

REVIVING EUROPE: REDISCOVERING THE SPIRIT OF ROME

MONITORING GROUP FOR THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE UNITED KINGDOM AND THE REBUILDING OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

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Brexit has exposed the threat of breaking-up the European Union. While Europeans prepare to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome of 25 March 1957, the centrifugal forces have never seemed stronger. This situation is a wake-up call: the anniversary of the Treaty of Rome must not be a mere commemoration. On the contrary, it must allow us to lay more solid foundations for a reformed Europe that is more in tune with people's expectations.

Brexit seen as a springboard to a new start

The building of a European Union is a **major project** that has allowed us to **promote peace and cooperation, defend the values of human dignity and uphold respect for fundamental rights**. Over the course of a few decades, an area of free movement has been set up that is viewed as a major asset by the citizens of Europe and a large internal market now exists that is the envy of the major economies: today Europe is the greatest economic power in the world.

Britain's decision to leave the Union was a major shock that appears nonsensical from a geostrategic point of view, in the context of globalisation that is increasingly organised around continent-states: China, Brazil, Russia, India, etc., which makes unity and cohesion a pressing requirement. Europe is now paying for its lack of determination in the face of the economic and financial crisis, terrorist attacks and the migrant crisis.

In order to rise to these challenges, **vision and leadership are essential requirements yet currently lacking** within the Union. Sluggish political response has resulted in the refusal of Member States to truly take ownership of the European project, despite the treaties that have been signed, and an unfortunate tendency to blame all their

problems on the Union, only taking responsibility for their successes.

The Senate's report considers the European Union to have suffered from **bureaucratic choking, exacerbated by a democratic deficit**, which has contributed to the rise of **populism**. The Senators consider that there is only one alternative: either Europe wakes up, or it exits History.

Today, Europe must choose between two visions of what it wishes to be: **not just a "European area"**, centred on a large single market, but **rather a "European power"**, taking on its political dimension.

Brexit must pave the way for a European awakening.

Today, all of the other global powers have their own vision of Europe, and generally hope for its breaking up. But Europe itself struggles to state its purpose clearly. It must, however, take ownership of its history and its destiny. It must assert its own vision.

The Senate's "roadmap" for reviving Europe

Founded on a clearcut and unabashed vision, carried by the Nation States, the European project must be renewed according to certain priorities for which the European added value is made very clear to the people: security, employment, competitiveness.

■ Reasserting the EU as a power

Faced with the emergence of continent-states which resort to the weapons of power to reach their goals, Europe must in turn assert itself as a global power. To this end, it must fulfil its responsibilities in terms of **defence**, exploit its added value in the **fight against terrorism** and **interior security** and consolidate its response to the **migrant crisis**. This is one of the principal expectations of the European people, which must be answered.

As far as defence is concerned, we must successfully express a **political desire based on a shared strategic vision**, founded on a "strategic review" of European defence. In order to engage the inter-governmental dynamic, a **permanent political dialogue at the highest level, led by France and Germany (but open to all Member States) should be developed** to take full advantage of the possibilities of the Treaty of Lisbon, with particular emphasis on permanent structured cooperation. The implementation of a European security council and a permanent planning, leadership and management structure for military missions, as well as the development of tools for operational coherence and European financing capacities for defence must be the priorities of our actions in this field.

Bolstering the fight against terrorism means creating a Union for security, defining a suitable **legal framework on encryption and improving the provision, use and interoperability of European databases that help us in the fight against terrorism**. We must also encourage the Member States to adopt a national PNR in order to guarantee the effectiveness of the European PNR, as

well as ensuring effective police cooperation by strengthening the role of Europol. Legal cooperation must be promoted by strengthening Eurojust and, finally, creating a European public prosecutor's office. It would also be advisable to ensure that we **maintain close ties with the United Kingdom**, in this field and in that of defence, **in the medium term**.

The European response to the migrant crisis will involve the **effective control of external borders** and the effective and rapid implementation of the renewed Frontex mandate. We must also strengthen our **cooperation with migrants' home and transit countries**, as well as **securing the Schengen area** and renewing the European asylum system.

Europe must defend the what really makes its identity. We must establish and confirm the **moratorium on enlargement**, in order to strengthen the EU regulations. The Union must consolidate its values of respect for human dignity, fundamental rights and democracy. As the largest trading power in the world, thanks to the strength of the single market, it must command greater respect in **international commercial negotiations and end its somewhat naive approach**.

■ Defining the economic priorities

As with Airbus and Ariane in the past, Europe must initiate further efforts to promote **growth and employment**. **The Senate considers the digital world and energy to be priorities**.

Europe must also work towards tax convergence.

The **competition** policy must be placed at the service of **industrial revitalisation and employment** and not constitute a hindrance to the emergence of European champions.

The announced increase in the capacity and duration of the European Fund for Strategic

Investments must be coupled with reflection on the lifting of regulatory obstacles to investments. In parallel, the European Union must finalise the **governance of the Euro**. It must create a **directory of the Euro zone**, but also an effective democratic control that integrates the national parliaments. The Senate wants the European Commission's next white paper to take this into account.

It is also necessary to strengthen **European cohesion**, moving towards **social convergence** – the posted workers issue highlights this pressing need – and **modernising the policy of cohesion**.

■ **A closer, more intelligible Europe**

This redefined Europe must fully respect **subsidiarity**. The European Union must be **more intelligible** and **closer** to its citizens. It must reform its modus operandi and integrate democratic control, particularly through the **assertion of the role of the national parliaments**.

A green card for the national parliaments

The Senate proposes a **green card** or **right to initiate legislation** for the national parliaments, which would **meet regularly in Strasbourg** to consider topics of current European interest.

The functioning must be more democratic: **the European Council's role as instigator and coordinator** must be strengthened through the yearly adoption of priorities to be implemented; **the institutional triangle** (Commission, Council, Parliament) should be reviewed with a **reduction in the number of commissioners**; the application by the Commission, through its right of initiative, of the priorities agreed on by the European Council; the **extension of the vote to the qualified majority in the Council** (except on the subject of defence); **harmonisation of the voting procedures of European members of parliament for greater clarity**. Europe also requires **simplification, which must become a permanent priority, and greater transparency**.

■ **Developing a method**

In order to realise this European awakening, the report recommends a **method**. A new

ambition must be led primarily by **the Franco-German driving force**, which has unfortunately lost its strength. They, and they alone, can **awaken Europe**. It is they who must take **initiatives that will gather the support of our other partners**. The Franco-German relationship must not be exclusive. It is nevertheless decisive. The two countries will be holding major elections in 2017. Following their outcome, they will enter a period of political stability conducive to strong initiatives that will allow people to regain confidence in the European framework. **A Franco-German roadmap aimed at the challenges of the twenty-first century** such as digitisation must be developed in order to give the European project a new impetus.

Pragmatism also leads us to encourage recourse to **enhanced cooperations** between willing Member States in order to progress. These enhanced cooperation will show the advantages of a European action and ultimately attract those States that were initially reticent. They would therefore carry the **revival of the European project** first with a limited number of States and attract afterwards the entire European Union.

■ **A shared project**

The European union must once again become **the project of European citizens**. Europe represents a common history, values and a way of life that must be defended. United in their diversity which must be respected, Europeans must overcome the challenges together, ensuring that the things that bring them together triumph over those that may divide them.

This statement justifies proposals focussed on **strong symbols of belonging**: a European identity card would be created which every citizen – who would also have a national identity card – could claim; in line with the increasingly frequent combination of the European flag with national flags, it would be desirable to encourage member states to play the European anthem every time the national anthem is played. The Senate proposes the creation of a radio station, "Radio France Europe", and an online video platform.

It is also necessary to get young people behind the European project. Erasmus is an incredible success which over 3 million students have benefited from. We must take this further by setting up an **Erasmus for apprentices**.

Report on the work of the monitoring group

Following the British referendum of 23 June 2016, the Senate, on the initiative of its president Gérard Larcher, decided to set up a monitoring group for the withdrawal of the United Kingdom and the rebuilding of the European Union. The Committee for Foreign Affairs, Defence and the Armed Forces and the European Affairs Committee joined forces and made up a group of 20 members representing all political groups.

Since its inaugural session on 11 July 2016, the monitoring group has met 21 times. It has travelled 4 times (Strasbourg, Brussels, London and Berlin).

The report is based on the 20 communications that have been made on 9 different themes (the Europe of Defence, Commercial Policy of the European Union, Europe and Growth, the Franco-German Relationship, Governance of the Euro Zone, Security and Migrations, Reform of the European Institutions, the Europe of Subsidiarity, Update on the Negotiations for the Withdrawal of the United Kingdom). All members of the monitoring group have made their own contribution.

All these documents - summaries of speeches, study of comparative legislation, previous reports - may be consulted on the Senate's website:

http://www.senat.fr/commission/groupe_de_travail_brexit.html



Monitoring group for the withdrawal of the United Kingdom and the rebuilding of the European Union



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This report is available on the internet:
<http://www.senat.fr/notice-rapport/2016>