

## FEDERALIST DEBATE & TRAINING WEEKEND SUMMARY OF THE DISCUSSIONS

Saturday 2 March 2013

### **Opening session – “Challenges and opportunities towards a federal union”**

*With Andrew Duff, MEP and UEF president, moderated by Paolo Vacca, UEF Bureau Member.*

Paolo Vacca opened the seminar raising the point that: “*there are countries struggling so much that they could collapse. But there is a window that could or might lead us to a more federal Europe*”.

President of the UEF, Andrew Duff, stated subsequently that “*wherever we go as federalists we are accused of being dreamers. I enjoy dreaming of a federal union with nation states*”. However, he warned that “*the EP is more conservative and more nationally oriented*” today than before.

The introduction led to a discussion with the audience. During the debate, Andrew Duff specified that there is not a huge appetite from various countries to make a treaty change at the moment, and that going back to the people might put too much stress on the project. However, Mr. Duff declared there is not an option but to have a treaty change. “*Without change we are not able to solidify our fiscal union. The Lisbon Treaty must be stretched*”, he said.

Andrew Duff also pointed out that the public opinion is changing much faster than the solutions. This is the reason why according to him there is not a proper response from governments and institutions towards the markets. The EU is not given enough time to grow up, “*therefore a signal from the Eurozone would be fundamental*”, he added.

Andrew Duff further emphasised that governments and institutions put pressure on the people with their top-down approach while there should be a bottom up approach. This could be made, for instance, by allowing the people to engage in the writing process.

On the question whether a constitution would provide a real solution to bring the EU closer to the people, Andrew Duff answered that “*drafting a constitution is a hard thing to do, especially as the electorate cannot engage in it. It is very important not to obscure constitutions. It would not be imposed in a way that countries will not have a choice. It will be democratically imposed, and I quite like my bold approach*”, concluded Mr. Duff.

### **Session I – “Combining fiscal discipline, solidarity and growth: lessons from federal states and challenges for Europe”**

*With Harald Stieber, economist at the European Commission and UEF Federal Committee member, Alexander De Streel, Professor of Economics at the Universities of Namur and Louvain-la-Neuve, moderated by Paolo Vacca.*

Alexander De Streel explained that the crucial element in fiscal policy matters is more the enforcement of the rule than the rule itself. He added that inter-social mechanisms being only national at the moment, the solidarity within the EU could only occur between Member States and not individuals. This pattern has the damaging consequence of leading to economic austerity and recession. Mr. De Streel stressed that *“the legitimacy of the Commission has not been increased and that is backlashing against the people, citizens and parliamentarians. They do not accept this. As the EU we should focus more on solidarity”*. He further emphasised that money allocated to other Member States was not lost or given but was rather an investment that would bring wealth back to investors. Mr. De Streel added: *“It is clear that the risk of too much fiscal discipline is that you get rid of that investment. When it comes to EU spending we need to focus more on '93. On the question of tradition, countries must adapt to globalization but must not be obligated to adapt their monetary policy”*.

Harald Stieber opened his intervention by asking two questions: *“Should we have integration by surveillance or action? When did we go into surveillance mode in the EU?”* He stressed how focussing on federal systems could help us to handle with fiscal discipline, pointing out in particular the USA and Germany. Mr. Stieber highlighted that the German model was always taken as an example, but that only part of it was implemented in the EU. The recycling process of wealth was secured within the German economy with richer *länders* spending their capital into poorer *länders*, which he described as *“the only solution to keep the currency rate down”*. He supported that *“Somehow it is unfortunate that Germany is still able to bail its banks out. If Germany had more difficulties it would make them more willing to negotiate”*. Mr. Stieber affirmed that the capacity to choose on one's own economic model depends on the country's size. He argued that the only country that has political autonomy in this regard is the USA, and called for the EU to become the second one.

## **Session II – “Consolidating the Eurozone, preserving the European Union: reforming EU treaties or an additional treaty towards a multi-level Europe?”**

*With Richard Corbett, Member of the Cabinet of Herman Van Rompuy, Giulia Rossolillo, Professor of EU Law at the university of Pavia, Piotr Maciej Kaczyński, Advisor to the Polish delegation to the EP, moderated by Michele Ciavarini Azzi, president of UEF Belgium.*

Michele Ciavarini Azzi highlighted the historical importance of the current crisis and the chance it was to reveal a number of shortcomings and failures in the EU. He acknowledged however that the present climate for a deeper change did not have enough support.

Richard Corbett affirmed a political union needed first a separate budget. *“The Member States don't want to assign more sources at the European Union level which is a problem. We need an authority independent of Member States with its own sources. This is why creating a budget in the EU is so important”*, he said.

Giulia Rossolillo focussed on the necessity to have a separate budget and on the different ways to reach this breaking point. She pointed out four possibilities: a revision of the treaties, an enhanced cooperation, using article 136 TFUE (Eurozone provision), or having a separate treaty for the willing Member States. She declared that the choice of the route is dependent on the level of resistance from Member States and on the nature of the content to be changed.

Piotr Maciej Kaczyński concluded the session by stressing how important it was before any further step forward to make the Parliament more understandable and more democratic. *“You must make the changing of positions and the direct result of elections more visible”*, he asserted.

### ***Session III – “Sharing best practices on how to run national or European grass-root campaigns: federalist and non-federalist campaign experiences”***

*With Pauline Gessant, president of the Young European Federalists, Peter Matjasic, president of the European Youth Forum, Guillaume Liegey, head of the “door to door campaign” in the campaign team of François Hollande, Veronica Scognamiglio, European Campaign Coordinator on Discrimination of Amnesty International, moderated by Mana Livardjani, UEF Director.*

Pauline Gessant introduced JEF main campaigns, insisting on how the way of campaigning was related to the content of the campaigns. She explored different types of strategies (information campaigns, attention campaigns, transnational street actions, online activism). She also emphasised the importance on communicating about those campaigns and to give feedbacks to participants, media and social media.

Peter Matjasic raised the problem of motivating people for grass-root campaigns, especially on a European scale and on issues that seem sometimes far from people direct concerns. It is indeed a key element for lobby platforms such as the European Youth Forum to rely on a citizen movement to support its claims. However, Peter Matjasic said one of the main difficulties is the discrepancy between the global goal of the base and the highly focussed and narrow political demands of the lobby team. Furthermore, when it comes to concrete proposals, political sensibilities risk to stretch and weaken the movement. The key of the success is nevertheless in the ability to link mass support to political goals while managing practical issues.

Guillaume Liegey described the process he used for the “door to door” campaign of François Hollande presidential election. He insisted on the importance of getting people on board: *“use your volunteers, give them support and something meaningful to do. Make them feel useful”*, he insisted. He called for sincerity as a powerful tool to convince others: *“you know your beliefs, so focus on it while making a campaign. Personal stories are the best to explain what your beliefs are”*. He also stressed the need to focus on a target group and to experiment, which is important to know what the participants give as feedback.

Veronica Scognamiglio shared her experience as European Campaign Coordinator on Discrimination of Amnesty International in organising gay pride marches at risk in Baltic countries, overcoming reluctant authorities, challenging mentalities and fighting against homosexual discrimination.

Saturday 3 March 2013

## **Session IV – Workshops**

### **“How to keep a local/regional/national section active and politically relevant”**

*With Peter Oomsels, president of JEF-Belgium and Luisa Trumellini, board member of UEF Italy.*

Peter Oomsels and Luisa Trumellini stressed the importance to keep the action on the street and to talk to people. The key, they said, is to be creative and visible, to target a public, and to provide unbiased information. They advocated for organising events which make people willing to know more about the cause and to become active themselves. They insisted on the necessity to keep an eye on the long run of the organisation and to always facilitate the knowledge transmission to new people. Extra funding outside of the collection of member fees is also a necessity, although they recommended not being dependent on grants.

### **“Campaigning for Europe: how to get through the media? How to use new media’s”**

*With Dominique Ostyn, Senior Manager Communication & New Media at Euractiv and Jon Worth, European blogger and partner of TechPolitics LLC.*

Dominic Ostyn and Jon Worth demonstrated the important impact of social media as well as their limits. Twitter is very efficient to raise issues among certain circles and in the Brussels media, or to directly contact politicians, but it fails to reach the outside world (twitter is not used in every European country). They advocated learning where to find key people, going to their platform, using it as free publicity. They advised to use different kinds of short information rather than a large quantity of it, and to use rather a few good networks than many bad ones: “by doing less you have more impact”, they insisted.

### **“How to lobby politicians at local, national and European level?”**

*With Diogo Pinto, Secretary General of the European Movement International and Phillip Souta, Director of Business for Europe.*

Diogo Pinto and Philip Souta defended lobbying as an important part of the democratic system in order to provide decision-makers with relevant information. In order to convince politicians to pay attention to a particular message, they advocated for a transparent lobby. Beyond ethical reasons, this strengthens the credibility. They highlighted the importance to provide decision-makers with useful assistance they can rely on and to demonstrate why it is good for them to help you with your cause (ideological reasons, polls results, offering them media coverage, saving them work, providing reliable

technical support and arguments, building ties with like-minded people and organisations, etc.). They insisted on avoiding complexity in direct communications with decision-makers and on focussing to the point, presenting the conclusions as obvious.