right to show that we are masters of our decisions at any time and have therefore become more unpredictable as voters. At the same time, in our choices we are vulnerable to succumbing to the flock instinct. We follow the crowd but, as sociology warns us, this amorphous crowd is increasingly prone to irregularities. Deviation may happen at any time and the whole flock may change direction without any early warning. We do not want to be held hostage to our previous political choices. In many central and eastern European countries, this unpredictability has resulted in the pendulum phenomenon: every election brings to power new parties while the incumbents are punished with extinction.

Quite naturally then, we have become less interested in the outcome of elections. They matter only when we want to express our voice of protest and issue a warning. Therefore, in many countries, against the background of apathy and absenteeism, there is a rise in the number of protest parties (like the Pirate Party in Germany or the MoVimento 5 Stelle in Italy). Another phenomenon is the lack of trust (Krastev 2013). Even if we participate in elections and elect our representatives, we immediately distrust them. Parliaments in almost every European country are at the bottom of the trust rankings of public institutions. As a by-product, we are witnessing the rise of unelected representatives, among them celebrities whom we follow and trust although they are never tested in any sort of election. We tend to trust celebrities more than parliamentarians.

Another characteristic feature is political dispersion: the party political systems are becoming increasingly fragmented, and governments are formed on the basis of sometimes exotic coalitions. We have tried to compensate for the lack of trust in the political class by placing our confidence in the management skills of technocrats (trust is about intentions, confidence is about competences). This has brought about the rise of meritocracy. The tyranny of technocrats sometimes makes the role of

politicians purely decorative. Politicians are for show and the real decision makers are somewhere else. Last but not least, the aestheticisation of politics: election campaigns have become a source of rivalry between public relations companies, and candidates with better PR strategies win whatever their professional or moral qualities. Seeking and gaining power has become a game in itself.

Politicians do not now conceal that they do not aspire to have a vision and a sense of mission. Political life, and party systems in particular, are also deeply affected by the crisis of ideology. The socialist parties in Europe are at present in deep conceptual limbo and cannot produce a convincing ideological response to the crisis. Traditional liberalism was hurt by the 2008 to 2009 crisis even more, while conservatives are plagued by extremist and nationalist movements. The re-emergence of nationalism in a format that bears a resemblance to a zombie caricature is the best evidence of the deep ideological crisis. There are predictions that more and more patchwork ideologies will be the dominant political reality. A good example is Poland's Law and Justice party, which combines leftist demands on the economic side with deeply conservative ideological rhetoric. The new phenomenon on the European political scene is the rise of European political party families. The European political groups, in particular the Socialists and the European People's Party group, are a factor of political life, not only in the European Parliament but also as an external factor in national political manoeuvres in several states, in particular some transitional democracies.

Finally, the long-standing scourge of political life even in mature democracies is the connection between money and politics. In many countries, this leads to big corruption scandals, while in others it results in the oligarchisation of political life.

Democracy has thus become a ritual and is less and less a method of running a society. Liberal democracy is one of the pillars of the European identity, and many see its present state as being at a crossroads. Which way will democracy go? Two alternative avenues are often suggested to deal with the decline in democratic commitment: an increase in direct popular participation or rule by technocrats.

One option proposes recreating the public agora. The proponents of this approach put their hope in liquid democracy and whatever will remain of it as a long-term impact (for example e-petitions). The new possibilities are being created thanks to the cyber-revolution. As Cohen and Schmidt (2013) suggest, democracy would be increasingly open, allowing every opinion to find its space in the public sphere. Real-time updating will foster a hyperactive interface and discourse, and sources will be defined as "legitimate" and "illegitimate". The Internet has already provided the possibility of a real time political interface, and the appeal of direct democracy has grown. However, it looks like the liquid democracy concept is still too ephemeral to constitute a realistic alternative for the future. In addition, we know from experience that rule by plebiscite is not necessarily the best option for democracy.

Henry Kissinger (when interviewed by Schmidt and Cohen) saw the impact of cyber-driven democracy in the disappearance of strong leaders, which democracy provided a natural selection process for. He believes that "unique leadership is a human thing, and is not going to be produced by a mass social community ... It is hard to imagine de Gaulles and Churchills appealing in the world of Facebook". According to Kissinger, today's leaders lack the will and courage to take an independent and sometimes

controversial stand and confront the mainstream view. This void of leadership cannot be compensated for by the power of the crowd. Kissinger notes: "The empowered citizen knows the technique of getting people to the square but they don't know what to do with them when they are in the square." All political strategies need long-term effort, and the flash-mob mentality is not compatible with effective power seeking: "You can't get people to the square twenty times a year." However, the proliferation of agorae and platforms for expressing political views is, after all, not a bad thing for democracy. They help to replace the existing model of participatory democracy with John Keane's proposal of "monitory democracy" as a possible solution (2009).

The other school sees no serious alternative for the future than democracy based on the model of corporate management. Ruling over state matters, including its political aspect, would become a technical profession. Voters would have to accept the role of shareholders, with elections resembling the general assembly of a corporation. Governments would follow the pattern of work of company executive boards and parliaments would replicate the role of governing boards. We have already pointed out in our discussion of meritocracy how delusional this approach could become if pushed to extremes.

Tolerance, rationality and democracy are often associated with the notion of European identity. They are all now exposed to serious strains. How Europe will deal with them may determine its future attractiveness as a regional model of co-operation. Today's response provides rather a discouraging picture of the relevance of the existing institutions.

The first chapter of this essay began with a reference to Ulrich Beck's call for a quantum leap in European integration (2013). Beck's consistency lies in always stressing the factor of values in the development of the European project. For him "Europe is nothing without its values of freedom and of democracy, without its cultural origin and dignity". And restoring citizens' faith in Europe is the priority step for a period of "great politics". The road to the revival of Europe does not go via growth but via values. The pillars of confidence, in Beck's view, are fairness, equality (protection of the weak), reconciliation and non-exploitation (of the weak by the stronger).

This leads Beck to the central element of the strategy: the idea of a new social contract for Europe, based on strengthening freedom, protecting social solidarity and strengthening democracy (mainly through cosmopolitan sensitivity). He aptly describes the contradiction between power and legitimacy and calls upon the holders of legitimacy – the citizens – to fill the vacuum left by the holders of power – the state (the European institutions) and capital.

Can European institutions take up Beck's call?

Based on presentations at Quba (Azerbaijan) in April 2012, Bakuriani (Georgia) in April 2012, Ohrid (the "former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia") in April 2013, Kiev (Ukraine) in April 2013, Chişinău (Moldova) in May 2013 and Golitsyno (Russian Federation) in July 2012.

The multitude of Europes

We accept as axiomatic the view that 60 years ago Europe ceased to be a geographical term. Tony Judt insisted that Europe was an idea, not geography (1996). Clearly, when one talks about a country “joining Europe”, one does not mean a geographical area. This results sometimes in quite a schizophrenic attitude on the part of people living in European countries outside the European Union. They strongly believe that their countries are European but whenever they are on a trip to Brussels or Strasbourg they speak of visiting “Europe” as if they are not part of it. For Turkey and Russia, this internal tension is even bigger. Only with the help of dialectics can one understand that one can be in Europe and out of it at the same time.

Europe is more than a common past. As a political term it was rediscovered at the court of Charlemagne, where it was mainly used to confer a distinctive identity on the lands ruled by Charlemagne as opposed to Byzantium. It has meant different things since then. In 1648, all European leaders sent representatives to the Congress of Westphalia except for the English King, the Russian Tsar and the Ottoman Sultan. By the Congress of Vienna, England and Russia were firmly established parts of the Concert of Europe. Turkey gained the status of a “European state” in 1856. Luuk van Middelaar (2013) reminds us that the borders of Europe have been always politically defined: “Belonging to Europe was a matter of will and permission, interest and co-option”.

Even the United States, in the Cold War period, used to be called a European power (and had strong reasons to participate in the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, the CSCE). In political decisions at the beginning of the 1990s, the Southern Caucasus states were declared European while the five Central Asian states won the privilege of being CSCE/OSCE participating states but without the claim of being “European”. Quite recently, even Mongolia has joined the OSCE, while countries as close to the continent of Europe as Morocco or Tunisia are still not members.

However, Europe is more than a shared history. Some people believe that the success of European integration was possible because the leaders involved in the project’s launch decided to forget the past. Was Europe really built on collective amnesia, as suggested by Hans Magnus Enzensberger (Judt 1996)? Though it is true that all Europeans were scared of the reality of their recent history and of a possible return to revenge and retribution, it was not about amnesia but, rather, an escape from the deterministic process of history.

The European Union has long been defining the European identity for its own purposes. In 1973 a “Declaration on European Identity” was adopted in Copenhagen. It referred to the obligation to ensure “the survival of the civilisation which [the nine European states] have in common”, common values and principles, an increasing convergence of attitudes to life, and a common civilisation. These were perhaps hollow phrases but a direction was set. In June 1993, this definition of identity was supplemented by the so-called Copenhagen criteria – a stable democracy, a functioning market economy and the implementation of European legislation (*acquis*). Then came the difficult exercise of defining the roots of Europe in the Preamble to the European Constitution. Europe was finally declared to be inspired by the “cultural, religious and humanist inheritance of Europe”.

How many Europes do we have? Is it legitimate to speak of a single Europe? Europe has indeterminate geographical borders to the east. Its cultural and religious identity is heterogeneous, but Europe, instinctively, has a true single identity. Paradoxically, what cements this identity is the awareness of divisions and differences. The recent crisis provoked much speculation about the return of these divisions: the Europe of Charlemagne and the Europe of Byzantium, the Europe of the North and the Europe of the South, the Europe of the post-war West and the Europe of the post-Soviet legacy. The crisis evoked the old stereotypes about Nordic Europe – driven by Protestant ethics and hard work and delayed gratification – and of Mediterranean Europe – allegedly putting leisure over work, avoiding taxes and duties whenever possible and unable to grasp the concept of delayed gratification. Likewise, talk emerged of the insurmountability of the communist legacy and the iron curtain still persisting in the minds of people. It was even possible to hear again Klemens von Metternich’s forgotten warning that Asia begins at Landstrasse in Vienna. What was rarer in the discourse was the recognition of the real division between “rich Europe” and “poor Europe” and the need to do more to close the gap through more solidarity. For a single Europe, the huge income disparities between such countries as Moldova and Luxembourg, Greece and Norway, Portugal and Finland are hardly acceptable. There is also the dividing line between rich Europe and poor Europe that exists in each European country. These dividing lines are far more dangerous than the presumed divide between North and South or East and West. Discussions on eastern Europe have revealed that Voltaire still sounds very fresh when dividing Europe into the Europe that is known and the Europe that wants to be known. Large parts of Europe are still surrounded by ignorance.

The multitude of Europes is also a result of the proliferation of institutions – there are as many Europes as there are institutions, with each institution claiming to play a European role within its operational definition of Europe. Whenever referring to Europe, the European Union presumes that it is the Europe of the EU, sometimes enlarged by the candidate countries, sometimes enlarged by neighbours, and then called “wider Europe”. The Council of Europe speaks about a huge territory extending at least in legal terms beyond the Urals as far as Chukotka, but excluding Central Asia. The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe works in a transatlantic and Eurasian context of European co-operation. The United States and Canada are treated like European powers, and their European participation is even more pronounced in the context of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

The OSCE extends to the whole of Central Asia and even beyond. All its member states are expected to live by European standards and values.

The European Union firmly occupies the centre-stage of European politics. To some it was the only European institution capable of absorbing the geopolitical shockwaves after the fall of communism. This could only be done collectively and with the EU bearing the main burden. The United States felt that it was high time for the Europeans to take responsibility for their own continent. Russia was too weak at the time to pose a challenge, so it had to be the EU as a political agent of leadership. "EUrope" had to take responsibility for the rest of Europe. Enlargement was decided on and a common foreign and defence policy was developed to live up to this responsibility. However, some people hold the view that Europe has still not fully overcome the earthquake of 1989.

Only a political cataclysm can stop the Union from further integration and from consolidating its role as the political powerhouse of Europe. However, the big question debated in the last 20 years is how far it can expand. The original Europe was based on the premise of expansion – it wanted to grow bigger. The idea of limiting integration to a cosy circle of states never came to mind. The expansion was put to the test with the pressure from post-communist countries, in the 1990s, seeking to join. At that time, however, the problem was not geography. Until the accession of countries like Greece, Spain and Portugal the European Union had been a rich-club project, and some say that the fact that big, rich countries launched it determined its success – historically, there has been no successful integration process among poor countries. The limits of political geography are being tested only now, with some newcomers, especially Poland, calling for the prospect of membership to be opened up to countries like Ukraine. Who can dispute that Ukraine lies fully within the boundaries of Europe? Despite this, the same people who see no problem that Turkey has only a tiny strip of its territory on the European continent question the possibility of ever integrating Ukraine into the EU. However, we must not forget that Europe is about the desire to become a member. The main problem with regard to Europe in the last 20 years has been the conviction that enlargement can come only at a cost to existing members. Europe has become a zero-sum game.

What is true, and the new members in central and southern Europe in particular were told this quite bluntly, is that one can join Europe only by accepting it as it is. The founding states enjoy the privilege of having determined the original rationale of the process. The original six states are sometimes compared with the "Charlemagne Europe", and the model of a single Europe is based on parameters established by those six. No new member, even if it is big and powerful, can make a visible impression on the original rationale of the project. All that new members can achieve is to deprive some of the older members of their perception that they can have a decisive voice in determining the future of the project. Some of the original founders, when frustrated with the preponderance of newcomers, have threatened to reconstitute a narrow Europe in its original or early form. But such threats are unlikely to secure much support.

The European Union will most probably expand further. It may, however, never expand far enough to incorporate all countries within the geographical boundaries

of Europe. If the notion of the European identity is linked more and more to the EU, then how will it be possible to deal with those countries that want to feel strongly European but are not willing or able to join the EU?

Europe is clearly more than the European Union. It is full of institutions, and some people, especially journalists, say that from the institutional point of view it is saturated with talking shops. This is a legacy of the Cold War when “jaw-jaw” was a worthwhile exercise in itself. Today, Europe’s institutional set-up reminds one increasingly of an overcrowded room: each of the organisations is useful, each contributes something, but their activities are inevitably overlapping more and more. After the fall of communism, the concept of interlocking institutions was put in place to prevent duplication, but today it is in deep need of revision as the centre of European institutional development has shifted to the European Union. The OSCE and the Council of Europe, which are increasingly alike, have been pushed to the margins of European politics. This institutional drift is mainly the EU’s responsibility. It is only the EU that can provide the other institutions, even NATO, with a sense of leadership and strategy.

The strategic question is, can the EU go it alone in meeting the challenges of European co-operation?

There are strong views that the European Union simply has to be self-sufficient. Like a leviathan, it has to grow and develop new capabilities and create new institutions. In addition, it is evident that the further it expands, the more Brussels-centred the entire construction of European politics has to be. However, the long-term interest of the European Union seems to be to make wise use of the existing pan-European institutions. Non-EU countries like Switzerland or Norway that do not aspire to become EU members need a level playing field to talk about Europe. Bilateral consultations with Brussels may be more effective in communicating their concerns but will never give them any sense of shared responsibility for the future of the whole of Europe, and this sense of responsibility is only good for the continent.

The current crisis has also had a much overlooked impact with regard to the geography of the European project and the very meaning of the term Europe. While nearly all major players have been focusing on the eurozone and its survival, on the role of Germany and France, on the future options of the UK or on the desired arrangements for Brussels as a political centre itself, the full, wider concept of Europe is losing visibility in the public arena. Whereas many east European countries that only have long-term prospects of EU membership or none at all are disappointed by the vagueness of the promises concerning those prospects, the EU partnership with Russia is seen as troubled and the dialogue with Turkey has seemingly lost its dynamic.

Given the challenges Europe faces in an ever more competitive world, but also taking into account the impact of the process in Europe’s neighbouring countries, the lack in many politicians of a “wider Europe” perspective may be perceived as worrying and short-sighted. Can the belief in the wider Europe concept be restored at all?

Much depends, of course, on such partners as Russia. Very few people today can question Russia’s European civilisational credentials. Those in the West who 10 or

15 years ago were still saying that Russia was so different that it could not “genetically” embrace the Western model of democracy or the rule of law have now fallen silent. For many Russians, especially the younger generation, a supposition that Russia champions values different from those of Europe would be quite insulting. Even if at present there is talk among some Russians that some Western values are alien to their society, the context of this discourse is political and short-lived. Russians are European in terms of their values. As in the case of the UK or Turkey, their European identity is not always exclusive and is sometimes characterised by being simultaneously “in” and “out”. In Russia, like in the UK or Turkey, Europe is colloquially understood in its core “continental” meaning, but the European connection is growing in strength in Russia. The existing problems with Russia’s European role are geopolitical in nature. First, it is a fact to be sadly noted in the context of the 2013 Eastern Partnership Summit in Vilnius that the relationship between the EU and Russia is seen in some political quarters in Moscow as a zero-sum game. This perception, if continued, would increasingly restrict the meaning of Europe to the European Union in the public discourse in Russia and eastern Europe. It will be the natural result of the “either Russia or Europe” dilemma. Political Europe would be nothing but the EU. The other difficulty is global. There is a solid consensus in Russia that the country should preserve its global identity as a separate and sovereign “pole” in any multipolar world set-up. Whether this is in the long term realistic or not, this would surely mean that there will be issues on which Russia will define its identity in contrast to the EU. The consequence is obvious: Europe will be commonly identified with the EU on the world scene.

However, the pan-European format does not make sense without Russia, and the EU should be interested in developing a strategic partnership with Russia that would keep the pan-European format alive.

We began this essay with the premise that Europe is experiencing the most serious crisis of values since the fall of communism and went on to explore how important these values are in defining the European identity. If the proposed diagnosis – that it is values that constitute Europe’s identity – is right, then Europe should particularly foster and promote the organisation that is universally regarded as the guardian of these values: the Council of Europe. The Organisation could be one of the agents of a drive towards a revival of these values. With its mandate directly focused on the promotion of values, it offers a unique integration philosophy and can extend a helping hand to an EU in crisis. Moreover, at a time when an ever-narrower meaning is being applied to the very term “Europe”, the much larger, pan-European membership of the Council of Europe could enable the latter to further defend and promote the vision of a wider Europe. Could this approach appeal to European leaders?

The Council of Europe has been one of the cornerstones of the European integration project from the very beginning. With every European citizen in its 47 member states eligible to lodge an application directly to the European Court of Human Rights, the Organisation not only implements a vision of all Europeans being equal before the law but embodies the link between every citizen and the European project.

However, the Council of Europe is seen by many experts nowadays as one of the most misunderstood and undervalued organisations in Europe. On the one hand,

its political impact currently does not even come close to its significance for the European project. On the other hand, many of its additional capabilities and tasks are overlooked.

How can the Council of Europe be made more politically relevant? The admission of central and eastern European states to the Council of Europe was one of the most remarkable developments in its history. In fact, its pan-European nature and wider European focus could be seen as its unique feature and greatest potential. In Strasbourg, Russian, Turkish, Ukrainian or Georgian officials are not only present as important neighbours and regular visitors but are equal partners in the European project. On paper, at a time when the EU is experiencing a structural crisis, constrained resources and, therefore, widespread “enlargement fatigue”, every organisational link to the EU’s immediate neighbours should preferably be used in order to reassure them of their place in the European project. However, the Council of Europe is regarded as having disappeared from the radar of political leaders.

Over the last few years, the Organisation has made significant progress on including Mediterranean, Middle Eastern and Central Asian countries in its projects and conventions. In May 2011, its Committee of Ministers agreed on a neighbourhood strategy with the objective of facilitating democratic political transition and helping to promote good governance in these regions. In this connection, the Organisation will assist peoples who have lived under autocratic regimes for decades to take advantage of a unique historical opportunity by delivering best-practice methods and providing expertise. With the European project becoming ever more focused on the eurozone, the Council of Europe, which has most EU neighbours as members, can be a legitimate and efficient supporter of the EU’s neighbourhood policy. Moreover, with its progressive policy towards “new” neighbouring regions it is actively promoting the wider Europe idea through increased co-operation and engagement with non-EU member states. Can we be more ambitious in opening up institutions like the Council of Europe to Mediterranean and Central Asian neighbours?

Can the Council of Europe start working with the supra-geographical idea of Europe? This would mean a total turnaround for the Organisation, but, leaving aside Belarus, which is not yet a member, its traditional geographical mission has essentially been accomplished. Several important tasks for the Organisation, such as the management of diversity, cannot be effectively implemented without more openness towards neighbouring regions, in particular the southern Mediterranean. Europe should not impose itself but it could perhaps in the cultural and civilisational sense start extending its activities beyond the old borders.

That would mean an entirely new adventure for the Council of Europe, but this adventure would be something quite European. After all, Europe is not something waiting to be discovered. Rather, its role is to discover. As Denis de Rougemont suggested, to search for Europe means to create it. The broader notion of Europe will simply have to be created, even if by means of an adventure. The myth of Europe and the mission of Kadmos associated Europe with adventure. Summed up by Bauman (2004), Europe is a mission, a mission that requires invention, dedication and perseverance. Perhaps this mission will never be accomplished; perhaps it is a challenge that will never be met. But Bauman believes that the essence of Europe always escapes the

reality of Europe. The essence of Europe is geographically transcendental: it ignores political, cultural and social boundaries. You can be far away from Europe and may never have lived there but still feel “European”. Europe is exterritorial; it is and will remain esoteric. No one will ever be able to define its geographical boundaries and mental and cultural characteristics.

Alongside its pan-European role, the other strategic asset of the Council of Europe is its expertise in the fields of human rights, democracy and the rule of law. Although there is an obvious crisis of values, there is a striking reluctance to engage leaders in talking about it. The Council of Europe, as a platform for addressing this crisis, is struggling to catch the attention of political leaders. Europe is witnessing a large number of summits. There are “economic crisis summits”, “Libyan (Syrian) crisis summits”, “sustainable development summits”, even “migration summits”, but strangely enough, no “human rights summits” have been held in the past few years. This might be because states are afraid, figuratively, to be sitting in the dock. Moreover, there is a risk that any solutions reached at a summit would only disappoint the public. The stakes are high but the benefits are uncertain. Or has the notion of human rights perhaps lost its political appeal? Even worse, is the crisis of values a systemic crisis of human rights as a concept?

The concept of human rights had its golden age from the middle of the 1970s until the fall of communism in Europe in 1989. Today, despite clear violations and direct assaults on human rights, it is failing to become the focus of European politics. For some experts, it is a victim of its own success. The policy of human rights has achieved a great deal. First of all, it has revolutionised the practice of international relations. Samuel Moyn (2010) observes that, just as international law revolutionised international relations at the end of the 19th century, human rights have revolutionised international law. Human rights have become transnational and subject to international enforcement, as embodied in the notions of “responsibility to protect” and “humanitarian intervention”. Secondly, human rights have served as a catalyst for cosmopolitan empathy. Human rights violations today do not need much awareness raising. Our societies will hardly be indifferent ever again.

The human rights agenda has been firmly defined and largely implemented, but there are still countries considered to be systemic violators. Sometimes these are quite big and powerful states, but even in the case of relatively small and vulnerable problematic countries the challenge today is how to find carrots and sticks that work. Power diffusion has weakened the effectiveness of pressure applied from the outside.

A number of philosophers take an even deeper look at the problem. Some see the utilitarian understanding of human rights as having reached a cul-de-sac. Marcin Król (2012) believes that contemporary utilitarianism has survived thanks to two factors: the ever-expanding scope of human rights and the ever-stronger mechanisms for monitoring and implementing human rights protection mechanisms. The right to happiness has been consolidated at the expense of losing the idea of the quality of happiness, and the two have become irreconcilable. Philosophers like Jürgen Habermas (2012) suggest refocusing the concept of human rights around the notion of dignity. For Habermas, “human dignity” is not a retrospective classificatory expression, an empty placeholder, as it were, that lumps a multiplicity of different

phenomena together, but the moral 'source' from which all of the basic rights derive their sustenance". Perhaps a paradigm change may help to reinvigorate the human rights concept.

The practical paradox remains: Europe has developed the most extensive, elaborate and intrusive system of supranational human rights protection, so how is it possible now to speak about a serious crisis of values with all the assets of the European human rights protection system available?

On the one hand, Europe rightly boasts the most advanced catalogue of human rights. It has the European Convention on Human Rights and more than 200 corresponding international treaties and legal instruments. It has judicial mechanisms providing every European citizen with the right to bring an action against his or her own or another government over human rights violations. Strong protection for the rights of Europeans is provided by the European Court of Human Rights (and the Court of Justice of the European Union). Europe has several institutions that serve as platforms for political pressure, monitoring and assistance: the EU, the Council of Europe, the OSCE, all of which operate with sometimes considerably overlapping agendas.

Despite all this, the European system of values is in crisis. One reason is political – a lack of will or deliberate obstruction. The curbing of political freedoms in some European countries for the sake of "safeguarding stability" is one example. For some leaders there are simply more important values, such as sovereignty, stability, national cohesion, etc.

The crisis of values is a result of the failure of the "imitation strategy", which was adopted at the beginning of the 1990s to guide the former communist countries through transition. This strategy worked quite well in the case of the EU aspirants. The promise of EU membership was the driving force for the development of proper institutions and standards and for ensuring the fulfilment of the EU's so-called Copenhagen criteria. The success of the EU candidates reinforced the belief that it was enough to show how democracy should be organised, how human rights protection systems should be developed and how the principles of the rule of law should be guaranteed and the post-communist countries would, through capacity-building activities, advice, and soft persuasion, build mature systems, copying the Western model. However, as we now realise 20 years later, the imitation strategy is not working. Managed democracy, phoney justice, corruption and other negative phenomena are rendering the strategy ineffective. We understand now that the reason for the problems is not a lack of knowledge of how to do it but the lack of political will. The events in Ukraine have shown that membership in the Council of Europe alone does not give the necessary assurances that the political will to apply the European values will emerge simply as a result of popular pressure. Geopolitical considerations unfortunately play a role. Against this background, only the prospects of integration with the EU can bring hope that leaders will have to be serious with regard to upholding these values.

A lack of resources is another explanation. Many problems related to the inefficiency of the justice system are due to the lack of sufficient funding – too few judges, inadequate operational budgets, etc. Insufficient resources prevent many states

from enforcing high European social cohesion standards. A unique instrument, the European Social Charter, is still far from being universally and fully implemented. Sometimes, human rights abuses occur because of simple negligence. More serious are those problems that arise due to the lack of systemic reform. At the same time, the European system is under strain because of the emergence of new problems, the most serious of which have arisen due to technological change. The Internet and digital technologies have cast new light on the understanding of human rights and democracy, and new conceptual problems have emerged in the areas of freedom of speech and the right to privacy.

The NSA affair has made us aware of how vulnerable our privacy actually is in the age of the Internet. When we visit a website, our IP address, type of device and screen size can easily be ascertained. Our every activity on the Internet can be tracked, analysed and recorded (at least for several months). Even when we make a mistake while using a search engine, it is recorded and stored. E-mail providers can scan our e-mails and make algorithmic analyses of our messages (in principle, only to better fine-tune advertising offers). Almost all e-mail traffic can be intercepted. The metadata of e-mails and telephone calls must be retained (in Europe between 6 and 24 months). E-readers are traced for their readings and comments. Driving, cycling and running apps retrieve data on our movements. Every Facebook “like” is logged. Via our telephones, we can be located even if we are not making any calls. Loyalty cards provide information on our consumption patterns while public communication cards trace our movement patterns. We are constantly being watched by CCTV (in the UK alone between 2 to 4 million people are watched every day).

International case law has recognised that the right to privacy is not absolute. However, there are some important principles. For example, any limitation to the right to privacy must be prescribed by law, but formalistic claims for the purpose of surveillance are not enough and the principles of legitimate aim, necessity and proportionality should apply. In a democratic state, invasion of privacy should not be abusive and arbitrary, and there must be a mechanism for public scrutiny of state actions. There must also be adequate safeguards to prevent abuse, together with sufficient and significant penalties. International case law emphasises accessibility and the foreseeability of state activities. The Edward Snowden affair has placed a question mark over the effectiveness of existing international standard-setting instruments for the protection of privacy.

New challenges brought about by the growth of awareness and rising expectations can be best illustrated in the quest for justice. National justice systems are improving, but demands on supranational bodies like the European Court of Human Rights are high. The Strasbourg Court delivered almost 1 100 judgments and more than 1 800 decisions in 2012, and approximately 81 700 applications were declared inadmissible or struck off the list by single judges. The number of pending applications, which topped 160 000 in September 2011 and stood at 151 600 on 1 January 2012, had been reduced to 128 000 by the end of the year. This is quite a heavy workload by any standards and will remain so not only due to the litigation culture that has developed in many European societies but simply because our quest for justice is becoming increasingly important. The critical assessment of how national justice systems work stems from the rising sensitivity to justice.

There are calls to pronounce access to justice as a new global goal. The number of people deprived of effective access to justice is difficult to assess, but some count them in the billions. However, even in Europe, leaving aside the problems of politically controlled justice systems, the number of people unable to access justice runs into dozens of millions. These are irregular migrants, undocumented people, socially excluded groups (homeless people, etc.). Their human rights will hardly be ever guaranteed without the proper accessibility of justice (Soros and Abed 2012).

There are still unfortunately countries with politically controlled justice systems in Europe. Along with “phoney justice”, the new phenomenon of “selective justice” has emerged in some post-communist countries, the case of Yulia Tymoshenko being widely regarded as symbolic. However, the problem of the efficiency of justice is more general. People are increasingly impatient with the length of proceedings and demand that procedures be simplified, taxes and fees be reduced and proper judicial information be provided. Justice is, in turn, key to the perception of how best to ensure human rights. The pressure to develop effective legal aid systems and mechanisms to compensate for judicial deficiencies is growing. Some feel that those personally responsible for compromising the lofty principles of justice should be exposed to international name-and-shame procedures. However, the “Magnitsky list” as a method is still taboo in Europe. At the same time, Europe is leading the world in the trend towards restorative justice.

Justice may become the organising principle of the European system of values. Many believe that the cosmopolitanisation of the individual will result in the abandonment of the existing tribal approach to justice. If true, Europe is already very much in the lead. The European understanding of a just society – a society trying to ensure justice without waiting for universal models – is developing pragmatically without any ideological doctrines.

In the field of the rule of law, the common scourge is corruption. Corruption in politics is commonplace. Instances of fraud, patronage, hidden accounts and conflict of interest scandals occur periodically in many European countries. Public disapproval of “pantouflage” practices is growing. People demand clearly defined limits of parliamentary or state immunity as well as more transparent political party funding. At the same time, nepotism is undermining the myth of meritocracy. Corruption is one of these problems that can only be tackled by a top-to-bottom approach, and that approach must be extended to all aspects of life, especially sports.

Europe is approaching the time when demographic processes will inevitably pose the question of a new intergenerational contract. On the one hand, the situation of the elderly is still perceived through the prism of social rights rather than human rights, but this is going to change. The ultimate challenge for the European system will come from the pressure to legalise the right to die, but, although less acute, such problems as age discrimination against workers or the right to dignified care will have to be solved. A “European deal” on the rights of the elderly must be pursued, while youth empowerment is another pressing challenge. On the one hand, the granting of political rights such as the lowering of the voting age (at least in local elections) is unavoidable; on the other hand, education systems must be better

tuned to the labour market. Europe should invest jointly in building platforms for e-education. Perhaps a comprehensive charter of young people's rights will become desirable one day.

Gender issues are being actively pursued by activists and researchers, and Europe must speed up efforts to overcome the legacy of discrimination against women. Although they are still meeting with resistance, measures promoting a gender balance in political and corporate life should be pursued. A particular sensitivity to the rights of children has developed in Europe. This sensitivity, based on the teachings of Janusz Korczak, should be made part of the European civilisational identity.

Europe should also finally live up to the promise that there shall be no second-class citizens. This requires upholding the cause of eliminating all forms of discrimination against vulnerable groups. Prejudice against LGBT people is still used by state and other institutions to gain popularity among conservative elements in the population. Openly anti-gay rhetoric and even speeches denouncing legal acts are still a fact of life in several European countries, and a big change in attitude is required on the part of all major churches and religious organisations. While countries will probably differ in the level of rights extended to LGBT people (the number of states allowing same-sex marriages or the adoption of children will grow, but rules will not become universal so soon), there should be a clear understanding that a non-discrimination policy is needed as a common European standard. Such rights as the possibility of changing one's sex or name or entering into a civil union contract should become applicable throughout Europe.

An example of the impact of increasing empathy among Europeans is the growing importance of ensuring the implementation of the rights of people with disabilities. The Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights suggested in 2012 the codification of the right of people with disabilities to live independently and be included in the community and stressed the right to legal capacity for persons with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities. Europe can become a true leader in propagating a mature model for social inclusion, equal access, strong participation in public life and quality care for people with disabilities.

A new front of human rights challenges has arisen as a result of technological advances. For example, many new ethical questions stem from the development of bioengineering. Europe needs a coherent multilateral framework concerning organ and tissue transplantation, and there is a need to provide codes of conduct and binding legal instruments on biometrics as a legal vacuum in this field may have a negative impact on privacy. The need for a legal framework also applies to ethical research. Political emotions are mostly associated with "end-of-life rights". There will probably not be a common European approach to euthanasia in the near future, but at least a common European approach to researching all aspects of the end-of-life dilemma would be helpful.

Empathy is also driving Europeans to look critically at some law enforcement aspects. The conditions of detention are among the most criticised human rights deficiencies today. Experts have sent out alarm signals concerning prison overcrowding, the lack of adequate medical care, dilapidated conditions, poor hygiene, limited access to natural light, the lack of outdoor exercise or the absence of professional management

in the detention system. One of the most common complaints in Europe today is about ill-treatment by law enforcement officers: inhuman and degrading treatment, severe physical ill-treatment by the police, unlawful detention, and the failure to carry out effective investigations into alleged ill-treatment. These shortcomings are often quoted in human rights monitoring reports.

The surge in counterterrorism policies, too, has stimulated a new chapter of conceptual work concerning human rights. The fundamental question is the relationship between security and human rights. One aspect has become clear: the interests of national security do not always coincide with the perception of personal security. In addition, counterterrorism policies sometimes interfere with people's understanding of justice and human rights. The extradition of Abu Qatada from the UK was the most visible manifestation of these conflicting considerations. In the summer of 2013, Europe was emotionally debating the so-called "snooping affair". The big question is how far the restrictions placed on the right to privacy by "state security" and "public safety" interests can go. Every state wants to feel sovereign in this respect, but the fact is that the traditional approach of giving more protection to our own citizens than to foreigners is becoming increasingly obsolete in a cosmopolitan Europe. Assurances that we do not snoop on our citizens but only on "foreigners" reflect a tribal approach to morality and law, but this will hardly meet with public approval in Europe. Whether we like it or not, public pressure for a clearer definition of "security considerations" will grow.

The maturing of our societies, individual empowerment and technological changes make it increasingly important to find ways of harmoniously reinterpreting existing rights and liberties in their mutual interaction. In chapter IV of this essay, concrete examples were analysed of the tension between different rights, such as freedom of religion and free speech. This interaction between different freedoms will be one of the most important challenges in the field of human rights. The same goes for the mutual relationship between collective and individual rights.

In the wake of the recent crisis, some libertarians suggested that the state was under such great stress that it should be relieved of the role of guarantor of so-called positive human rights. Several politicians in some western European countries even declared the end of the welfare state. Zygmunt Bauman suggests (2004) that Europeans want to move from the welfare state to the security state. The deregulation of life and the privatisation of risk provoke fear, and states want to transform this into fear related to physical integrity, private property and security. Bauman believes that security has become the most valuable of all values, explaining this by reference to otherness. In his logic, the other may see our values as threatening and unacceptable but knows he or she must target us to attack the values we cherish. However, Bauman's remark that security is seen as more important than justice was probably too influenced by the post-9/11 shockwaves. The fact is that the level of violence in and around Europe is falling. This is a significant civilisational trend: the West has been quite successful at curbing violence (Pinker 2011), and recent empirical studies confirm that crime rates are falling everywhere in the Western world. Crime hit a 30-year low in the UK in 2012 and reached a four-decade low in the United States. While there is no consensus on how to explain the trend (better policing, the impact of surveillance cameras, the role of the digital revolution, etc.), the evidence is sound. We can feel more secure than ever, at least in the physical sense, so today it is the value of justice that is coming to the forefront.

The period before the Second World War was the cradle of the welfare state. The welfare state came as an offspring of the “warfare state” – the planned nationalisation of social preparations for industrialised war. The welfare state facilitated post-war planning and encouraged transnational co-operation projects. Some experts believe that, as a consequence, the European project has reached a stage today where any coherent common economic policy will inevitably require a European social security system. Social cohesion will grow in importance. For Habermas, one of the consequences of making the concept of human dignity a central theme is the need to focus now more on social rights (2012).

The overall conclusion is simple: European leaders must mobilise all available instruments to improve the upholding of European values. There are many different avenues for improving human rights implementation standards. It is essential to increase the synergy of all European institutions operating in this field – the EU, the Council of Europe and the OSCE – and their combined impact, both in the political and technical fields, should be increased. Human rights issues should also be put higher up on the foreign policy agendas of member states. States’ accountability with respect to human rights implementation should be increased, and there should be penalties for non-compliance. There are many possible political, legal or even economic sanctions that can be applied if necessary, but states must recognise that mere persuasion has its limits. There must be also some red lines when it comes to membership of the Council of Europe. As a model for human rights protection, Europe sometimes needs punitive approaches.

In promoting human rights issues, states should increase the role of citizens. The empowerment of the individual can find very concrete expression in pan-European public debates on human rights implementation. But the citizens of Europe also need reassurance from state leaders about the ultimate vision of human rights in an integrated Europe. Even if some of the measures discussed here are for various reasons difficult to implement at the moment, a clear vision would help to consolidate the common European identity. Leaders should be able to set concrete benchmarks to guide the work of international institutions in the field of human rights. What kind of benchmarks? Merely for the sake of illustration, it is possible to imagine the following examples: the right to choose your own culture and identity would help to reflect the concept of multiple identities and intercultural dialogue throughout the European space; citizens would be protected from state policies prescribing the character of their identity. Another important right that could be reflected in these benchmarks would concern the right to freely express one’s opinion. This would involve the universal depenalisation of libel, guarantees for the freedom of electronic media, including from excessive state control, and protection of the freedom of the Internet. Europe would also benefit from the reconfirmation of basic LGBT rights, such as the right to change one’s birth sex and name or the right to enter into same-sex partnerships. The fight against corruption should also be reflected in concrete European benchmarks, including standards relating to the transparency of politicians’ personal assets or the financing of political activities. The right to travel within Europe should also be highlighted in these new objectives, and Europe should aim to become a visa-free zone. Benchmarks should also apply to the rights of the younger generation and of the elderly.

Europe needs a productive summit on values. The worst that may happen with Europe is the emergence (or re-emergence) of the value divide, which has much more destructive potential than any politically, economically or even militarily motivated divisions. This is the multitude of Europes that no one should want again.

Based on presentations at Zelenogorsk (Russian Federation) in April 2012, Neum (Bosnia and Herzegovina) in June 2012 and Novosibirsk (Russian Federation) in October 2013.

Conclusions: Europe's global future

The economic, social, and psycho-political burden of the present crisis is unquestionably large, at least in several of the countries most affected. The price that societies and individuals have to pay to find a way back to recovery is sometimes very high, but when the crisis is finally over many may ask whether it has really been used as an opportunity. Has it been seen as cathartic? For the time being, the only cathartic effect is associated with the promotion of a federal project for the European Union. Some politicians, experts and intellectuals backing the integrationist philosophy have insisted that post-crisis Europe take a leap into the future. What the practical impact of the "leap forward" philosophy might be remains to be seen.

In all the discussions on the crisis in Europe the emphasis is put on addressing the issue of what is wrong with the European project as such. Very few participants in these discussions have tried to look outside at the world at large or analyse the problem more deeply. After all, it may well be that the crisis in Europe, including the crisis of the European identity and European values, is a reflection of a broader process, namely the crisis of the West and its civilisation.

Marcin Król (2012) puts the European crisis precisely into this broader context. For him, the recent crisis was moderate in economic terms, serious in political terms, dramatic as a crisis of civilisation, and fatal in the spiritual sense. In his opinion, Europe has always been in permanent crisis, but the difference now is that it has lost the ability for self-reflection and self-criticism that helped it overcome past crises. There is a growing divide between those who believe that nothing changes and those who believe that everything is changing for the better, and this divide is slowly permeating our own state of mind. Król believes that four ruptures are bringing down Europe: that between faith and rationality, nationalism and universalism, utilitarianism and the human inability to satisfy the quest for pleasure, and liberalism and democracy. Europe is increasingly unable to deal with these four challenges and EU constitutional fixes are irrelevant from this point of view. Król asserts that the response to the crisis through the federative vision is misguided and is against the citizens' current mood since no European society wants a European federation. The big task ahead lies in reviving Europeans' spiritual agility, and tinkering with the governance model of the EU will hardly be of any help in this process.

Likewise for Niall Ferguson (2011), the present European crisis is definitely a more deep-seated phenomenon: the West has been abandoning the values on which it built its civilisational success. In his view, the Protestant ethic has all but disappeared, with the 2008 financial crisis exposing in turn the fundamental flaws of Western consumer society. Western elites are beset by fears of a coming environmental apocalypse; Ferguson warns us that the main threats to the West are “our own loss of faith in the civilization we inherited” and “our own pusillanimity – and ... the historical ignorance that feeds it”.

Concerned by the backlash of anti-European feelings, Thomas Friedman (2012) takes a more political view without deeper civilisational undertones. But he still believes that Europe is a good example of a broader phenomenon of history going into reverse gear. By his reasoning, Europe is slipping back from the height of the integration project to the age of nation states. By the same token, many countries in North Africa and the Middle East are receding into the tribal concept of a state.

There is another approach that suggests that Western decline is actually taking place but is relative. For Francis Fukuyama, the crisis is simply about history slowing down (2012). He believes that the past decade has been a period of historical stagnation. If this is the case, can Europe revive itself within the declining or stagnant West? Can the revival of the European project give an impetus to Western civilisation as such? Does the fate of the EU make any difference in this strategic approach?

However, the big question is: will the power shift as reflected in the rise of China or India be accompanied by a shift in values? Some experts now believe that the main global impact of the crisis is related to the sphere of values. Europe has provided the standards that have kept the world in balance, and if a weaker Europe will not so much destabilise the world in the economic or political sense, a role will be played by how attractive the model of values it represents is.

Bauman (2006) reminds us that until the beginning of the 20th century what we now call the Westernisation of the world used to be called its Europeanisation. It was very much a one-way process. As pointed out by Denis de Rougemont, Europe discovered all the lands of the world but no one has ever discovered Europe. Europe wanted to turn the world into a copy of itself. As a subsidiary process, it exported its own history (or the surplus of it). The rest of the world had to suffer from wars and conflicts because of the old and new rivalries between European powers. By the end of the 20th century, the tide had turned and Europe is now in the hopeless position of trying to consume the excesses of global history. It has become humbler and no longer enjoys the privilege of ignorance. It has to learn from others, and there is nothing wrong with this. Globalisation is about learning from one another. Of course, if a former teacher has to take the role of a pupil, then any subsequent neurosis is understandable. However, time will have its effect and Europe’s psyche will regain its balance. Besides, Europe still has a great deal of knowledge and experience to share with others, quite enough in fact to bolster its self-confidence.

Several commentators believe that the revival of the European project should help Europe be a significant global player. This is a new version of the idea of Europe as a power project. Timothy Garton Ash has already been quoted in this essay as a

proponent of this concept. He believes that the 21st century will be the age of the giants. World affairs will be decided between old powers like the United States and emerging powers like China and India, and if Europe wants to be seated at the high table it has to become big. The argument is convincing but it assumes that Europe needs and wants to become a new empire. This imperial construction would obviously have to be liberal, benign, non-colonial and non-imperialistic but would nonetheless have to be really big in economic, demographic, and other terms if it is to count. The argument is nothing new either. After all, European integration proposals before the Second World War, such as those by Walther Rathenau or Aristide Briand and Gustav Stresemann, were motivated not only by obvious pacifist sentiments but also by the desire to protect Europe against the trade challenges posed by the US, Japan and other non-European nations.

The European project has been very successful in solving practical problems of European co-operation throughout its history. It has helped to reconcile historical emotions and served as a catalyst for unprecedented economic growth in Europe during the 1960s. It has helped to bridge the income gaps between different nations and has been extended eastwards to heal the wounds of the Cold War divisions, but some say it now needs a new mission. The European project without a mission cannot be sustainable. Should its mission at the present junction be to become a global player, a new liberal empire? Is this an attractive *raison d'être* for the European project?

As already pointed out, another question is whether size will matter in the world of tomorrow. After all, the period from 1998 to 2008 was termed the decade of the small nations. Probably never before in history had being small not mattered so much. Of course, one might ask how small a state can be while still being sustainable in the global set-up. After all, as Parag Khanna (2011) points out, the world is full of orphan states (currently estimated at over 50), states that depend on foreign aid and have difficulty running and managing their own affairs. However, as we see, the emancipation of nations is unstoppable and the number of states in the world will grow, though probably at a slower pace than up to now. What makes this process irreversible is the quest for recognition. Even if life as a sovereign state is difficult, it is rare that movements for independence are abandoned. So the quest for recognition will keep the world a pluralistic, ever more numerous community, probably making it impossible to manage world affairs through a directorate of big states or entities.

However, the objection to the goal of making Europe a single entity, and thus big enough to be a global player, should be primarily ontological. The European project was a project of the cosmopolitanisation of relations. The European Union played a decisive role in weakening the tribal approach to international relations and limiting the destabilising effects of the nation-state concept. The EU was about decomposing nation states. Would it not be a betrayal of this mission if Europe now started acting to reconstitute the nation-state philosophy at a higher regional level? Accordingly, if the global factor is to play any role in galvanising further European integration it has to be a different kind of motivation than simply sitting at the high table of world affairs. Perhaps Europe needs a new global mission, and this vision should be bigger than simply giving Europe stronger cards in the global game with the United States,

China or India. Some people say that the world is torn between chaos, a nightmare of Hobbesian policies and a vision of a neo-imperial order established by one or more world powers. Perhaps if one looks for an alternative concept, the only new credible global mission for Europe would be to serve as an agent for the cosmopolitanisation of international relations at the world level.

Should Europe commit itself to pushing for the implementation of the last political Utopia – the Utopia of a world government? That would probably be too quixotic. The chances of a world government are quite slim, but, as shown by the very strong analysis by Jacques Attali (2011), the arguments for world government are growing. After all, some believe that world government is the only way to safeguard the primacy of the so-called Western values in a world of dramatic power shifts. In more practical terms Jürgen Habermas (2012) sees for the EU the role of moving the world towards a Kantian, peaceful federation of nations through the constitutionalisation of international relations. For Habermas, in the immediate future, cosmopolitan constitutionalisation would come at the global level through a reinvigorated United Nations (focused exclusively on security and human rights) and a system of negotiations among the strongest nations to address global domestic politics (such as the environment, climate change, etc.).

Let us also not forget that Europe is a method of reaching goals, and European politics is consensus-based. To quote Luuk van Middelaar (2013) again: “Ideological and political fault lines between right and left, rich and poor, north and south are tempered by technicalities and compromise. Coalitions between countries shift all the time.” There are no eternal coalitions. Configurations shift as the agenda changes, and memories are short. Perhaps at least this pragmatic consensus-building method employed by the European Union can become an inspiration for the world in transition to better global governance.

Is Europe a model for others in their regional co-operation or national governance? Is it an alternative both as an agent and as a model? Should others look to its welfare model, its model of democracy, its model for managing diversity? In many corners of the world, it is indeed seen as a model. Paradoxically, people in other parts of the world call for the European model to be replicated at the domestic level but opt to emigrate, live and prosper not in Europe but, rather, in the United States.

Today, Europe’s role is more often defined as creating a community embracing all human beings, but it is mainly seen as a political process. Therefore, whatever shape the new world role for Europe takes the most probable scenario is that globally Europe will be associated more and more with the Europe of the European Union.

The EU’s global political involvement is quite recent. It has been advanced by many peacekeeping and stabilisation missions, especially in Africa, and by participation in Middle East settlement mediation or in efforts to negotiate an agreement on the Iranian nuclear programme. However, the EU still does not have its own seat on the Security Council, and without it will probably not develop a stronger identity on the global security scene. Besides, the European public is not very enthusiastic about the EU becoming more involved in managing conflicts elsewhere.

It is true that for many Europeans the world outside is no longer appealing. It does not call for adventure, and it is not friendly but rather hostile and dangerous. However, “fortress Europe” does not seem to be a viable option. The world is a system of connected vessels, and thinking of Europe as a cosy, prosperous little corner able to protect itself from the influences of the turbulent world is an illusion. Some, however, have developed an entire philosophy of an irrelevant but comfortable Europe and call this process the “Helvetisation” of Europe, a term that is not fair in this context (and is first and foremost unfair to the Swiss).

The world has become simply too invasive. The mechanics of international relations are changing quite fundamentally. The global political environment is characterised by power diffusion. As explained by Joseph Nye (2011), the main source of power diffusion is the proliferation of actors, but the main new quality in this multitude of players (states, international organisations, corporate entities and non-governmental organisations) is the emergence of the individual as an autonomous participant in international affairs. For many years already, the individual has been a point of reference in international politics. After all, the concept of human rights has revolutionised not only international law but also international politics. The idea of “responsibility to protect” is the culmination of this process, but nowadays the individual is increasingly becoming an independent player.

Power diffusion is not only about the proliferation of actors but also about the global strategic game, which is being played on more than one chessboard. The old classical chessboard of the real world is still there, but there is a new one: the virtual-world chessboard where the state and the individual share the tension. The virtual world will not overtake, overhaul or overshadow the existing world order but it will increasingly interfere with the real world, thus complicating power relations.

The digital space has made the individual more powerful, also by allowing him or her to have multiple identities, but the state has followed suit. States have created their own avatars, and these quite often behave differently from real states in the real world. States therefore have to develop a double set of policies: foreign and domestic policies for both the physical and virtual worlds. The virtual state, like the individual, is becoming more powerful thanks to the Internet. It aspires to be the gatekeeper and, as a result, the Internet is experiencing a form of Balkanisation.

Power-seeking strategies have changed. Nye (2011) describes how in the strategies of states possession goals have been replaced by milieu goals. Controlling territories, resources and strategic points has been replaced by ensuring access to and use of both material and non-material goods. Today, the main goal of the power game is winning over the individual, especially his or her emotions. The individual is what is at stake in this strategic battle among states and this adds up to the classical tension between states and the individual. The conclusion for the European Union is obvious: it will be successful as a global player if it possesses the right strategy to win over the individual both in Europe and on the world stage.

These new processes also fundamentally change the mechanics of foreign policy decision making. On the surface, it is still very much the same: the most important strategic decisions are taken by the leaders alone. There is no great difference in the way the most crucial decisions are taken in democratic and non-democratic

systems, though how they are taken and to whom the decision maker is accountable will vary. In a democracy, a wrong decision always has a price, whereas in an autocracy this can easily go unpunished. Below the level of leaders – at the level of political doctrines, ideologies and strategies – it is the political, intellectual and business elites who decide on the general direction of foreign policy, but below that there is a new, strong current that exerts its influence on the surface. Henry Kissinger calls this a “mad consensus”. A mad consensus is not silly or irresponsible and can sometimes be very wise and very responsible. It is mad because it is unpredictable; it is based on a snowball effect and on flock instincts or a herd mentality. The digital space is the catalyst for a mad consensus. This does not mean that a mad consensus is democratic since, as we know, even in a network some elements are more equal than others, and even in the digital age we tend to believe the source rather than the opinion expressed. Sometimes, a change takes place in this blind movement and the current takes a different course – not because of a position or action of an elected democratic leader but because of someone not elected to the position of a leader and sometimes someone quite anonymous. No wonder, then, that the traditional meaning of leadership is no longer applicable.

Europe has no choice but to be globally active. It should develop a vocation for a leadership role. It might, however, be asked how Europe can lead if it no longer possesses the argument of power. The natural answer is: only by means of its soft power and with a clear vision at hand.

The search for a global role for the European Union is continuing. The term “normative power” has been coined as the desired identity for the EU. Its centrepiece should be the promotion of the values of human rights, democracy and the rule of law. In May 2013, a report was published entitled “Towards a European global strategy: securing European influence in a changing world”. It was prepared by four leading European think tanks (from Italy, Poland, Spain and Sweden) and suggests that at the global level “the EU should combine formal and informal avenues when it comes to fighting climate change and managing the world economy. The EU should also seek to anticipate the demand for governance in ... cyberspace and outer space ... the EU should invest in region-building and inter-regionalism, and work to increase the participation of regional organizations in global governance structures”. This seems quite a realistic programme for a time horizon of 2030. Although the authors acknowledge the profound changes in the world order (power shift and power diffusion) and the growing demand for post-national forms of governance, they still see the world through the prism of regions. In other words, their main preoccupation is not with global challenges but the vitality of a regional framework, that is the EU. The main focus of their work is therefore how to create a new Atlantic Community with the United States or new, targeted partnerships with the emerging powers. They advocate a more inclusive set-up for global governance that envisages new forms of interaction with societal actors. This is enough to justify the need for a European global strategy but is probably not enough to be called a “vision”.

Europe should be ready to lead humankind, probably more as a beacon than as a missionary and more in a cultural sense than through the projection of power. After all, Goethe called European culture Promethean. Europe is about projecting its values

elsewhere. Will global responsibility help it to overcome current problems, and stay together in good economic and political health? Probably not, as this might be too lofty a goal to have a meaningful impact.

Another strategic question is whether it makes sense to stick to the European identity while claiming a vision for a globalised world embracing all human beings. After all, only when we go outside Europe do we start realising that we are European, whereas when we are in Europe we are very keen to call ourselves French, German, Italian or Polish. It is the context of the outside world that makes us Europeans, and the question is for how much longer?

Even now, calling yourself a European is one thing, but do Europeans exist at all as a construct? Luuk van Middelaar (2013) describes all the difficulties in defining and consolidating the European identity within the EU context. He recalls how after 1950 “the word ‘European’ moved from the geopolitical and cultural outer sphere, where it naturally kept company with ‘American’, ‘African’ and ‘Asian’, to the institutional inner sphere, where it acquired an ideological charge”. “Europeans” were politicians favouring further integration. “Europeans” were reduced conceptually from the inhabitants of a continent to the supporters of a project, and it became imperative to develop a new connotation in this regard. The term “European” has been increasingly associated with the citizens of the member states of the European Union, even if Europe is presumed to be bigger than the EU. However, the political and economic glue binding the Union together is much stronger than the civic bonds among Europeans. If the Union were to disintegrate, there would be protests, even street action by thousands of Europeans, but most would probably not be concerned.

So what is the nature of the glue? In the “peace project” (the original understanding of Europe) it was assumed that “Europe” was above all a moral act, whereas in the “power project” it was assumed that the imperative was to merge nation states’ powers in order to amplify power. Europe switched from a peace project to a political project. The current discussions about the nature of the project oscillate between the utilitarian approach, where Europe is simply a matter of convenience, a market and a service provider, and an idealistic approach, where Europe is treated as a dream, a political objective. Europe now needs more than ever a cultural-civilisational project. The essence of the project should be to develop a value-based identity with a strong cosmopolitan element. This identity would no longer make Europeanness dependent on the fate of the political Union, whether it be a federal or confederal set-up. It would bypass the issue of how far the European Union can expand and how to refer to all those Europeans who cannot or do not want to join it. It would water down the consequences of having a multi-speed Europe. The cultural-civilisational identity can, however, be built only on the strict application of the criterion of values. Authoritarianism, politically controlled justice, rampant corruption, intolerance and attempts to justify the existence of second-class citizens under a “cultural exceptionalism” flag would be clearly incompatible with this European identity, even if political common sense were to say that this approach should be relaxed for the sake of keeping a country within the orbit of European influence. Europe needs a cultural identity that would focus on the freedom of the individual. Two aspects of this freedom seem to count most: freedom to define one’s own identity and freedom

from the excessive control of the nation state. Will Europe ever find leaders strong and credible enough to promote this idea of Europeanness? All the hope is with a new generation. This would be the broader strategic perspective of the work of the European schools of political studies.

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Europe has been going through its most serious crisis of values since the fall of communism. In public discourse, economic and social pressures have overshadowed the other dimensions of the crisis, including societal values. However, the crisis of values would appear to be more than simply an effect of the recession.

Europeans have lost trust in democratic institutions at all levels: European, national and local. Rising xenophobia and discrimination against minorities undermine the vitality of the European model of tolerance. Europe is plagued by endemic corruption which costs it more than €100 billion annually, triggering political instability.

Some believe that once Europe is back on the path of growth the crisis of values will disappear, and that there will be a resurgence of faith in European integration.

But in the long term, growth in Western societies may be impaired by serious "headwinds" resulting from demographic trends and rising inequalities, and Europe may become the first post-growth society. European societies are already changing their traditional characteristics as a result of exposure to the effects of two global mega-trends: the empowerment of the individual and cosmopolitanisation.

Can the European project be of relevance when addressing these challenges? What role in this process can be played by the Council of Europe, which is the embodiment of the idea that Europe is bigger than the European Union and the European agenda is richer than the economy and politics?

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The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation. It includes 47 member states, 28 of which are members of the European Union. All Council of Europe member states have signed up to the European Convention on Human Rights, a treaty designed to protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The European Court of Human Rights oversees the implementation of the Convention in the member states.

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