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1. PAST EVENTS

60th anniversary of the Congress of Europe 1948-2008, May 23rd-24th, The Hague

This was a very successful event, blessed a lovely sunshine in the lovely Dutch capital. I could not attend the opening Plenary, though I have no doubt that the three key speakers gave a strong note from the start.

The workshops held on the Friday afternoon were introduced by brilliant personalities. In the workshop dealing with Economic and Social Europe, Ms Joao Rodriguez gave a masterly presentation on the Lisbon strategy. The debate took place on the basis of the preliminary contributions sent over the internet and was lively. Some important ideas were exchanged, though time was missing to go beyond purely ideological statements, at times: women's rights, inclusion, innovation, economic coordination were among the most debated issues.

The results of the debates were presented the following day in the impressive "Nieuwe Kerk". The moderators did a great job , especially the moderator for the workshop I had attended. Ann Mettler summed up the concerns expressed by the participants by stressing the issue of equal opportunity for women and for young people, briefly summing the concerns about precariousness and lasting inequalities. Concerns were expressed that the key advances and proposals in the historical Resolutions of the European Congress were somewhat overlooked or forgotten.

The ensuing speeches by the representatives of most institutions were brilliant. Each speaker managed to convey a sense of the identity and mission of the institution he represented. There were of course no women on the panel and the only speaker in French was Mr luis Maria de Puig, for the Council of Europe. Differences were also audible

between the Prime Minister of Slovenia representing the Council and Mr Barroso, President of the European Commission, when presenting their respective priorities.

The exchanges with the public were brilliantly moderated by Mr Pat Cox, president of the European Movement and were followed by a press conference. The afternoon was devoted to the replies to questions from the public and from the European Forum of Civil Society, with TV cameramen.

Overall, an enthralling event full of majesty, with brilliant presentations by political leaders and quality debates. The quality of debate was somewhat poorer in the workshops than the official ceremonies and debate: they looked like a superficial race for a wish list, at times, and there was a sense of superficiality and caricatural oppositions at times under the time pressure.

Two regrets/suggestions: it was impossible to enter the "Ridderzaal" on Saturday, the historical place for the original Congress, because of the official dinner; there should have been an official visit arranged the day before or in the morning. Though this could run the risk of repetitiveness if repeated, it would be useful and thought-provoking to actually reread and discuss the historical resolutions.

Catherine Vieilledent
UEF Groupe Europe

2. FUTURE EVENTS

2008 European Parliament Open Doors day, Saturday the 7th of June 2008, Brussels

On Saturday 7 June from 10 am to 5 pm the European Parliament in Brussels will open its doors to the public. This year the event is celebrating the **European Year of Intercultural Dialogue** as well as focusing in the new face of the European Union, once the Lisbon Treaty is ratified by all Member States.

The UEF European Secretariat will be represented together with UEF Belgium, UEF Groupe Europe, EUD Brussels and JEF Europe through a couple of stands at the open doors day of the EP.

Come and visit our stands which will be situated inside the ASP building, level 0, in front of the banks.

Citizens' AGORA Citoyenne: Climate Change, 12-13 June 2008, ASP, Brussels

We would like to draw your attention to the Agora of the European Parliament that will take place on the 12-13 June 2008. The Agora will tackle the topic of "Climate Change" as one of the major challenges facing our societies.

The UEF will participate with a numerous amount of moderators, reporters and representatives. You will be able to read a report on the event in the next newsletter edition.

Invitation: Who is your candidate?

Should the citizens have the right to elect the President of the European Commission?

Tuesday June 24th 2008, 18.30
EAS 300 - Eastman Building,
Rue Belliard 135
(Parc Leopold), 1040 Brussels

Last February, the **Union of European Federalists** had asked the European parties to present their candidate for Presidency of the Commission in view of the next political

campaign. In view of the forthcoming 2009 European elections, this is a historic opportunity for European parties to build a link between the vote and the political vision for the EU.

The next step has been the very recent launch of the website and the **Campaign for a Transparently and Democratically elected President of the European commission** www.who-is-your-candidate.eu, where European citizens are signing the petition asking the political parties to nominate their candidates for this position. Soon national actions all over Europe will complete this initiative.

Within the scope of this initiative, the **UEF** and **New Europe** are organizing a **debate on June 24th** that seeks to open the discussion amongst the representatives of European political parties, but also to allow further discussions on what is on stake when it comes to selection process of the President of the European Commission.

On the light of your party's last developments on this issue, we will ask the representatives of European Political Parties to share with us your position regarding:

- The nomination of a candidate for President of the European Commission linked to a political program as a way to improve the turn out of the European Parliament elections.

- What will your party do to increase the participation in the European Parliament elections and bring the European approach to the local level?

- Who is your candidate for the position of President of the European Commission?

This is the occasion to explain your position on the nomination of the President of the European Commission to a large audience of observers and representatives of the European civil society.
The following organizations are partners of this event: European Movement international, Young European Federalists, Permanent Forum of Civil Society, Europe United, European Alternatives and Federal Union**.**

3. WHY EUROPE PROJECT

UEF Why Europe seminar in Belgium on "European Union leadership in environmental affairs: The new challenges of globalisation", Brussels

UEF-Belgium and UEF-Groupe Europe, in cooperation with the "Centre de Réflexion Européenne et Fédéraliste-Fernand Herman" and "cafebabel.com", organized a seminar in the frame of UEF "Why Europe?" project. The last event of "Why Europe" – a European project implemented in 5 countries and funded by the EU program "Europe for the citizens" – dealt with the EU leadership in Social and Environmental affairs.

The two topics were discussed within two different panels. The first one on Social issues was introduced by Catherine VIEILLEDENT, Secretary of UEF-Groupe Europe, Pierre JONCKHEER, Belgian MPE, and Jan JARAB, member of the Cabinet of Vladimir Spidla, European Commissioner for Employment and Social affairs.

The second one on Environmental issues was introduced by Paul FRIX, Political counselor of UEF-Belgium, Gérard ONESTA, Vice-President of the EP, and Domenico ROSSETTI di VALDALBERO, from the European Commission.

Michele CIAVARINI AZZI, President UEF-Belgium, made final conclusions to the seminar that was attended by around 100

participants. For any other information and texts available: www.whyeurope.eu

The following text, which we would like to provide you with, was presented as an introductory document for the discussion.

Introduction au séminaire "Why Europe?" de l'UEF

La promesse de la construction européenne, en termes rifkiniens, est sa capacité de préserver un consensus sur les valeurs d'égalité et de justice dans un monde globalisé et de le projeter vers l'extérieur. Cette promesse est dans tous les traités, elle est encore dans le futur traité et dans la Charte des droits fondamentaux qui rappellent des valeurs que l'Union voudrait universelles.

Or, l'Europe est divisée. Depuis trente ans, les inégalités se cumulent et s'aggravent : l'exclusion, la pauvreté, la réalité long terme du chômage, tout particulièrement chez les jeunes et les seniors, l'inégalité tenace pour les femmes (salaires, précarité…), le décrochage entre l'économie réelle (bas salaires) et le capitalisme financier où on observe des ruptures éthiques graves. Les systèmes sociaux sont exsangues dans de nombreux états, sauf ceux où, oh paradoxe, on a accepté une fiscalisation générale à la faveur d'un consensus social pérenne (pays nordiques).

L'Europe subit des mouvements migratoires qui sont le prix visible des inégalités accrues au plan mondial. Elle peine à résister à la mise en concurrence des territoires et à la course vers le bas où le social est la première variable d'ajustement. On l'accuse parfois d'être le « cheval de Troie » de cette course. Certes, la réalité est complexe : l'Europe sociale est restée subsidiaire (travailleurs transfrontaliers, sécurité-hygiène au travail, égalité hommes/femmes). Le vieux partage des tâches (l'Europe pour l'économie, les Etats pour le social) touche sans doute aujourd'hui à ses limites absolues. C'est en ce sens qu'on peut interpréter la récente jurisprudence de la Cour de justice, un signal majeur qu'il devient urgent de remédier à la fragmentation des règles et des responsabilités.

Quelle capacité est donc celle de l'UE aujourd'hui? Il y a deux manières de comprendre la « mondialisation » : soit elle désigne le sentiment que nos cadres de référence ne sont plus à la hauteur, soit elle donne la mesure de notre responsabilité dans un vide global de leadership. J'ai tendance à penser que pour gérer la menace extérieure, et pas simplement désigner notre impuissance, l'Europe doit avoir une vision claire que cette menace est aussi une

menace pour le globe : c'est en refusant de solder ses valeurs qu'elle assume ses responsabilités dans le monde. Cette vision claire doit se traduire dans une approche globale et coordonnée à la question des coûts (la pollution, la consommation d'énergie, l'économie spéculative, etc…) et du partage du fardeau. Pour défendre l'intérêt européen à préserver des sociétés justes et solidaires, y compris au plan mondial, l'Europe a besoin de gouvernance économique et de démocratie sociale. Elle a besoin d'instruments décloisonnés (l'unanimité verrouille le fiscal et le social pour l'essentiel, le budget de l'UE est très modeste et sans capacité redistributive) et elle a besoin d'une forte convergence des politiques (économiques, budgétaires et fiscales).

L'ambition de la Stratégie de Lisbonne est de faire une Europe «d'ici 2010 capable de croissance économique durable offrant plus et de meilleurs emplois et une plus grande cohésion sociale tout en respectant l'environnement ». Cette ambition est aussi une ambition globale pour un développement durable à travers le monde. A l'heure où se prépare un agenda social renouvelé pour la période 2011-2016, aidez nous à comprendre comment l'Europe, puissance commerciale et économique, peut être une « puissance normative », une force de persuasion et d'influence dans un monde sans leadership fort et crédible.

Report on the UEF Why Europe seminar in Austria, Citizens participation today: Why and how?, Vienna

Around 80 international participants attended the conference "Citizens' participation today: why and how?" who took place on 15 May in Vienna, Austria. This event was organised by the UEF Austria in cooperation with JEF Austria and the Association of Local Democracy Agencies (ALDA) in the framework of the "Why Europe" campaign.

Friedhelm Frischenschlager, Federal Chairman of the UEF Austria, first introduced the conference along with Per Vinther, Executive President of ALDA and Ulrich Bohner, Secretary General of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities.

Then, the director of ALDA, Antonella Valmorbida, explained the role and aims of the Local Democracy Agencies. These organisations, based in the Balkans and Caucasus, work on the field to enhance local people involvement in the local political life. With its experience in difficult areas, ALDA is also involved in a process of citizens' consultation in order to define the European citizenship.

This lecture was followed by the presentation of three different projects on youth participation which happened – or will happen – in Austria. Sandra Herschkowitz presented her project about children and youth participation in the municipality and city planning, whose implementation was set up with JEF Austria. Furthermore, Lisa Györös introduced the main project of her organisation "United games Austria" to the participants and Claudia Ehgartner gave a first overview to the future project on children participation which is going to be coordinated by the Museum of Modern Arts in Vienna and JEF Austria.

After a short break, the round table was able to discuss along with the public on the various aspects of citizens' participation. The public agreed that there has to be a special focus on youth participation – welcoming the engagement of the European Union in this field thanks to the Youth Programme – and that projects handling active citizenship should first deal with a definition of the European identity. The suggestion of new communication methods with young people was brought up, in order to develop a more active local decision making process. Some participants welcomed the projects'

presentation as "concrete results" of citizens' participation.

Report on the UEF Why Europe seminar in the UK, Constitutional affairs: fundamental right and the Lisbon treaty?, London

A seminar was held by the UEF UK section, Federal Union, in London on Saturday 15th of March 2008, to discuss two aspects of the constitutional process, namely the protection of fundamental rights, and the future of the EU after the Lisbon treaty.

Fundamental rights and the European Union

Owen Tudor, Head of TUC European Union and International Relations Department, opened the discussion with a rather succinct and elegant description of the dilemma in which the European Union found itself: it was set up in the 1950s with an economic infrastructure to achieve a political purpose; now, it has a political infrastructure in order to achieve an economic purpose.

In common with that change, the British trade union view has changed, exemplified most notably by Jacques Delors in his speech to the TUC in September 1988. Having been opponents of the European Union, trade unions are now supporters of it, the common marker having become also a social market. A particular concern now is that the Lisbon strategy seems to be purely about economic issues, with perhaps a little on the environmental side, but it is essentially silent in the social area. Very little social legislation is now envisaged. Even that little which is under discussion is very slow: the agency workers directive was discussed as long ago as 2002.

Commissioner for trade Peter Mandelson is warning about a possible resurgence of protectionism, but that fear is overstated. It is possible to respond to globalisation not by closing each national economy but by providing better protection for those who would otherwise lose out as a result. This requires a social model.

In that sense, therefore, social rights are a response to globalisation. Simple protectionism aims to protect social rights but at the expense of economic rights. It is possible to protect them both.

Patrick Diamond, Director of Strategy, Equality and Human Rights Commission, said that the debate about the Charter of Fundamental Rights is important and useful, because it highlights the question of what kind of Europe we are trying to build? Is it political? Is it economic? The origins of the Charter are an acknowledgement that Europe is more than just an economic arrangement. Its rights and freedoms offer content to what a social Europe means, which is more than just a market but contains some notion of the good society, an idea that harks back to the 1789 Declaration of the Rights of Man.

An important question is, if this is what it means to be a European citizen, can British citizens see themselves in that light? The UK has opted out of the social chapter and the single currency, and it also seems to have opted out of the very notion of European citizenship. People in the UK are subjects of the crown, not citizens of the state, and furthermore they have a difficulty in conceiving of having a dual identity as both British and European. It is not inevitable that this should be the case: more courage is required in making the political argument to the contrary.

An important feature of the Charter is that it integrates equality firmly into the notion of human rights, giving rights and freedoms to people who do not currently enjoy them. It creates them as a common value of the whole of the EU. Going further than this, the state has a positive obligation to take action

to enable people to enjoy their rights, and not only a negative obligation not to prevent people from enjoying them. An additional complication is that, in a diverse society, action to promote equality must also respect and protect diversity rather than seeing it as something to be overcome.

The concerns that business has been raising about the Charter are reminiscent of the industrial relations climate of the 1960s and 70s. It is a pity that the government has conceded ground to business and to the eurosceptics on this issue. The reality is that, over time, the Charter will have an influence on UK law and policy. The rights and freedoms in the Charter are going to impinge on UK law, so it would be better for the UK to embrace this properly rather than to stay on the margins.

John Parry, honorary member of the bureau, Union of European Federalists, explained that part of the problem is that citizenship combines with rhetoric in forming people's state of mind. As an example of rhetoric, he quoted from the "Reflections on the revolution in France", in which Edmund Burke had written: "What is the use of discussing a man's abstract right to food or medicine? I always advise to call in the aid of the farmer and the physician rather than the professor of metaphysics."

The UK has tended to discuss charters and bills of rights as though they were exclusively foreign concepts, except that the English invented the whole idea. In the late 17th century, the Convention Parliament drew up a declaration of rights, which was accepted by the joint monarchs William and Mary. This declaration included freedom of speech, free elections, the right of parliament to approve of laws and taxation, and the right of petition, among others, and it aroused interest in intellectuals throughout Europe.

In the United States, these rights were restated in the American revolution – the rebels saw themselves firmly in the English political tradition – and the famous Declaration of Independence is based on them. This means that it is perfectly possible for the English to take an interest in the abstract discussion of rights.

Considering how fundamental and human rights are protected today, the UN declaration is not binding, but the European Convention on Human Rights is more effective. It covers the member states of the Council of Europe, which is rather wider than the European Union. So why does the EU require a separate charter of its own?

One reason is that the European Convention does not cover all the issues that the EU thinks are important. A further reason is that the EU, as such, is not a signatory of the Convention, yet the acts of the EU ought to be governed by human rights principles and guarantees in its own right.

The irony of the opposition to the charter is that it does not contain anything very striking or controversial. It was first adopted as a declaration (without legal force) at the Nice summit, and brings together the various different fundamental and human rights considerations in one place. The ECJ has already started to refer the contents of the Charter in its judgments, not because they are in the Charter per se but because they are the expression of European politics and political thought. They are a set of principles to be interpreted rather than a codification of law, and are now mentioned in Article 6 of the Lisbon treaty.

The subsequent discussion raised the following points:

- The UK is more culturally and religiously diverse than it was 50 or 100 years ago, and there was an important question of whether and how the EU can accommodate such diversity, particular in view of the

large and growing minority of people with a Muslim identity.

- The ECHR, and the prospect of EU membership, has an important role in improving the protection of fundamental rights in Turkey. The accession process offers a powerful lever for change, which might be weakened after membership is achieved.

- The Delors speech in 1988 presented a false picture of the extent of the EU's involvement in social legislation: it was much less than he described, but sadly Margaret Thatcher believed him.

Europe after the Lisbon treaty

Joan Marc Simon, secretary-general of the Union of European Federalists, opened the afternoon's discussion by describing the Lisbon treaty as a real step in the right direction, even though there are some parts missing from the previous constitutional treaty. Some federalists argue for a continued focus on the idea of a European constitution: this is no doubt correct but it is necessary to think about the timing. For the next few years, the priority should be the implementation of the Lisbon treaty, and the meaning of the European elections.

Regarding the Lisbon treaty, lots of aspects remain open to be decided, and the federalists will try to influence those decisions. Examples of where decisions remain to be taken include some aspects of the powers of the EU, the way in which the European Parliament might exercise more power, the integration of the third pillar into the first pillar, the role of the High Representative and the powers of the President of the European Council. Federalists should focus on how the various powers will be used, ensuring the maximum transparency and connection with the citizens.

The main priorities in this field should be as follows:

(1) the president of the European Council will be elected to serve a 2 1/2 year term, but the powers of this post are not clear, nor is its external role. Tony Blair let it be known that he would be interested in the post if it were to be more powerful, but from where should these powers come?

(2) the role of the new External Action Service and how it will relate to the European Commission and the diplomatic services of the member states.

(3) whether the High Representative, who will be double-hatted as both an official of the Council and a Vice-President of the European Commission, will see the former role or the latter as being more important.

(4) the election of the Commission president by the European Parliament after the elections in June 2009, for which it will be open to the political parties to nominate candidates for president as part of their election campaigns. If this happens, voters will know for whom they are being asked to vote, which will increase interest in the elections and also increase the legitimacy of the Commission afterwards. A campaign on this issue will be launched in April.

Federalists should start discussing future scenarios, such as what would happen if there were to be a conflict between the president of the Commission and the president of the European Council. It was unclear what might happen. Two possible outcomes are (1) to merge the two posts, creating a single leader of the European government, or (2) to keep the two posts but with the Commission president serving as leader of the executive and the Council

president serving in a more symbolic and formal role.

Brendan Donnelly, director of the Federal Trust and chair of Federal Union, responded by voicing agreement that the most pressing task was to look at the Lisbon treaty to see how it can work in practice. There was a lot of ambiguity which was still to be resolved, and which could be resolved in ways which were more or less preferable.

A central feature of the Lisbon treaty was the establishment as the normal method of taking decisions of the institutional model of Commission, Council and Parliament, with qualified majority voting in the Council and co-decision for the Parliament. When Justice and Home Affairs was first introduced into the treaties at Maastricht, it was on a strictly intergovernmental basis, and this was described at the time as the way forward for the European Union. However, 15 years later, it has gone and been replaced by the Community method.

This transformation has yet to be applied to foreign policy or to the eurozone, but in each case the question should be approached on its individual merits rather than as a package based on the notion of the European constitution.

Turning to the draft Manifesto that had been put before the meeting, he described the referendum results in France and the Netherlands in 2005 as a question mark and not a full stop. The European demos will be served by the European elections having a role in the choice of president of the European Commission. The Manifesto also welcomes the normalisation of the legislative procedure, the greater involvement in the EU of the national parliaments, and the clearer allocation of powers between the different levels of government (although in his view, it was still not clear enough).

He argued that the powers of the Commission president were more clearly defined than those of the president of the European Council: in fact the latter was limited to representing the European Council on issues only when there was unanimous agreement to do so. The terminology of "European government" should generally be avoided.

Regarding the High Representative, he observed that there was a terrible irony in the attitudes of the eurosceptics. The proposal in the constitutional treaty was for the name "Foreign Minister" but not the powers: this was criticised because such a high-flown title implied that there was an intention to increase the powers in due course. The change in the Lisbon treaty, bringing the title in line with the powers, is now criticised because the powers of the High Representative are still the same as those of the previous Foreign Minister, which therefore shows that the former is merely the latter in disguise.

Lastly, he expressed concern about the possibility of future referendums on the treaty. It would not work, he said, if governments attempted to secure Yes votes on the grounds that the treaty was limited and constrained the powers of the Union when everyone could see that its purpose was to develop the Union as a more effective body. National governments played a major role in forming public opinion in Europe, and there was a great danger when their rhetoric and their actions did not match. For this reason, therefore, it was necessary for federalists to address themselves to the national governments and not only to the citizens.

The subsequent discussion raised the following points:

The role of the External Action Service was to support the work of the High Representative,

rather than to replace or undermine national diplomatic services

The EU is a multi-level system of governance and, amid all the talk of who might become President of the European Council, there is no reason why the higher level is necessarily more powerful than a lower level: why should someone give up being prime minister of a large member state in order to chair four summit meetings a year? The idea that the federal level is always the most powerful is largely drawn from the European picture of America, but the European Union is very different in nature from the USA.

4. UEF IN THE PRESS

The following article of Giorgia Bartoli (UEF.be) and Domenico Rossetti di Valdalbero (Secretary General of UEF.be) was published on 16th of April in the Belgium newspaper L'Echo.

Etats fédéraux multiculturels: quel exemple pour l'Union européenne ?

Si "l'OPNI" (objet politique non identifié selon Jacques Delors) que représente aujourd'hui l'Union européenne devient un jour une vraie fédération, elle sera une fédération multinationale dans laquelle le pouvoir central fournit un encadrement institutionnel capable de résoudre les conflits parmi les Etats membres. Dans ce cadre les entités fédérées conçoivent le pouvoir fédéral comme l'acteur le mieux à même de faire coexister les diversités culturelles à travers une décentralisation du pouvoir et une attention particulière envers les minorités.

Certaines conditions doivent être respectées afin qu'une fédération puisse fonctionner. Le système suisse est un bon exemple. Chaque Canton a le même nombre de représentants au sein de la Chambre Haute et les membres du Conseil Fédéral sont choisis afin de représenter les différents groupes linguistiques, religieux et régionaux. Il faut aussi qu'existe un dénominateur commun, c'est-à-dire un ensemble de valeurs partagées par toutes les entités en question pour créer une communauté dans laquelle la diversité des parties puisse aisément se concilier avec l'unité.

L'Union européenne a souvent été comparée au système politique suisse en tant que fédération : dans les deux cas, le fédéralisme est de type coopératif, c'est à dire que le centre accorde beaucoup d'importance aux volontés des entités fédérées sans jamais imposer des décisions unilatérales ; ensuite, le consensus est toujours obtenu à travers la négociation de toutes les parties envisagées et pas seulement de quelques-unes. Le risque de confiance limitée dans les institutions est compensé en Suisse grâce à la possibilité de référendum: la démocratie directe permet en effet de donner une voix aux groupes et intérêts qui n'ont pas d'autres accès au processus décisionnel ni d'autres moyens pour influencer les choix politiques. *Mutatis mutandis*, on peut analyser l'importance de l'innovation introduite par le Traité constitutionnel et reprise dans le Traité de Lisbonne: pour la première fois, un million de citoyens originaires de différents États membres peuvent demander directement à la Commission de présenter une initiative revêtant pour eux un intérêt dans un des domaines de compétence de l'UE.

L'implication des citoyens dans le processus décisionnel - de même que le référendum en Suisse - peut contribuer à la création d'un espace identitaire commun car, en participant directement à l'activité législative, les citoyens peuvent considérer le système fédéral comme "leur propriété" et cet enjeu est très important en particulier en vue de la création d'un "peuple européen".

La comparaison entre la Suisse et l'Union européenne peut être basée sur l'hétérogénéité culturelle commune aux deux

systèmes politiques en question: dans une époque globale, comme celle du XXI^{ème} siècle où les sociétés s'ouvrent au monde, il est clair que la préservation du multilinguisme assume un rôle clef en terme de constitution des identités. D'après Karl Deutsch, en effet, « plus le besoin de communiquer est grand, plus l'importance de la langue est grande et encore plus la motivation sur laquelle se base la préférence du maintien de sa propre langue ». Toutefois, le parallélisme entre la Suisse et l'UE présente au moins deux limites fondamentales: en premier lieu, la dimension continentale de l'UE par rapport au petit territoire de la Suisse, n'est pas négligeable en ce qui concerne les difficultés pour les institutions communautaires de gérer des politiques dans une région où les distances géographiques et culturelles ainsi que les priorités socio-économiques sont très grandes (cf. relance économique de type keynésienne, effort de lutte contre l'inflation, heures de travail par semaine, niveau de protection sociale, etc). Deuxièmement, en termes de négociations interinstitutionnelles, contrairement aux systèmes fédéraux classiques comme celui de la Suisse, l'Union européenne manque actuellement d'une Chambre Haute (comme le Conseil d'Etat suisse) dans laquelle les entités fédérées sont représentées de façon égalitaire dans le processus décisionnel.

Pour cette double raison, l'évolution du système fédéral de l'Union européenne pourrait sans doute tirer des enseignements du système canadien. Le Canada, tout comme l'UE, est composé d'une mosaïque de peuples d'origine différente tant du point de vue historique que géographique. Les Provinces canadiennes n'ont pas une représentation au sein du Senat fédéral puisque les membres de la Chambre Haute sont choisis sur la base des quatre régions principales. Ils sont choisis par le Premier Ministre et ensuite nommés par le Gouverneur Général et non par la voie électorale. Enfin, le système fédéral canadien est, comme l'européen, axé sur de nombreuses asymétries entre les entités fédérées. Le Québec en particulier a utilisé plusieurs fois la clause de l'*opting out* en ce qui concerne, par exemple, la signature de la Charte de droits fondamentaux annexe au texte constitutionnel ou de l'Entente cadre d'union sociale de 1996. Dans l'UE, les *opting out* sont fréquents (cf. Royaume-Uni, Danemark, etc.) et les coopérations renforcées ont permis le développement de ce qu'on appelle l'Europe à plusieurs vitesses ou à cercles concentriques où un noyau d'Etats peut progresser plus vite dans l'intégration. Dans une Europe à 27 membres qui souhaite continuer son processus d'élargissement, ce noyau dur d'Etats plus fédéralistes est une nécessité.

Cependant, s'il est vrai que les asymétries permettent d'avoir plusieurs niveaux d'intégration dans l'UE et de contourner les vétos de certains Etats membres, il est impossible de passer sous silence les conséquences qui pourraient découler d'une telle Union européenne: il existe en effet le risque d'assister à la création de plusieurs « directoires européens », c'est-à-dire des groupes d'Etats qui pourraient vouloir se constituer comme les décideurs de l'UE en vertu des ressources qu'ils possèdent et de l'influence qu'ils exercent sur d'autres pays. Il est clair que la constitution de ce type de directoires conduirait progressivement à la montée en puissance des intérêts particuliers sur les intérêts généraux et, par conséquent, à l'affaiblissement d'une identité européenne forte fondée sur la recherche du bien être commun de tout citoyen communautaire. Bref, oui à des coopérations renforcées mais encadrées par un système fédéral fort, notamment dans sa composante exécutive (Commission) et de contrôle (Cour de Justice).

Giorgia Bartoli et Domenico Rossetti di Valdalbero

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5. CALENDAR OF ACTIVITIES

- *Open doors day of the European Parliament ASP,* ***Saturday 7th June 2008****, Brussels.*
- *UEF conference: Who is your Candidate?* ***Tuesday June 24th 2008****, 18.30 EAS 300 - Eastman Building, Rue Belliard 135 (Parc Leopold).*
- *UEF Bureau Meeting,* ***Saturday 5th of July 2008****, Brussels.*
- *UEF-Congress,* ***11-12 of October 2008****, Paris, France.*

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The UEF, founded in 1946, is an independent and non-governmental European organisation, campaigning for a federal Europe. Since April 2005, it is presided over by Mrs. Mercedes BRESSO, President of the Italian Region of Piedmont, Member of the EU Committee of the Regions.

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