

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

FORWARD STUDIES UNIT

## Reflections on European Identity

Edited by Thomas Jansen

WORKING PAPER, 1999

The contents of this publication do not necessarily reflect the opinion or position of the European Commission.



# Table of contents

---

<b>Preface .....</b>	<b>5</b>
Jean-Claude Thébault	
<b>The dimensions of the historical and cultural core of a European identity .....</b>	<b>7</b>
Heinrich Schneider	
<b>Consciousness of European identity after 1945.....</b>	<b>21</b>
Gilbert Trausch	
<b>European Identity and /or the Identity of the European Union.....</b>	<b>27</b>
Thomas Jansen	
<b>A contribution from political psychology .....</b>	<b>37</b>
Tom Bryder	
<b>What is it ? Why do we need it ? Where do we find it ? .....</b>	<b>51</b>
Edy Korthals Altes	
<b>European identity and political experience .....</b>	<b>57</b>
Mario Soares	
<b>How to define the European identity today and in the future? .....</b>	<b>63</b>
Ingmar Karlsson	
<b>European identity - A perspective from a Norwegian European, or a European Norwegian.....</b>	<b>73</b>
Truls Frogner	
<b>European identity - an anthropological approach .....</b>	<b>77</b>
Maryon McDonald	
<b>European identity and citizenship .....</b>	<b>81</b>
Massimo La Torre	
<b>From poetic citizenship to European citizenship .....</b>	<b>89</b>
Claire Lejeune	
<b>L'identité européenne comme engagement transnational dans la société.....</b>	<b>99</b>
Rüdiger Stephan	
<b>Security and a common area.....</b>	<b>103</b>
Adriano Moreira	
<b>Neither Reich nor Nation - another future for the European Union.....</b>	<b>107</b>
Roger De Weck	

<b>What does it mean to be a European ? Preliminary conclusions .....</b>	<b>111</b>
Jérôme Vignon	
<b>Annex:.....</b>	<b>115</b>
A dialogue on unemployment between Truls Frogner and his Neighbour	
<b>List of contributors.....</b>	<b>119</b>

## Preface

---

The texts that have been gathered in the following pages were written or pronounced during the «*Carrefour Européen des sciences et de la culture*» which was held in 1996 in Coimbra. This event had been organised by the Forward Studies Unit in cooperation with the ancient University of Coimbra whose academic excellence made this small Portuguese town so famous.

The *Carrefours Européens* aim to provide a forum where personalities coming from the world of science or culture can discuss and exchange their views with Commission officials. Participants come from different European countries to propound ideas on issues that are particularly important for the future of our continent. Each of them brings different experience and sensibilities and thus contributes to the openness and the richness of the reflection.

The debates that took place in Coimbra focused on understanding how the European identity expresses itself. Their richness is reflected in the following texts that are at long last submitted to our readers with the deep conviction that neither their relevance nor their actuality has been lost.

A characteristic of European identity is that it facilitates, fosters and stimulates variety in modes of expression, form, content and approach. And it is clear that this same principle can be applied to the definition of this identity itself: several paths may lead to the recognition and the assertion of an European identity which in itself is made of a plurality of ethnic, religious, cultural, national, or local identities.

Each of the discussions that took place in Coimbra have, in their own way, reflected this approach. Both the University's rector and Marcelino Oreja Aguirre (the Commissioner in charge of communication, information, culture and institutional questions at that time (1995-1999)) highlighted three constituent poles of European identity. First, Europe is steeped in humanism and all the values that make up its heritage today. The second is European diversity: even if the construction of the Community seems to be a harmonisation process, this harmonisation is just a necessary step towards the realisation of a European market-place which should allow underlying diversity to flourish. Diversity is truly Europe's richness. Finally, universalism is a European value and an obligation. At a time when Europe is sometimes tempted by the idea of becoming a "fortress Europe", this founding principle has to be constantly remembered and revived.

The debates gave further opportunities to put forward some key issues linked to identity, memory or nation. Thus, identity appears as two-sided: on the one hand memory, and heritage, and on the other hand voluntarism and a project to be achieved. Contrary to what is usually thought, identity seems to be constantly evolving and changeable.

All these reflections ended in a discussion on the theme of "Europe and its role in the World", and of its contribution to the promotion of peace and progress.

Marcelino Oreja had expressed the initial interest in a meeting such as this and had encouraged the Forward Studies Unit to organise it. The Commissioner's active participation highly contributed to the intellectual and human success of the event.

We now offer our readers these collected thoughts, for which we most warmly thank the participants with the wish that they will cast light on a question that reaches right to the heart of the European political project.

Jean-Claude Thebault  
Forward Studies Unit Director







# The dimensions of the historical and cultural core of a European identity

Heinrich Schneider

---

## Preliminary remarks

The topic “dimensions of the historical and cultural core of a European identity” may appear to be a historical and theoretical one. However, it is political in its nature. It stands in the context of a political discussion. Obviously, it is a contribution to the assessment of new political projects of the European Community : On the one hand, a discussion of the role of the cultural heritage, the historical traditions of Europe in the formation of a political identity which will and should necessarily arise if the projects of “deepening” are to be successful ; and, on the other hand, a discussion about the question : what is the significance of the common cultural and historical roots of those nations which belong to Europe, in view of the “widening” of the Community. Historical reflections, theoretical reasoning, and scholars' analyses can help with the orientation of opinion and decision-making processes, but they cannot replace decisions about political goals. What we are really dealing with is the political identity of a European Union. What it should be has to be decided politically.

## Problems of clarifying the terms – what is constituting identity ?

Every now and then, politicians have talked about “European Identity, but mostly without ever trying to explain its meaning<sup>1</sup> ! The term “identity” is used in the context of discussions on European identity as psychologists, sociologists, and students of civilisation apply it – not in the sense philosophers deal with the concept “identity” in logics or metaphysics. Primarily, one talks about the identity, or the formation of identity, or an individual. Can we construct a concept of collective identity just as well ? Perhaps as an analogy. But we must be careful in doing so. For all that : one does speak of the identity of social groups, and there is also the concept of the identity of larger social or historical units, for instance nations. However, we cannot possibly construct the concept of “European identity” in the same fashion as we perceive group identity of Boy Scouts or national identity. These models are not adequate and thus we have to search for a more general definition.

Anyone in search of her or his identity will pose the question : “Who am I” ?. With regard to collective identity the questions are : “Who are we ? Where do we come

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf., for instance, the “Document on European Identity, adopted by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the member states of the European Community in Copenhagen, 14 December 1973

from ? Where do we go ? What do we expect ? What will expect us ?”<sup>2</sup>. But these questions really serve to clarify another, more fundamental one : Why and how can we (or must we) talk in the first person plural ? There are two common answers ; one of them sounds as follows : “Because we want it that way !. The other one refers to certain things that we have in common : a common history, common views about our present situation, common projects for our future and the tasks that are facing us there...

In the lingo of sociologists, this means : it is the common “definition of a situation” which serves as a mutual link and creates solidarity.<sup>3</sup> Identity is thus founded on “spiritual ties”, it can be grasped in a “core of shared meanings”<sup>4</sup> in sharing consensually a common universe of symbols and relevancies.<sup>5</sup> We do not only speak a common language ; we also agree about the things that must be talked about as well as the things that are important without words. This sharing of common values is not hanging somewhere in mid-air over our actual everyday life. Normally there are common societal conditions of life as well. Therefore, we also have to deal with the “sociological dimension” of European common cause.

Our common “world of meanings” (“knowing about life”) is one thing that we need in order to find our collective identity. Another one is the delimitation as an element of identity. Knowing about myself also implies that I distinguish myself from others ; identity is always based on negations, as Niklas Luhmann shows.<sup>6</sup> Collective identity as well needs the distinction between “Us” and “Them”. Nothing leads more effectively to the formation of group identity than a common enemy, according to those who do research on small groups. An analysis of nationalism shows that national identity is mostly defined through relating to “counter identities”.<sup>7</sup>

A third element is needed to constitute collective identity in the full sense of the word : the ability to act and to be responsible for one's action. Personal identity includes the capacity of independent action. Collective identity calls for, and implies, authorisation, which enables the collectivity to conduct collective action.<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> This, by the way, is how Ernst Bloch begins his book “Des Prinzip Hoffnung”, Vol. 1, Berlin 1954, p. 13.

<sup>3</sup> In this context, the present situation has also a historical depth-dimension, and there is a perspective into the future

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Talcott Parsons, *Politics and Social Structure*, New York 1969, p. 292ff. This concept of collective identity is in accordance to Parson's concept of individual identity being “the core system of meanings of an individual personality ; cf. Talcott Parsons, *The Position of Identity in the General Theory of Action*, in : Chad Gordon and Kenneth J. Gergen (eds.), *The Self in Social Interaction*, New York 1968, p. 14.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Peter L Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality. A treatise in the sociology of knowledge*, Garden City and New York : Doubreday 1967

<sup>6</sup> “Alle Identität konstituiert sich über Negationen” ; cf. Niklas Luhmann, *Sinn als Grundbegriff der Soziologie*, in : Jürgen Habermas and Nikias Luhmann, *Theorie der Gesellschaft oder Sozialtechnologie*, Frankfurt am Main : Suhrkamp 1971, p. 60.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Orest Ranum, *Counter-identities of Western European Nations in the Early-Modern Period. Definitions and Points of Departure*, ~n : Peter Boerner (ed.).

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Burkart Holzner and Roland Robertson, *Identity and Authority. A Problem Analysis of Processes of Identification and Authorisation*, ~n : Roland Robertson and Burkart Holzner (eds.), *Identity and Authority*, Oxford : Blackwell 1980, pp. 5ff., 10f., 18f., 22ff.

Aristotle already knew that, by the way : The identity of a Pólis is primarily a constitutional identity, the “politeía”, through which a community becomes a political subject, so to speak. It is founded on the “koinonía” of knowing about right and wrong (the “díkaion”) as well as about what is beneficial or not (the “sýmpheron”). It rests on the solidarity (“philía”) of people, and its political manifestation is a general consensus, “homónoia” as “philía politiké”.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, collective identity in the full sense of the concept implies a political dimension : Collective identity formation tends towards the establishment of a polity.

Only against the background of this differentiation between the requirements and dimensions of collective identity, it does make sense posing more exact and detailed questions to find out what European Identity is, what it can be, and what the possible impact of historical, cultural, and sociological components looks like. Some theses and problems have to be introduced and considerable aspects in our context are to be pointed out.

## The primacy of politics

The first task we have to deal with is to find out whether “the European Community will be able to build up a 'European identity“., namely, under the present “new circumstances, now that the 'old' historical frontiers of the continent are reappearing”. This language sounds clear enough ; but the matter itself is rather complicated.

The “reappearance” of the “old historical frontiers of the continent”.—do we know what we are talking about ? To quote Oskar Köhler “Neither in a geographical sense nor in a historical view, there is a static' definition of Europe”.<sup>10</sup> A lot has been said about the validity of that formula, “Europe goes from the Atlantic to the Urals”. But Willem van Eekelen, the Secretary General of the Western European Union, has recently stated that “the whole of Europe ...” (“Gesamteuropa”) reaches “... from Vladivostok to San Francisco”, and he is not the only one to say that.<sup>11</sup> Statements of this kind do sound as if inspired by the experience of the CSCE process. But the most famous German XIX<sup>th</sup> century historiograph on European politics, Leopold von Ranke, has already pointed out that America belongs to Europe ; “indeed do New York and Lima concern us much more than Kiev and Smolensk”<sup>12</sup> – and we must bear in mind that Ranke, of course, saw the Russian Empire as part of the European system. Other authors took the same attitude ; there is for example the definition of the European system of states as “the connection and interdependence of all European states and empires ... including the independent states that have arisen from the colonies of Europeans in America”.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Aristotle, *Politics*, book I chapter 2 and book III chap. 3.

<sup>10</sup> This is the introductory sentence of Oskar Köhler's article “Europa”, in : Josef Hofer and Karl Rahner (eds.), *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, 2nd ed., 2nd printing, Freiburg/Br. 1986, colt 1187.

<sup>11</sup> Ambassador Henri Fromont Meurice did join him in sharing this opinion, cf. “Europa im Aufbruch. Auf dem Wege zu einer neuen Friedensordnung”, *Protokoll des 91. Bergedorfer Gesprächskreises 199...*, p. 29 and p. 34.

<sup>12</sup> Leopold von Ranke, *Geschichte der germanischen und romanischen Völker* (1824), p. XXXIX, cf. Heinz Gollwitzer, *Europabild und Europagedanke*, München : Beck 1951, p. 279

<sup>13</sup> Karl Heinrich Pölitz, *Die Staatswissenschaften im Lichte unserer Zeit* (1824) cf. Gollwitzer, op. cit., p. 443

On the other hand, there are much narrower definitions. When Winston Churchill held his famous speech at the University of Zurich in 1946, in which he called for the creation of a kind of United States of Europe, he entertained no doubts that Great Britain must naturally be a friend and supporter of this new political entity, but of course not a member. And the author of a well-known book about “The limits and Divisions of European History stated that usually the eastern border of the European community today, both in earlier times and today has always been the Western frontier of Russia”.<sup>14</sup> This, of course, refers to modern times ; in the Middle Ages, Europe's eastern borderlines were located much further westward. Where do we find those “reappearing 'old' frontiers of the continent ?”

The controversy on how Europe is to be defined geographically is, nowadays, hardly touched by the question whether America ought to be included in the European identity ; however, there is dissent whether Europe coincides with the occidental part of the continent, that is, whether the border between Latin and Byzantine civilisation can serve to delimit it, or should do so.

Now we have a whole series of problems : It cannot be denied that the schism between “East” and “West Rome” appears to be a symbol for a cultural demarcation. In the West, there was the struggle for supremacy between political and religious authorities, and in the dead corner between both of them the freedoms of the estates and urban autonomy could be developed. As a consequence, the “civil society” had more of a chance to spread out than in the East, where church government was integrated in the Empire, thus perpetuating ecclesiastical rule in the political order, respectively Caesaropapism. This had further outcomes ; but there also had been other preconditions that did contribute to the different course of social and societal history, like small-scale geography and the harbourly-structured landscapes of many of the regions of Western Europe<sup>15</sup>, as against massive geographical structures of the East, and others.

❖ Surely, there was the great schism ; but there was also suffering that arose from a common consciousness of a fundamental unity—up to the Ecumenical Movement of our days.

❖ Even in the days of Peter the Great, Russians reached out for Europe. Were the East European Westerners of his days and of later times erring in their illusions ? Can we deny that cultural and political identities are open to historical change, and that there have been, already, processes of “widening” of the extent and range of European civilisation ?

❖ And, with respect to social and mental differences between different parts of what has been called our continent, is it not a constituent feature of the cultural uniqueness of Europe that opposites meet here, time and again, turning the task of ever-renewed conciliation into the principle of productive dynamic development ?

---

<sup>14</sup> Quoted from the German edition : Oskar Halecki. *Europa Grenzen und Gliederung seiner Geschichte*, Darmstadt : Gentner 1957, p 79

<sup>15</sup> Hans Georg Gadamer speaks of “einer einzigen großen Hafenlandschaft die für die Entdeckungsfahrten zu neuen Weiten förmlich aufgetan warn”, cf. Hans Georg Gadamer, *Das Erbe Europas*, Frankfurt am Main : Suhrkamp 1989, p. 40.

I do not want to say that such “old frontiers” like those between the Latin and the Byzantine tradition are irrelevant. But how far Europe will reach tomorrow, or the day after tomorrow, or in the next century and later, cannot be looked up in a historical atlas of the Antique, the Middle Ages, of the XIX<sup>th</sup> century, or of the Cold War period in our century either.

Besides, the supreme representatives of the CSCE participating states have adopted in 1990, the Paris “Charter for a New Europe”, and we can read in this charter that the new Europe extends as far as the reality of human rights and democracy, rule of law and pluralism, economic freedom, social justice, and the commitment for peace is reaching on European soil. We all know, and have only recently again become painfully aware, that there is that discrepancy between what is and what should be, what we want to do and what we achieve. But should it not be our common cause to realise and safeguard these principles of a European political order for all nations whose representatives have stood up for them? Can we deny this solidarity to those who wish to subscribe to this common European order—wherever they may live in Europe? And is it possible to denounce the declaration of thirty-four heads of state and government in favour of a new “united democratic Europe. as a mere emptiness, a proclamation that cannot be other than untrue – in view of the fact that even Albania has now joined these 34?

Certainly, there may be reasons for a narrower concept of uniting efforts that have to be carried on during the years ahead of us – such as political prudence may suggest. In Western Europe, governments and people might ask themselves whether the chances for organising European security within European borders may not be better if one denies responsibility for certain regions. It can be argued that the political and structural requirements for a certain kind of economic or political integration may indeed call for a restriction in certain areas, in order to be optimal. And there are much more such questions and considerations.

Just one of these questions is the one we are dealing with. What would be the most favourable historical and cultural conditions for including parts of Europe in the Union-to-be : soon, or later? But, according to my opinion, it would be unjustifiable trying to avoid all these reflections, not to discuss their ramifications and to shun—or to disguise—political decisions by pointing out old historical and cultural borders. And indeed, if one were to stress that cleavage between ancient Latin and Byzantine culture, then the motherland of European political thought, Greece, ought not to have been accepted into the Community—and the definite stand the Community had recently taken in favour of Yugoslavian unity would have been absurd... Hence, the primacy of politics should not be denied.

## **Options of the European Community**

When speaking about the “reappearance of old frontiers” in Europe, some other aspects come to mind. What is really new in the European situation, is the disappearance of “less old” frontiers. What allows the states of Central and Eastern Europe to “return to Europe”—as they call it—is in the first place the fact that the fatal barriers, the wall in Berlin, the barbed wire obstacles and iron curtains, are removed, and that people have been successful in overcoming totalitarian systems. But along with the end of East-West polarisation, with the termination of the

antagonisms of political organisation, some other “old frontiers” and controversies have reappeared. We face again the situation about which Karl Jaspers said, some decades ago, that Europe has got to make a choice between “Balkanisation” and “Helvetisation”. “Balkanisation” means a tangle of conflicts and hostilities, whereas “Helvetisation” points to the attainment of a political identity across a multitude of national heritages and languages. The beginnings of the formation of the European Community, restricted to the six founding nations of the Coal and Steel Community and later the EEC had been initiated as such a process of “Helvetisation”, as a first step towards a confederation with an identity of its own.

However, this policy was determined by some quite specific options. At first, things were started with a small community of states that intended integration ; but it was clear that this community could not identify itself with “Europe”. The Community of the “European Six” was regarded by that organisation which considered itself as maid-servant to a union of European states —i.e. the Council of Europe—as a case of establishing “specialised authorities” for specific functional areas. In Strasbourg they thought that all such endeavours should always take place “within the frame of the Council of Europe” and thus being securely bound to the “proper European policy”(as the Council had conceived it).

And yet this Council of Europe was in itself limited to only a part of the European states. As a representative of a European identity, it was some “pars pro toto”, and the Community of the Six was some “pars partis”. This changed in the course of time. In the Treaty of Rome, “the foundations of an ever closer union among the European peoples” (and not only those peoples that are directly involved) are mentioned. And in the Single European Act, the parliament of the Twelve is called the instrument of expression for the endeavours of “the European peoples” ; as simply as that. This implies that the political identity of the Community is to be further developed to become the political identity of Europe as a whole. If this is wanted, one cannot deny any European nation the right to participate in that political identity. Now, if today some 81 percent of the Hungarians, 79 percent of the citizens of the CSFR, and still 68 percent of the Poles have a positive attitude about the creation of the United States of Europe”, and affirm that their own nation belongs to this future policy<sup>16</sup>, than the Community of the Twelve will have to reconsider what is to be done about the Community's own identity.

Another decision of the “founding fathers” has been quite important. What the Community was all about originally, was to form an administrative union to manage the common coal and steel production as well as the distribution, notwithstanding the idea to use this union as a lever to promote political integration by creating interdependence of interests. Later, a widening was achieved in more than one dimension : the Community was extended to nine at first and then step by step to twelve member states. And the area of functions and policy fields was expanded, comprising now the whole of national economies and more and more common tasks up to a common foreign and security policy. The reason for this widening of functions and interests lies in the interdependence of policy areas. There is hardly a problem area which is not to be treated on the EC level. On the other hand, the states have not given up their spheres of responsibility, and they are still thinking (or

---

<sup>16</sup> Cf. “Mehrheit im Osten für Vereinigte Staaten von Europa”, in : Die Presse (23 April 1991), p. 22.

dreaming) of their complete autonomy and “sovereignty”. Thus, they try to keep under control what is happening. As a result, political processes on community, national and “mixed” levels intertwine. Complex procedures of mediation and grey zones of responsibility evolve. There was talk about “traps of policy tangles”<sup>17</sup> and “Eurosclerosis”.

The reforms initiated by Jacques Delors were aimed at breaking up these entanglements and the sclerosis of the Community. Since the EC is supposed to gain more freedom of action rather than simply retaining its status, this will hopefully end in a strengthening of its political identity. This becomes particularly clear in view of the goal to form a European Union of a federal character. Under this perspective, the Community can no longer be regarded as a system to co-ordinate just the problem management of its member states who so far try to push their own interests rather than bear jointly the common consequences of their interdependence. A federal union cannot be achieved without an established supranational authority to determine a common policy. And this does not only raise the problem of democratic legitimacy but also the question of political identity.

Thus, it is not surprising that the question of political identity of the Community, and in particular of the European-Union-to-be, is posed anew. In the first place the upheavals in Eastern Europe raise the problem how the Community intends to define its own purpose with regard to the identity of the whole of Europe— even more than for example the intentions of EFTA states to join the Community. Slogans like “centre of gravitation” or “anchor of stability” are no adequate answers to that. And secondly, “deepening”, strengthening the polity character of the Community, transforming it into a “European Union” also implies the necessity to clarify identity problems.

## **In search of a definition of European identity**

We have to find out what Europe has in common, historically and culturally, in order to define, to articulate and to strengthen its identity. If we are to do that, we should remember what the fundamental dimensions of a possible European identity are, according to the conceptual and theoretical explications I tried to give in the first part of this contribution :

- the “spiritual ties” as they are manifested in a common “world of meanings” (a “universe of symbols and relevancies”), as they allow to achieve a consensual “definition of the situation”., and including the three dimensions of a shared “today”, “past”, and “future” ;
- the “delimitation”, knowing what is special about “our thing” as compared to other people's things (“nostra res agitur”—not some “res alienorum”) ;
- the ability to act and bear responsibility through authorisation and, thus, institutionalisation (which means, in consequence, polity building).

---

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Fritz W. Scharpf, *Die Politikverflechtungs-Falle*. Europäische Integration und deutscher Föderalismus im Vergleich. in : Politische Vierteljahresschrift, vol. 26 (1985), p. 323ff.

What is primarily called for, is obviously a “political identity in the concise sense of the term—a capacity which enables to institutionalise common action, and a quality which provides an adequately wide and massive basis of consensus and loyalty.

It may well be that remembering common historical and cultural roots, and activating consciousness of them, helps to strengthen this basis. Yet one wonders why this historical dimension must be shoved into the foreground when the real issue is what Aristotle calls “*homónioia*” and what in our context might be called “European spirit” or “consciousness of a European common cause”.

To translate this into educational terms : Can we, should we, make our efforts to form European consciousness only by looking at the past, at our common history ? Would it not be equally important to recall what Europe means today and will mean in the future ?

Some hypothetical answer is at hand : the matter is seen in the same way as it was seen in the last century when national identity had to be formed. The formation of a national consciousness, however, came about under remarkably different circumstances.<sup>18</sup> When the nation decided to take over the power of government—as in the typical case of France, the main thing was to create the political will and to keep it alive (in the “*plébiscite de tous les jours*”, to cite the famous formula Ernest Renan found). “*Res publica*” was to replace “*res regis*”. The case was different if an ethnic or national group wanted to emancipate itself from a supra-national or foreign regime (as in the case of “secessionist nationalism”), or if people which were convinced that they belong together wanted to break up the barriers between constituent states (as in the case of “integrational nationalism”). Whereas, in the first of the three typical cases, the state that shall be taken over by the nation does already exist, in both of the latter cases a state shall be created which does not yet exist. The representatives of the people's political will need a “metapolitical” justification. It must be explained that this state should exist. This explanation refers to the existence of a “cultural nation” that now wants and deserves to constitute itself politically. Usually, the “meta-political” justification is given with a reference to history : in the past we, or our ancestors, did descend from one family or tribe ; or we grew together as a spiritual community ; and we shared a common fate even in earlier times. Or even this : history has uncovered a common metaphysical substance which unites us in national identity – Herder's doctrine of “*Volksgeist*”.

In political reality, this idea serves efforts of make-believe in the service of a political will.<sup>19</sup> It derives from religious doctrines and concepts which are given a new interpretation by transferring into socio-political thinking. To give an outstanding example : the originally theological concept of the “*corpus mysticum*”, that is the

---

<sup>18</sup> The following remarks make reference to Theodor Schieder's triple typology of nation state building in Europe, namely (I) the process of assumption of power of an existing state by the “nation”, (II) the process of secession or separation of a “nation” from a multinational empire or state, and (III) the unification of—up to then independent—states, whose peoples regard themselves being parts of one single “nation”. This triadic typology, according to my opinion is more revealing than Friedrich Meinecke's famous distinction between “*Staatsnation*” and “*Kulturnation*” ; but Schieder's idea is able to explain Meinecke's comparison. Cf. Theodor Schieder, *Typologie und Erscheinungsformen des Nationalstaates in Europa*, in : *Historische Zeitschrift*, vol. 202 (1966), p. 58ff.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Raymond Grew, *The Constitution of National Identity*, in : Boerner (ed.), op. cit., p. 31 ff.



community of the faithful who find their identity in Christ's "pneuma", in which they eucharistically and spiritually participate, is transferred on the nation, whose members are spiritually bound together by their participation in some metaphysical substance, which Herder called "Volksgeist". It is only later that such notions lose their "mystical" (or mythological, or pseudo-theological) character, so that the nation then (and we might say, "only") becomes a "community by common culture and disposition through having shared a common fate."<sup>20</sup>

If today a political unification is to be attempted, for instance, a European Union, and if we all, perhaps without much reflection, still see the paradigm for the creation of a political identity in the way nation states were formed, then we must suspect that the idea of a "cultural Europe", which would have the same function as the idea of a "cultural nation", will here be conjured up. I do not want to say that one might dismiss the idea of a European cultural identity and the quest for its historical roots as nothing but ideology, as a mere construction to serve a political purpose, as, for example, Geoffrey Barraclough did.<sup>21</sup> Indeed, there is a "fundamentum in re": there is a European spiritual and cultural identity; it would lead too far astray if I were to quote the witnesses for that—from Ernst Robert Curtius to Denis de Rougemont, Arnold Toynbee to Hendrik Brugmans.<sup>22</sup> But reminding ourselves of the names of such authoritative scholars does not dispense us from the effort to identify at least some substantial contributions to what we might all "European spirit".

What is meant to be represented by these centres of experience and of thought? And what has been further developed from the achievements those keywords refer to? It is difficult to answer such questions, for several reasons. One of them is the fact that the "fundamentum in re" of European spiritual and cultural identity is characterised by an agreement to disagree, a "concordantia discors", as Jacob Burckhardt called it, a common cause with sometimes lots of antagonism. Yet there are achievements and experiences imprinted in a common memory that constitute common understandings and are in the background of such political declarations as the "Charter of Paris" conjuring so emphatically an identity of spirit and will.

There are problems both in principle and in method which have to be faced, if one tries to reconstruct and to explain them: that of the "hermeneutic circle" and of the inevitably subjective and specific perspective as well as that of the criteria for adequate selection of sources, etc. We cannot deal with these problems here in extenso. So we just turn to the "authorities", to the specialists of information. There is plenty of general agreement about the most important and significant issues—maybe not perfect, but considerable consensus. After all, the historical and cultural identity of Europe has been an interesting topic for a long time, and many have taken part in this discussion. At least, there is an agreement about the most important historical eras, what their message is today and what should be kept alive in the

---

<sup>20</sup> Otto Bauer regards the nation as a "Kultur- und Charaktergemeinschaft", based on common historical experiences ("Erleben und Erleiden des Schicksals"); cf. Otto Bauer, *Die Nationalitätenfrage und die Sozialdemokratie*, Wien 1924.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Geoffrey Barraclough, *Die Einheit Europas als Gedanke und Tat*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 1964.

<sup>22</sup> See the contribution by Hendrik Brugmans in this volume.

“collective memory” of Europeans. In this context phenomena, issues, and essentials like the following ones are named<sup>23</sup> :

- Extra-European and “Pre-European” achievements that were significant stimulators of European culture, i.e. the impact of ancient Egypt on pre-classical and classical Antiquity, above all the tradition of the Old Testament.

- Classical Hellas : The Greek tradition of the “polis”, the “civilisation” of social life and the Greek understanding of politics which had to have such a deep influence all over Europe ; the “discovery of the mind” ; the idea of “paideia” and thus humanness ; the evolution of philosophy—the beginnings of critical cognition of reality, that is, the Pre-Socratic thinkers, the classical philosophers Plato and Aristotle and the creation of the various genres of European literature.

Rome as Republic and Empire : The idea of the “res publica”, Roman law, the “virtutes”, the Roman answer to Greek philosophy (Cicero, for example).

Christendom as creative power in Europe : the surpassing of the reality through God's salvatory work ; the idea of the “corpus mysticum” ; the several types of Christian attitudes in the mundane world ; the relativity of secular power, the construction (or discovery) of the concept of “person” in christological thought and dispute the interrelation of religious orientation and secular order, of political power and church authority —with view on the different development in the Latin and Byzantine empires and its consequences for the forming of their societies—, and the importance of Christian social doctrine.

The laying of the foundations of “Occidental culture” after the “Völkerwanderung”, the role of Benedictine monkhood, the “Regnum Europae” of Charlemagne.

The “Second Awakening of Europe” (Albert Mirgeler) in the Middle Ages ; the controversy between “regnum” and “sacerdotium” ; the struggle for “Libertas Ecclesiae”, the intellectual disputes over the recognition of authorities (the establishment of the “studium” as an institution. The rise of scholastic philosophy and of universities), and the rediscovery of the “inner mind” (mysticism). The inclusion of Middle and Eastern Europe in Western European culture.

The dawn of modern times : Schism, growth of towns and municipal self-government ; Renaissance and Reformation ; striving for religious freedom, the building-up of the territorial state, development of a bourgeois economy, the construction of a European state system and the growth of its dynamics of power, the expansion of Europe into other continents.

The Enlightenment, the emancipation of the middle classes, the great revolutions in England, America, France, and their intellectual foundations : human rights, basic freedoms, civil society, and representative government.

The political ideas and movements of the XIX<sup>th</sup> century : liberal and democratic progressivism, conservatism, socialism, and imperialism ; idealistic and materialistic

---

<sup>23</sup> The list of phenomena, issues and essentials is in particular influenced by the author's subjective view. But as it shall be nothing more than an impulse for discussion, it can be done without references – which had to be very extensive – to the corresponding literature.

philosophies as well as the new critics of civilisation, society, and the inner life (Marx, Nietzsche, Freud). Finally the movements for emancipation in the dynastic empires.

The age of world wars, totalitarianism, and the efforts to overcome it.

Once more, there are many questions with respect to such an outline. Do we recognise in this landscape summits of the first, second, and other order? Are there essentials that are either continuously effective or slowly rising in an evolutionary process? Maybe with regard to the concept of man (personality, the call to freedom and solidarity). Further on in view of the productive collision of involvement and distance, mundane responsibilities and transcendental calling, harmony and antagonism. And also in ranking individual before cause; in the development of attitudes of “critical loyalty”, broken affirmation, the combination of tolerance with firmness of conscience, and so on... But is it possible at all to present more than subjective opinions or convictions, as far as questions like such ones are concerned?

Furthermore: Is it possible to draw a precise and adequate picture of the relations between transnational developments, structures and movements on the one hand, and of the particular contributions of nations, ethnic or religious groups, and regions on the other? Does in this sense, a “historical image” exist, truly “European”, reflecting indeed the contribution of all nations and groups that make up the Community of Europe, and will this image continue to be understood (at least by the more sensible contemporary minds) as a cultural common obligation?

I think, nobody would be able to present a definite answer to such and similar questions. The meaning of the European heritage and of the living European spirit can only be actualised and made effective through a permanent effort of intellectual realisation of its components and elements. This effort must take place in form of a dialogue and discourse, through which we expose ourselves to the impacts of what we are affected by and called on, in order to widen and deepen our understanding and to activate motivational strength.

## **Integration : colonisation of the world we live in as subversion of identity ?**

Posing once again the question of the meaning, of the function and of the importance of a “meta-political” identity of Europe today and tomorrow, we do this now in a different perspective. This is the case because matters might be taken too easily by simply identifying common heritages, leaving the business then to the mediators of a European consciousness, say teachers, classbook authors, or journalists. Is all that we have recalled perhaps only a heritage losing its formative power, as some contemporary theoreticians want us to believe?

Jürgen Habermas has asked whether “complex societies” can anyway form “a reasonable identity”.<sup>24</sup> He says that this is only possible in a process of

---

<sup>24</sup> Jürgen Habermas, *Können komplexe Gesellschaften eine vernünftige Identität ausbilden ?*, in : Jürgen Habermas, *Zur Rekonstruktion des Historischen Materialismus*, 3 ed., Frankfurt am Main : Suhrkamp 1982, p. 144ff.

communication taking place under conditions of an “ideal form of life”, free of any domination. All other “knowledge” about identity would be unreasonable and could be only a mystification of conditions which one has not to identify with. Niklas Luhmann is disputing Habermas' question. The “intersubjectivity of cognition, experience, and action created by symbolic interpretation and value systems” is, in his opinion, not apt to integrate modern societies. It cannot satisfy the “requirements for the control of highly differentiated societal sub-systems”.<sup>25</sup> The idea that political order has to do anything with spiritual sharing, that politics receive meaning from the conception of a common cultural heritage is, in his eyes, a totally outmoded notion (a case of “false consciousness”). Habermas insists that a humane life must be governed by “communicative reason”. But he diagnoses a fatal discrepancy between the demand for reasonable identity and such trends in modern development which he assumes are manifest especially in the process of European integration.

Along with the increasing rationalisation of social life, the integration of societies is more and more carried on “through the systemic interaction of specified functions”.<sup>26</sup> The control over social processes works through “speechless media of communication”, through exchange mechanisms like money in the economy and through mechanisms of power in the sphere of politics. And while these control systems were embodied for a long time in a normative framework according to the “Old-European” tradition of a common weal where there was communication about necessary and appropriate actions in terms of common sense and philosophy, it then came to a “mediatisation” and, finally, the “colonisation of the life-world”.<sup>27</sup> Those spheres in which individual and collective identity may find themselves and may realise themselves are now occupied and exploited by the politico-economic control organisations using power and monetary incentives in order to get societal life going on. Morality and culture are being robbed of their substance and, thus, cultural identity becomes obsolete.

Seen through such glasses, European integration as it has been in process for the past forty years would appear as a gigantic and typical example for the deliberate promotion and acceleration of just such a development : the take-over of power by a rational functioning macro-organisation that combines governmental and economic interests to control interdependencies. Habermas would be able to formulate his diagnosis – primarily made about the modern state – more precisely with respect to the EC system : The utilisation and instrumentalisation of conceptions of cultural identity and public political discussion in order to legitimise that what will be done anyway through calculated interest and power bargaining ; the substitution of democratic decision-making through relations between welfare administrations and their clients ; transformation of rule of law into an instrument of organising interest-controlled systems of regulation ; and finally, “make-believe of communicative relations” in the form of rituals in which “the system is draped as the life-world”.<sup>28</sup>

This might appear as a caricature, and Habermas has indeed met with decided protest. His thesis of the reduction of politics to systems control is shrewd, but is resting on

---

<sup>25</sup> Niklas Luhmann, quoted by Habermas op. cit.

<sup>26</sup> Jürgen Habermas, *Theorie des kommunikativen Handelns*, vol. II, Frankfurt am Main : Suhrkamp 1981, p. 175.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 240, p. 470f.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 472, p. 476, p. 536ff., p. 567.

rather fundamentalist premises. If it has been brought to attention here and now, then primarily because of the fact that our discussion may well need a thorn in the flesh so that we do not take things too easy on the subject of cultural identity and the building of a polity out of the EC system.

But there is still another reason for taking such theses and discussions into consideration. In spite of all exaggeration, a very sensible question arises, making our special topic particularly relevant : How is it possible to secure the political identity, through which the “meta-political” components and dimensions of identity only obtain their full significance as well as their motivational relevance, while the European Community is developing ?

It looks as if political actors or political scientists would have asked us to find the historical and cultural potential, so that we produce and promote European consciousness, because they expect some contribution to the progress of political community-building and polity-formation for the benefit of a European Union which shall be deepened and widened.

But a complementary perspective exists, too. In the framework of European integration, it is necessary to strengthen the structures and the processes for the articulation of a truly political self-understanding and for a process of conceiving and comprehending what the tasks which Europe is confronted with are. Only if these processes are going to take place, our spiritual and cultural properties” will play a significant role in our joint endeavours to solve problems and to meet the challenges of our time and of the days to come. Therefore, we need efforts to create a political identity of a uniting Europe. If not for other reasons—then at least in order to encounter trends which tend to make the content and the substance of our meta-political traditions politically irrelevant. The reality of politics and policies is more than a complex system of functionalist management of socio-economic interdependencies and power relations. It is also a field of communication and interaction between human beings, groups, communities, regions, and nations, on what is important, what is meaningful, and what should be done and pursued. By this process of communication and interaction, a common identity is being formed. This is also true in the field of European co-operation and integration.

In the humanistic tradition of our European civilisation, it has been passed on from the philosophers of the Greek “polis” to the outstanding thinkers of our time that politics always means two things : to make possible what is necessary (Paul Valéry), and to find agreement on what is real (Hugo von Hofmannsthal). Both of these will help to create, to keep alive, and to perform a European identity.



# Consciousness of European identity after 1945

Gilbert Trausch

---

The question of Europe's identity can be looked at from many angles within the perspective of this Forum – that of post-1945 Europe, and, even more specifically, that of the European Community. Sociologists, political scientists and philosophers have all made interesting contributions – highly theoretical, as can be expected, given the academic disciplines in which they work. A theoretical approach is particularly apt for the question of European identity, because, in the final analysis, Europe is a 'construction of the mind' (J. B. Duroselle).

However, we must not stifle the voice of history. This is a discipline that is kept in check by two rigorous parameters – time and space. What is true for one region is not necessarily true for another, and what is acceptable at one time is not always acceptable at another. I mention this because historians construct facts from documents of all kinds. The constant need to bear this in mind sometimes clips their wings and stops them getting carried away. Marc Bloch called them 'those nasty little facts which ruin the best hypotheses'. A historical approach to the European identity after 1945 inevitably brings us to the conditions in which the European Community was born.

No reasonable person would deny that the sense of a shared identity was and still is a major stimulus in the quest for a closer union. However, the disturbing fact remains that European integration only became a reality after 1945, with the creation of the OEEC, the Council of Europe, the Brussels Treaty Organisation, and, above all, the European Communities (from 1950). Robert Schuman's appeal on 9 May 1950 in Paris was translated into action, while Aristide Briand's in Geneva on 7 September 1929 fell on deaf ears. Both were French Foreign Ministers and therefore influential men, and both addressed their appeals to German politicians at the highest level who were very open to Europe, Gustav Stresemann and Konrad Adenauer. So why did Europe take off in 1950 and not in 1929?

The philosopher Jean-Marie Domenach hints at an answer when he says that the European Community was born not of Charlemagne but of European nihilism. He uses Charlemagne to symbolise Europe's identity. Many historians think that we can speak of Europe from the time of Charlemagne, who is referred to in certain documents of that time as 'Pater Europae'. But for Domenach, the jolt which finally induced the Europeans to unite more closely was the havoc wreaked by the two great totalitarian systems of the 20th century: Marxism-Leninism and National Socialism. The Gulag and Auschwitz were seen as the last warnings before the final catastrophe. The figures are clear and chilling. First World War: 10 million dead; Second World

War: 55 million dead (including 45 million Europeans). If this geometrical progression were to continue, the next step would be an apocalyptic Third World War. In other words, the European Community emerged in response to the challenge posed by two ideologies which were born in Europe from a shared cultural heritage.

How can Europeans be united? Basically, there are only two possible approaches: political and economic. And where should we start? This was a question that already exercised Aristide Briand. When, in 1929, he called for the creation of a United States of Europe, he proposed to start with economic unification. One year later, in a memorandum submitted to 26 European governments for their opinion, he shifted his stance and backed a political approach, the reason being the Wall Street Crash which had changed the situation. Briand thus played it by ear, without a precise idea of the path to be taken or the objective to be attained. In this he differed from Jean Monnet, who had clearer ideas on both the end and the means.

The same questions arose after 1945. Although it was clear that the two approaches should be separate, it was felt that there was no reason why progress should not be made on both fronts simultaneously. This is what the Europeans did in the years 1947-49 with the OEEC and the Council of Europe. The result was hardly encouraging, even though the two organisations did manage to group together almost all the states of Western Europe, because they were confined to the framework of simple cooperation between countries without any transfer of sovereignty. An attempt to move forward on the economic front – negotiations for an economic union between two countries (France and Italy) or five countries (with Benelux) under the name of Finebel – was to fail (1948-50).

In the spring of 1950, Jean Monnet realised that the political path was closed, because the European countries remained strongly attached to their political sovereignty. Having learnt his lesson from the failure of Finebel, and not impressed by Adenauer's proposal for a Franco-German economic union (23 March 1950), Monnet opted for the economic approach, but on a smaller scale: a common market in coal and steel.

This option had a number of consequences. Jean Monnet expected that this first 'pool' (coal and steel) would lead to others (agriculture, energy, transport) and hence, gradually, to a genuine common market. This prediction was to end up coming true, but only after forty years or so, which is probably longer than Monnet reckoned. Monnet also believed that this economic approach would eventually be followed by political unification. In this respect, events proved his hopes wrong. The attachment to national sovereignty in the world of politics (security and foreign policy) has turned out to be more tenacious than anticipated in 1950.

By launching the process of European integration through the economy, Jean Monnet – no doubt unwittingly – defined its identity over several decades. The European Community which, with its fifteen countries, is starting to represent Europe as a whole, is perceived essentially as an economic entity. However, men (and women), being creatures of flesh and blood, do not easily identify with economic indicators, quotas and compensatory amounts. The failure of all attempts to create a common foreign and security policy (European Defence Community and the planned European Political Community 1951-54, Fouchet Plan 1961-62) and the less than binding nature of the Maastricht Treaty provisions explains why the European Union



continues to be perceived by ordinary people as an economic machine. It is difficult, in these circumstances, to see it as the expression of a common destiny.

Jean Monnet's proposal for a coal and steel community, put forward by Robert Schuman, was a response to a multi-faceted challenge. Like everyone else, he was aware that Europe could not continue to tear itself apart, or it would end up disappearing completely. Also, Europe's difficulties over the last hundred years had always started in the form of a Franco-German conflict, so it was here that action needed to be taken: to make war between France and Germany 'not merely unthinkable but physically impossible' (declaration of 9 May 1950). This is why the French appeal of 9 May was addressed first and foremost to Germany. The two world wars were to some extent Franco-German wars, at least when they started, and can thus be seen from a similar angle to the 1870 war. This explains the determination of many Europeans to reconcile the French and Germans and bring them closer together. Jean Monnet understood more clearly than others that Europe's future depended on France and Germany.

Like it or not, the European Community has been built around France and Germany. If monetary union comes to fruition in the next few years, it will happen again around these two countries.

Jean Monnet's game plan – to make the Franco-German axis the motor of Europe – could not be achieved unless Germany played along too, in other words unless it aligned itself with the western political model for good. It had to be kept from the 'temptation to swing between West and East' (Jean Monnet, 16 September 1950) and therefore had to be solidly attached to a host organisation. Neither the OEEC nor the Council of Europe, with their loose structures, could take on this role, but the ECSC fitted the bill. The European Community, along with other organisations such as NATO and the WEO, thus became a way of resolving the German question.

## **The effects of the Cold War**

The appeal of 9 May 1950 was also a response to the challenge of the Cold War, which created a new situation in which Europe was not so much a player as an object manipulated by non-European players (the USA and the USSR).

Jean Monnet had no difficulty in accepting the Atlantic Alliance, which was essential in order to ensure Western Europe's security. However, he felt that it had helped to fossilise mindsets and create a 'rigidity of thought'. Thus 'any proposal, any action is interpreted by public opinion as contributing to the Cold War' (note of 1 May 1950). Monnet believed that a Community as he conceived it could break out of the Cold War mould, which was not the case for the Atlantic Alliance. He thought that the ECSC could incorporate West Germany without raising the question of rearming it, which he still felt (beginning of May 1950) would provoke the Russians. The Korean War (25 June 1950) was responsible for overturning this kind of thinking. German rearmament was put on the agenda. Very rapidly, the ECSC became the model for a European Defence Community.

In fact, throughout the first phase of European integration, from the OEEC through the ECSC to the EEC, Western Europe was subjected to a whole set of Cold War-related pressures which had a direct impact on the integration process.

There was American pressure, which could be described as positive in that it encouraged the Europeans to unite. American diplomacy pushed the Europeans to come closer together economically and politically, though it was understood that a united Europe must remain open to American influences and products. The pressure was also positive in the sense that it did not impose any specific solution on the Europeans. In the case of the OEEC, for example, the United States would have preferred a more integrated solution than the one finally chosen on Britain's initiative. Similarly, the first British application to join the EEC (1961) owed a great deal to American encouragement.

The same cannot be said for pressure from the USSR. It felt it was not in its interest for the Europeans to unite opposite it. Its policy thus aimed to divide the Europeans and to separate Europe from the United States. Thanks to its impressive military apparatus, which its acquisition of atomic weapons in 1949 rendered credible, it was able to put pressure on Europe – indeed virtually blackmail it. In the Cold War climate which set in from spring 1947, the Europeans lived in fear of the USSR, a fear which Paul-Henri Spaak gave full rein to in a famous speech. The Brussels Treaty, the Atlantic Alliance and the WEO, and also the ECSC and the EDC, were a response to the negative pressure from the USSR.

The process of European integration is inseparable from the climate created by the Cold War. Throughout its history, the European Community has been very sensitive to international developments. The Korean War had a positive effect on the ECSC negotiations and the beginnings of the EDC, but the death of Stalin and the ensuing détente affected the EDC negatively. In the autumn of 1956, the preparatory negotiations for the Treaties of Rome were heading for an impasse after wide-ranging last-minute demands made by France when they were finally saved by the events of Suez and Budapest reminding Europeans how weak they were.

In periods of tension, the Europeans close ranks, and in periods of détente they loosen their ties. Overall, the process of European integration has to be seen in the Cold War context. To push the image to its provocative extreme, one could say that the European Community is Stalin's baby. Only when they were forced to did the European countries agree to the surrender of sovereignty which characterises the Community. One can imagine only too clearly the consequences that the end of the Cold War may have on European integration.

The effects of the Cold War can also be seen in many other areas, particularly that of political institutions. Between the wars, democratic countries suffered a period of profound crisis, which explains the rise of fascist dictatorships and authoritarian regimes (central Europe and the Baltic and Balkan countries). Where democracies did survive, they were weakened and discredited by major scandals. After 1945, however, western-style democracy became the political system par excellence, fully adopted by the nations of Western Europe. The last bastions of authoritarian regimes – fascist or semi-fascist – fell one after the other (Greece, Spain, Portugal). The rule of law and respect for human rights which became established in Western Europe contrasted with the communist model. Confronted by a regime which claimed to have history on its

side and to be both politically and economically more successful, European democracy was obliged to furnish daily proof of its excellence and superiority. The example of the Federal Republic of Germany in its face-off with the other Germany illustrates this situation. The East German regime became a foil for the resounding success of the Bonn democracy.

The flourishing health of western democracy is not unconnected to the creation of the welfare state after 1945. The social insurance system goes back to the 19th century, with considerable differences between the different countries. However, it is the English model, developed during the Second World War, which was to become the source of inspiration for the other countries of Western Europe. Within one generation it had become the norm, and the differences between the countries diminished, even though the extent of provision was not the same for all countries.

The welfare state model stopped at the iron curtain. Beyond it, social protection was certainly well-developed, but the philosophy underlying the system was different. The weakness of the command economy explains the mediocrity of the services provided. Basically, the welfare state is a characteristic of Western Europe, different from both the communist system and the American system.

The fact that this model is now under threat, and that some are arguing for the American model, has particular historical significance in view of Western Europe's identity as it has been constructed, in particular through the European Community, over the course of the last forty years.

## **The Carolingian image**

In its quest to unify in the aftermath of the war, Western Europe was to take various forms based on different institutional approaches and different concepts. There would be the European Community, EFTA etc. Opposite, there was another Europe: the Europe of Comecon and the Warsaw Pact. However, it was the smallest of these configurations, the six countries which formed the ECSC, which was to dominate. Gradually, slowly but inexorably, the Community took on – or usurped, depending on the point of view – the name of Europe. It is easy to understand the irritation of some, such as the Scandinavians or the Swiss, on seeing the word 'Europe' increasingly applied to the Community during the 1960s, a usage which successive enlargements have only reinforced.

The Community is thus at the root of one of the concepts of Europe. For 22 years, until the first enlargement in 1972, it was this little Europe of six countries which incarnated Europe's identity. Right from the start one could see the historical imagination set in motion. Very quickly, potential commentators and journalists started talking about a Carolingian or Lotharingian Europe. It is true that the map of the six founding countries of Europe covered exactly the same area as Charlemagne's empire. In both cases, the Elbe formed a border, even a barrier, against the barbarian tribes – or the communist countries. Of course there was no causal link between the two constructions, separated by eleven centuries. This was a mythological projection, but one that was popular for a long time because the historical connection seemed so

irresistible. Clearly, calling it a Carolingian Europe stresses western Christianity's role in founding Europe. The force of the image led some people to speak of the Community as a Europe of the Vatican.

Be that as it may, the fact remains that the six countries which were the first to launch themselves into the European adventure are still seen as the spearhead or core of the European Union. They seem more committed than the others. And they are destined to be the heart of a future monetary union. It is all the more distressing, therefore, that one of them (Italy) has to stay on the sidelines, forced to by the Maastricht criteria.

This essay deliberately leaves aside the question of the European identity in terms of culture and civilisation. Few observers contest the fact that Europe has a cultural identity, formed over the centuries, encompassing the diversity of national cultures. But this identity may not be as clear-cut as some would see it, and it is blurred at the edges: Europe's borders have always been problematic.

Beyond this cultural identity, which the elites have recognised since the Middle Ages, but which has not stopped the Europeans constantly and mercilessly tearing each other apart, the period since 1945 has seen the emergence of several Europes, born of the convulsions of the First and Second World Wars. Only one of these Europes has managed to establish a public image - the European Community - and even that took four decades. The Community only really entered into public consciousness in the member countries with the Maastricht Treaty and the public controversy which it generated.

# European Identity and /or the Identity of the European Union

Thomas Jansen

---

When speaking of “European identity” one needs to state what exactly is meant, as each of these words taken individually may be ambiguous and confusing.

The “European” identity we are seeking to outline here is that of the European Union, the word “Identity” being understood to mean the spirit of this community, indeed, the very source of its cohesion.

In so doing, we assume that both the European Union as an organisation and its tangible manifestations, policies and achievements are expressions of that identity.

It is incumbent on the European Union as a political and democratic organisation to ensure that its citizens and peoples not only understand but actually espouse the spirit of the Union if they are ultimately to identify with it. Indeed, the Union's very ability to survive, grow, act and succeed in its endeavours depends on it.

## **The factors of european identity**

Let me first recall the basic factors of European identity in a broader sense, which even a precise definition cannot dissociate from that of the European Union. For, even if since its inception the European Union has never embraced more than a part of Europe, its vocation still relates to Europe in its entirety. And the historical, cultural, social and political components and factors of European identity which bind the continent together, east, west, north and south, will certainly increase in importance as the Union grows larger.

### ***Historical Factors***

Ever since the early Middle Ages, all political processes in Europe have been interconnected. There gradually arose a complex system of relations between tribes and peoples, dynasties and classes, states and empires, which, in a context of constant change, became ever more intricate and refined. Systems of domination and counterbalance arose and collapsed as a result of recurrent wars only to be followed by fresh attempts to build empires or peace settlements.

Just as nations are defined as communities of destiny, it can also be said of Europe as a whole that a shared history over many centuries has given rise to a differentiated yet in many respects interconnected and mutually dependent community of destiny. Proximity and the shared nature of both individual and collective experience have fashioned a special relationship between the peoples of Europe which, whether consciously or unconsciously, has had the effect of forging an identity. Even in places where togetherness gave way to antagonism, where proximity resulted in demarcation or where coexistence deteriorated into rivalry and ultimately war, shared experience has left a deep imprint on Europeans. Likewise, the very causes of the

wars in this as in previous centuries sprang from intellectual currents simultaneously at work everywhere in Europe.

### ***Cultural Factors***

The shared historical experience is underpinned by a considerable degree of cultural unity of which, paradoxically, diversity has been a constituent part. This diversity has common roots, i.e. it is the outcome of a combination of the Mediterranean Greco-Roman culture, which contributed the sum experience of the ancient world as a conservative and stabilising element on the one hand, and the continental Germanic-Slavonic culture, which contributed the dynamic, youthful and forward-looking component on the other.

The decisive catalyst in this synthesis was Christianity. The European world which emerged from this process during the Middle Ages never lacked awareness of its unity. Likewise, in modern times and even very recently, this awareness has always survived despite the bloodiest of wars waged in the name of national differentiation or opposing nationalist or ideological aims.

### ***Social Factors***

Not least because of its cultural unity, in which any differences can be seen as so many aspects or individual expressions of a shared background, Europe developed into a single area also in social and economic terms. Despite all the typical differences between its diverse regions, a similar pattern of economic development served as the basis on which social life progressed along similar lines everywhere. A significant part was played here by a highly developed trading system involving large-scale exchange of goods, labour and know-how. It formed a large internal market which, despite the restrictions imposed by the upsurge of nationalism in the 19th century, flourished up until the First World War.

Symmetrical social development in the regions of Europe was matched by a simultaneity of social crisis and radical change and then in turn the formation of social groupings or classes predisposed towards transnational identification, thus creating the conditions in which the integration rooted in historical developments and a common culture could take hold. A radical break in this movement towards social integration occurred only with the division of Europe into two fundamentally different economic and social systems after the Second World War, a period from which Europe is only now beginning to recover.

### ***Political Factors***

History since the Second World War has shown that the intellectual and cultural strengths of the Old World are far from exhausted. The fact that the Europeans adopted a critical stance towards their history but at the same time opened up to stimuli from the new worlds of America, Asia and Africa and the fact that they ultimately responded to the challenge of Communism also impelled them to develop a new self-awareness. The European identity expressed in that new self-awareness is characterised by a marked drive for organised action which, now that the Central and

Eastern European nations in an act of self-liberation are reuniting with the nations of western Europe, is confronted with new challenges.

The open democratic societies did not succumb to the threats or enticements of Socialist revolution and its claims to march in step with history. On the contrary, they succeeded in maintaining and developing their attractiveness. They emerged strengthened from all economic, social and cultural crises. In the North Atlantic Alliance, they were able to jointly organise their security. Lastly, in the European Community, a significant group of democratic states created a model of peaceful cooperation, peaceful change and unity which exerts an extraordinary power of attraction throughout the world.

## **National unity of the states and political unity of Europes**

The European Union is a young and still incomplete community composed nonetheless of old communities. Its Member States still possess a fairly strong identity. It is therefore only natural that, in seeking to define an appropriate way of expressing the European identity that appeals to the public, we should ask how the identity of the Member States expressed itself when (in the 19th century or before) they were still in their infancy.

The unity of the Member States as they came into existence was based mainly on :

- a common language and culture or common cultural and linguistic bases ;
- a common experience of history, which could even encompass the experience of mutual antagonism between different sections of what became now one nation ;
- one economic area with neighbourhood markets developing right across the region ;
- a shared need for security against external threats ;

Similar factors go to explain the process of European integration and the emergence of a supranational European Union :

- the experience of history acquired by the peoples and states of Europe both in war and peaceful exchange ;
- common cultural bases even if their expression has been diverse ;
- economic necessity and shared practical interest within the market which transcend the national and continental framework ;
- the setting of limits in relation to an enemy power which poses a threat to freedom and integrity (the USSR with its aggressive ideology and totalitarian regime).

Just as the factors referred to with regard to the formation of the nation state did not all affect all participants in equal measure, not all of the population feels equally inspired or convinced by the foregoing justifications with regard to the European Union. It will nonetheless be observed that it is these common factors which, now as

then, influence the decisions of the political, social and intellectual elites. And now as then we see amid those same elites sizeable minorities and occasionally even majorities of Luddites who, unwilling to relinquish the past, reject any identification with new contexts and find arguments for their ideas which are heard and believed by a certain section of the population.

These are all socio-psychologically explainable transitional phenomena which arise in the definition of a new European identity (including the difficulty of expressing this identity in an appropriate fashion) or in the search for a European awareness which transcends the national awareness. To see them as problems specific to European unification would be to approach them from the wrong angle. For it is clear that changes in political and social circumstances do not always immediately result in a change in awareness. Only when new circumstances are perceived as realities do we adapt our thinking and planning accordingly. The time lapse between the appearance of the new and its perception is attributable to the fact that the old continues to co-exist in parallel with the new for a while or even permanently. As a result, awareness continues to revolve around the old and therefore barely notices the new. The debate on the feasibility/non-feasibility of supranational/transnational statehood or democracy offers prime examples here.

The lack of identity for the young, new and constitutionally not yet established community known as the “European Union” is also accompanied by certain problems of legitimacy which its institutions in particular have in projecting and asserting themselves. However, if one compares these problems with similar problems of the Member States and their constitutional situation, they can be seen to be quite obviously commonplace phenomena with which all communities have to contend regardless of the level at which they are established. In this respect, the problems at the various levels may perhaps be connected :

- the weaker a nation's self-awareness, the less problematic is its European awareness ?
- the weaker the confidence in the system of the nation state, the greater the hope placed in the European institutions ?

## **The absence of a consensus on the constitution**

This is a practical problem and one which confronts politicians with practical tasks. It manifests itself in the deficit of legitimacy with which the authorities have to contend every time they want to make innovations whose advantages are not always immediately apparent given the time it may well take for results to be produced, whereas the disadvantages, whether short-term or medium-term, real or imaginary, have to be taken into account. For any political project to gain acceptance it is therefore important, indeed indispensable, for its meaning to be clear, its components visible, and its effects foreseeable. If the European project is to succeed, then it is crucially important for it to be understood.

But what does the European project entail ? *A Union organised on federal principles and endowed with a democratic political system which, through its institutions and laws, guarantees internal and external security and which takes on major tasks,*



*beyond the capabilities of individual Member States, in a manner accepted by the public as serving its interests.*

However, in defining the project, we see at once that the project thus defined does not enjoy the support of all the participants. There are governments, parties, parliamentary factions and important social and cultural groupings which want to achieve a different project. Their European project is based on another idea. For example : *Cooperation between a group of states which agree on institutions and procedures to perform jointly defined tasks, case by case, but without submitting to the discipline of a democratic and federal system.*

In other words, there is no consensus on the “*finalité politique*” of European integration and this makes it above all difficult to establish and give expression to the European identity. For the European Union remains the unfinished practical expression of an ultimately undefined project. It is therefore more process than project ; it is the blueprint for a product, the real shape of which remains undecided.

Equally undecided is the geography of the Union. Where does it place its borders ? There is no consensus here either. The dilatory treatment of Turkey's desire for Union membership is proof of this, as are the difficulties in agreeing an enlargement strategy with respect to Central and Eastern Europe.

And then there is the fact that we have become accustomed to seeing certain challenges as the most important motives for the unification of Europe : establishment of an enduring peace between the participant nations, reconstruction of a devastated continent, reacquisition of a role in international decision-making, defence of freedom against totalitarian Communism, the guaranteeing of a democratic future and greater and more widespread prosperity.

As European integration policy achieved results, so these motives gradually faded into the background ; and since the watershed year of 1989, it has become clear that the European Union needs new motivation.

This does not mean that all the original reasons and motives for the policy of European unification have become obsolete. They retain, albeit in a different context from before, a certain reality content. This is true even if it no longer carries the same weight as in the 1950s and up until the 1980s because :

- the process of rebuilding Europe from the ruins of the war has long been completed ;
- the peace between those nations of Europe which took part in the integration process is today guaranteed by the existing set of institutions ;
- the Soviet-Communist regime has collapsed ;
- democracy has established itself in all European countries and can be regarded as secure ;
- the aim of a more widespread prosperity has been achieved to an unparalleled degree ;

- Europe can regard itself once again as a leading player and partner on the world stage.

The question as to what makes it necessary to take integration further now that the most important goals have been achieved is therefore warranted ; it challenges us to define and explain the new objectives and motives in order thereby to give appropriate and perceptive expression also to the identity of the European Union.

## **The new tasks**

The new challenges confronting Europeans now and in the future arise from various developments :

- the process of unification itself, which has generated a dynamic through which the responsibilities of the European Union have increased substantially and certain reforms of its political system have become indispensable since it will otherwise be incapable of performing the tasks entrusted to it ;
- the collapse of the Soviet Union and the accompanying end of a bipolar world order based on two mutually opposed superpowers ;
- the technological and industrial developments which are giving rise to new ways of living, working and operating all over the world.

Many of the individual measures enacted in the decades since the Second World War can be seen as preludes and pointers to the changes of recent years. However, we are only now becoming gradually aware of their full implications. New situations are arising, which we are attempting to conceptualise when we talk for example of the “globalisation of the economy” or the “information society”.

In coming to terms with the new situation, Europe will above all have to face up to the following challenges :

- the renewal of European society ;
- the development of a democratic and workable constitutional order ;
- the enlargement of the Union to include the countries of Central and Eastern Europe ;
- the creation of a new world order in line with technological, scientific and social change.

The European nation states cannot rely on their own discretion and devices to carry out these tasks alone. For the challenges involved are directed at the entire Union. They can therefore only be properly addressed through the combined effect of contributions by the individual states to the united action of the Union of European states and the added value of joint effort.

### ***The Renewal of European Society***

There are in Europe various competing models for the most effective and fairest social order. They are inspired by differing national concepts and traditions of social organisation and social life ; even regional characteristics can be discerned, finding expression for example in the differences between the Northern European (more Germanic Protestant) and Southern European (more Roman Catholic) societies. And neither must we ignore the influence which ideological and political convictions have exerted on societies in the individual European countries : Conservative and Liberal, Socialist and Christian-Social ideas have all left clear, distinguishable traces.

And yet, we can now ascertain that over the decades, thanks to a common cultural foundation, a broad consensus has formed on a model which corresponds more closely than others to the vital needs and circumstances of Europeans. The differences between this European model and that of American society are striking, not to mention the models which underlie the societies of certain East and Southeast Asian industrialised market economies.

What are the main features of this European model of society ? Its central feature is what in Germany is called the “Soziale Marktwirtschaft”, i.e. a “social market economy” which allows market forces full scope whilst subjecting them to a framework of rules designed to prevent abuse, satisfy basic social needs and provide a minimum of social security. The consequent solidarity and stability also makes for greater freedom of the market ; the efficiency gained as a result makes it possible to supply the necessary resources for social welfare and security.

This model is being called into question and is now in jeopardy. More precisely, the excessive growth of the social security system over the years has disrupted the balance between individual responsibility for the whole and society's responsibility for the individual. On the other hand, the pressure of competition accompanying the globalisation of the economy and communication has meant that to safeguard jobs in “Enterprise Europe” substantial cutbacks have had to be made in the social security system together with radical reforms in the way they operate. Ultimately, this two-fold threat to the European model represents a virulent attack on the philosophy which underlies it ; the motives behind the attack are partly ideological, partly conditioned by interests and its aim is to eliminate the social dimension.

The European Union would lose an essential component of its identity if it failed to withstand this attack. The agreement on social policy between the Member States (with the exception of the United Kingdom) appended to the Maastricht Treaty was a first important step. The Commission White Paper entitled “Growth, Competitiveness, Employment” endorsed by the Union in the autumn of 1994 contains a programme for the safeguarding and reshaping of the social and economic order of the Union.

The aims of this programme are likewise served by the proposal for an Economic and Monetary Union, in particular its establishment in stages and the definition of a sound financial situation as a preliminary requirement for the introduction of a single currency and the consolidation of the single market in the large frontier-free European economic area.

The reform programme which underlies the policy of the European Union is sustained moreover by the confidence that the peoples of the old world who have emerged from the tribulations of repeated fratricidal wars and the humiliation of totalitarian repression have lost neither their capacity for innovation and creativity nor their historical and cultural experience and therefore possess all the assets needed to remain competitive in the global context.

### ***The Development of a workable constitutional order***

The identity of a political community finds its noblest expression in its internal order, i.e. in its constitution. However, it is precisely in this respect that the European Union is defective. The first item on the agenda for the years to come is therefore the revision of the treaties in which the institutions, procedures and rules of the Union are rooted. It is generally agreed that the Intergovernmental Conference entrusted with the reform (of the treaties or constitution) should serve to bring the European Union closer to the people by making it operate more efficiently and openly. The Union should raise its profile and its activities should become more understandable.

It is clear that the expectations placed in the Intergovernmental Conference, which must be measured in terms of the major developments dependant upon its outcome (enlargement, monetary union, etc.), can only be fulfilled if the conference aims at the establishment of a federal and democratically legitimate structure.

Federation could give expression to what is inherent in the European Union : namely unity in diversity. At the same time, as a prerequisite for the definition of identity, this would answer the unresolved question of the "*finalité politique*". Given the complex circumstances of the integration process in the Union, only a democratic order offers the possibility of tackling the pressing practical and political problems with any hope of success on the one hand, and of giving meaning to what we call Union citizenship on the other.

### ***The Enlargement of the European Union***

The historical watershed of 1989 confronted the European Union with a new task which will keep it occupied until well into the next millennium. After initial reticence, attributable to widespread unease about the new uncertainties as well as to misunderstandings and a resultant distrust between the partners, there is now a general consensus on the fact that every effort must be made to incorporate the states and peoples of central and eastern Europe as Members of the Union as soon as possible. There are many justifications for this, historical, moral, social, and not least, the fact that this is the only way of ensuring lasting economic and political stability and peace in this region.

The Union already treats the states of Central and Eastern Europe as future members and more and more systematic efforts are being made to achieve what in previous decades has been no more than a dream : namely the unification of all of Europe in peace and freedom. Indeed, the establishment of the conditions for the enlargement of the Union is in full swing, : in the individual applicant countries as well as in the Union itself. A strategy of preparation for membership has been drawn up in cooperation with the governments concerned. Important stages on this road of

standardisation and harmonisation are the association agreements with the Central and Eastern European countries which, through these agreements, have moved politically closer to the Union. The economic and trade provisions and the connected assistance arrangements afford them the material and practical wherewithal needed to prepare for membership.

If, however, the future members of the Union have to be capable of accession, then the Union itself must become capable of enlargement. Thus, if it is to remain open to all European nations which can claim a historical and cultural right to belong to it, it must also solve the problems connected with a major enlargement from 15 to foreseeably 27 and perhaps even 30 Member States : the political and institutional problems, the economic and social problems and also the financial problems, the solution of which will demand a substantial additional solidarity on the part of the Union's present Members.

A considerable leap in self-awareness could be made if this process of political deepening and geographical enlargement could be handled successfully, also because the name "European Community/Union" has always suggested the encompassing and representation of Europe in its entirety. The closer this ideal comes to being achieved, the easier it will be to bridge the credibility gap.

### ***The Establishment of a New World Order***

Lasting economic and social stability is also vitally important for the European Union from the point of view of the Mediterranean area. It is therefore in the Union's interest, indeed it is its duty, to help create the conditions for peaceful development in this region. The Mediterranean Conference of November 1995 provided the impetus for a new inter-relationship based on partnership which not only satisfies the present requirements but marks a fresh start compared with the centuries of cultural and religious conflict which have characterised relations between Europe and the Mediterranean region in the past.

The readiness of the European Union to face up to its responsibilities with regard to the Mediterranean area and Central and Eastern Europe (moreover in relation to Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States) is substantiated by large-scale development aid and development cooperation in the Third World. It indicates a growing role for the Union as an actor in the international order. It has the capacity to do this thanks to :

- its success in establishing its own order representing, historically and structurally, an international order pacified in a lasting manner by democracy and federalism ;
- the strength which it derives from the united action of its Members.

More unity, and above all more unity deriving from democratic decision-making procedures, will lend the Union greater weight and greater credibility in this role ; to achieve such unity, further advances need to be made in the establishment of its internal order and the strengthening of its capacity for external action.

The establishment of the European Community nearly fifty years ago was also a contribution to the creation of a more just and peaceful world order. Its endowment

with democratic institutions and instruments for the common definition and implementation of policies in an increasing number of areas, but in particular its development into a European Union with a common foreign and security policy and a single currency, only becomes really meaningful if it is understood as a structural component of a “world federation”, i.e. of a process which leads, via the organisation of large continental groups of states and a radical reform of the United Nations, to a world order based on subsidiarity.

That does not mean to say that the integration of the European states and societies is not in itself also a high-ranking objective for in the past it has led to the pacification and reshaping of Europe, increased economic prosperity and guaranteed social progress ; in the future, through the corresponding effects of enlargement to Central and Eastern Europe, it will also develop in those parts of Europe which have hitherto been unable to take part in this development. At the same time European integration remains the basis for the effective discharge of all the major cross-border tasks entrusted to Europe.

However, in the context of world history, the unification process in Europe is aiming further than the construction of a Union.. More precisely, the stability achieved through the process of building the Community, together with the instruments of peace devised in this process and the prosperity existing here, are all factors which oblige Europeans to assume responsibility in and for the world. This involves more than development aid and active concern for human rights or the protection of the global environment. It also involves the shaping of an institutional and legal framework for world progress, a worldwide economy, worldwide transport, worldwide communication, the ecology of the world and worldwide politics in its various branches.

The European Union will be in a privileged situation in being able to submit and implement proposals to this effect on the basis of its own experiences, if in the years to come it succeeds in giving expression to its identity by successfully defending its societal model through renewal, giving an effective form to its political system and at the same time finding optimum solutions for its geographical enlargement.

## A contribution from political psychology

Tom Bryder

---

“Europeanisation”, meaning the political *unification* or *integration* of Europe, as we have recently come to think of it, is a relatively new phenomenon. More precisely, it refers to attempts at creating a European federal union, a distinct entity in relation to its surroundings.

To the surroundings, such as people in the former colonies, or in the United States, “Europeanisation” has a different meaning from that revealed by the integration perspective. Edgar Morin (1990, p. 20) says that “Il est difficile de percevoir l’Europe depuis l’Europe.” From the outside it is often associated with expansive tendencies such as “European cultural imperialism” (in the former colonies) or “Cultural snobbism” (in the United States), that is, a *colonialisation of the minds* of people outside Europe, both in Africa, Asia, and America.

Somewhat paradoxically, it is difficult to distinguish “Europeanisation” as such from what we, in Europe, sometimes call “Americanisation” or “American cultural imperialism.” The difference for the political order, however, seems to be a matter of quantity and authenticity. Critics of “Europeanisation” so conceived, such as of the francophones and German visionary intellectuals like T.W. Adorno, search for a European identity free of such connotations.

Apart from this ingroup-outgroup aspect of “Europeanisation”, we must deal with on-going processes of how European identity evolves – if it exists, or whether it is emerging. How is it *created, sustained, and dispersed* ?

To which extent and in what respect can we characterise the formation of a European political identity as an outcome of learning, memorisation and information retrieval processes ?

To some people, particularly the contributors to the French intellectual debate on the future of Europe, the contradiction between technocracy and meritocracy on the one hand, and democracy on the other (“Eurocrats” *versus* “Europe des citoyens”), poses the major challenge to the process of a politically unified Europe.<sup>29</sup> It is, for example, presented as the end of minority rule in general by Wolton, who says (1993, p. 95), “Le passage de l’Europe technocratique à l’Europe démocratique signe la fin du règne de la minorité.” It is an expectation resembling the classless society expressed by Marxism.

---

<sup>29</sup> Wolton (1993, p. 232) says that this debate is more widespread than claimed here : “Le thème de la “technocratie européenne” est omniprésent dans tous les pays.

## Conceptualisations and definitions

Let me first mention some definitional issues that might be helpful in a search for appropriate conceptualisations of identity. According to Webster's :

- 1a = sameness of essential or generic character in different instances, or
- 1b = sameness in all that constitutes the objective reality of a thing, or
- 2 = unity and persistence of personality, or
- 3 = the condition of being the same with something described or asserted.

*Le Nouveau Petit Robert* (1993, p. 1122) is somewhat more exhaustive :

1. Caractère de deux objets de pensée identiques, *Identité qualitative ou spécifique*. → **similitude**.

*L'identité d'une chose avec une autre, d'une chose et d'une autre. Identité de vue*. → **communauté**.

2. Caractère de ce qui est un. → **unité**.

3. PSYCHOL. *Identité personnelle*, caractère de ce qui demeure identique à soi-même. *Problème psychologique de l'identité du moi. Crise d'identité*. – *Identité culturelle* : ensemble de traits culturels propres à un groupe ethnique (langue, religion, art, etc.) qui lui confèrent son individualité ; sentiment d'appartenance d'un individu à ce groupe. → **acculturation, déculturation**.

**PAR EXT.** → **sommier**.

Psychologists and psychoanalysts say that identity equals "The sense of one's continued being an entity distinguishable from all others" (Rycroft, p. 68). As Rycroft also says (ibid.) :

*The sense of identity is lost in fugues and perverted in schizophrenic delusions of identity in which, typically, an underlying sense of nonentity is compensated for by delusions of grandeur.*

A *fugue* designates a process by which an individual loses her or his sense of destiny and location. In psychoanalysis, fugues are classified as instances of hysterical behaviour and cited as examples of dissociation of consciousness. They typically arise out of *role confusion* when an individual cannot cognitively handle the information she or he faces.

A transposition of psychoanalytical concepts to a figurative political language, I believe, may create some fruitful associations which can assist us when we try to explain, for example, disintegrative processes in central and south-eastern Europe, or integrative processes in Western Europe.

Taking a preliminary view of what identity is from the psychoanalytic description, we may consequently look at "identification" as :



*The process by which a person either (a) extends his identity into someone else, (b) borrows his identity from someone else, or (c) fuses or confuses his identity with someone else. In analytical writings, it never means establishing the identity of oneself or someone else. (Rycroft p. 67)*

The expression “to identify with” bridges an *individual* identity and a *shared* identity (“I”, “me” and “we”, “us”), that is, some kind of “social” or “political” identity.

## **The place of identity in modern political research**

In modern political science (Cf. Lasswell, 1965) identity is usually treated as an element in a “political perspective,” the other major components being “demands” and “expectations.”

Probably influenced by sociological role theory (which is wider in scope than psychological identity theories, since it incorporates *behaviour* as well as thought and emotional process), some authors seek a solution to identity uncertainty in the concept of *multiple identities*. But who should determine what these identities should be like? The concept of identity cannot be patented by any traditional political-sociological group. It is not part of the traditional ideological quest for a distinct political vocabulary, as revolutionary socialists tended to believe before World War I. As Wolton says (1993, p. 48) :

*L’identité, la nation, la tradition ne sont pas des valeurs de “droite”, elles appartiennent à toutes les familles politique et il y a un conformisme eurocratique à diaboliser ces mots.*

As a matter of fact, the dynamism of a pluralistic and democratic conception of political identity presupposes that multiple identity pragmatism need not be present at *the individual level* of analysis at all, but only at *the social level* in the form of choice options. (Wildawsky, 1987).

From a theoretical point of view, the lack of hierarchical priorities of identity objects may lead to the kind of psychological state called fugues, previously described. Mixed or uncertain political role conceptions are not the same as cultural pluralism and may eventually lead to hyper- vigilance (psychological distress), decision evasion and paralysis.

Territory, language, ideas, culture, and history may all serve as *objects* with which we wish to establish notions of *political identity*. But which objects are of primary, of secondary or of lesser importance to the citizens of Europe? Which objects are *necessary* and which are *sufficient* for the establishment of a notion of European identity?

In the French debate, the opposition between *objects of identity* is basically seen as a conflict between “modernism” and “voluntarism,” not between social classes or party

alignments. Modernism is seen to be creating a link between identity and nationalism, and “voluntarism” is seen as creating a link between identity and history. Moreover, the construction of the new Europe, according to the French debate, does not simply mean a democratisation of the technocratic Europe which has been the foundation of previous attempts to integrate Europe politically, economically and culturally, but *a radical break away from both* the modernistic and the voluntaristic “paradigms” (Wolton, 1993, p. 67). The cardinal issue revolves around the opposition between democracy and totalitarianism. This issue re-emerged when the Communist menace disappeared around 1990.

Which, then, are the attitudes of the general public towards the European Common Market of yesterday, as it was usually referred to in the 1980s, and the European Union of today and tomorrow ? Should decision making in Europe be confined to the approximately 50.000 Eurocrats, or to the 343 million citizens ? If the Eurocrats, as a caste, are indispensable in the process of European integration, how do we ensure that they are made accountable to democratic institutions and that they take considerate attitudes to the citizens of Europe ? What should the role of national parliaments and the European parliament be in the future ? With the present tendency to transfer power from government(s) to markets, what will the scope, weight, and domain of political power in the political system of Europe be in the future ? Let us first take a look at the *objects of identification*, and see if they provide us with adequate criteria for choice and commitment.

### ***Geographical criteria***

What first comes to our minds when trying to outline what it means to be a European is, perhaps, Europe as a geographical unit. Political systems such the Italian political system, the French political system or the Danish political system all embrace a notion of territory. So important is this that Max Weber made territory a major component of his definition of what a state is.

But how do we establish where the boundaries of Europe are ? Should Greenland be included if we look at the map before it gained autonomy (Hjemmestyre) ? The Faeroe Islands ? Madeira ? The Canary Islands ? Cyprus ? Malta ? Uzbekistan ?

### ***Linguistic criteria***

In France it is sometimes maintained that (Wolton, 1993, p. 84), “Le fractionnement linguistique est... constitutif de l’identité européenne.” At the same time, the practical problems of the language barriers are realised (ibid.) : “Le principal problème de l’Europe est l’absence de langue commune avec d’insolubles problèmes de communication, notamment à Bruxelles et au Parlement. D’ailleurs sur 13.000 fonctionnaires à la Commission, il y a 1.700 traducteurs soit 2 traducteurs pour 13 fonctionnaires”.

Many people see this lack of linguistic unity as an indication of how difficult it is to unify Europe :

*L'Europe est aussi un carrefour de langues, puisque quarante-trois langues y sont parlées, à des degrés divers. (Wolton, 1993, p. 17)*

What about English ? Many people in most European countries, however defined, speak English. But so do many people in America and Australia, and as a native language of a European state, English is not spoken by as many people as is, for example, German. Moreover, French, Italian and Spanish are strong competitors within the European context. So language cannot easily be used as a common denominator for establishing a unified sense of European identity.

Still, as Edgar Morin points out, English may very well be used as a *working language* without the creation of an Anglo-Saxon cultural hegemony (1990, pp. 232-33) :

*L'Europe ne court aucun risque culturel à ce que l'anglais y devienne langue principale de communication. N'a-t-il pas constitué la langue de communication entre les diverses cultures et ethnies indiennes sans les corrompre, sans dévaluer les langues régionales, sans surimposer l'identité anglaise sur l'identité indienne ? L'utilisation de l'anglais, accompagnée de la connaissance de deux autres langues européennes, aurait en outre l'avantage de faciliter les communications avec le reste de la planète.<sup>30</sup>*

### **Cultural-Ideational criteria**

One can, of course, assume life styles, traditions and behavioural patterns within some European territory, more or less arbitrarily defined, constitute a "European culture." But even within nation states it is dubious to speak of specific political cultures, since other criteria such as class, urban versus rural, north versus south, and similar criteria tend to give more explanatory power to the notion of "political culture." The political culture of the British working class is definitely different from that of the middle class and the gentry, the political outlook of farmers in rural Holland definitely differs from that of city dwellers in The Hague, Amsterdam and Rotterdam, and northern Italian conceptions of politics are very different from those held by the population of Sicily and Naples. And as the two World Wars in this century have shown, Marx was definitely wrong in believing that the working classes of the world had so much in common that they would prefer class to nation as a chief object of identification.

---

<sup>30</sup> Others like Wolton (1993, p. 162) are more cautious and less optimistic : "L'identité postnationale est le moyen de construire cette identité, reposant sur l'adhésion à des cultures politiques démocratiques, communicationnelles, qui attribuent une influence certaine à l'échange et font notamment l'impasse sur le problème de la langue. Comment communiquer des expériences sans langage commun ?"

### **Analytical criteria**

If a political perspective reflects aspects of political cultures, and if identity is a necessary element of a political perspective, then it follows that we must give further consideration to political culture. At a somewhat high level of analytical abstraction, Wolton argues that one can intuitively speak of culture in three senses. *In the first place*, as an opposition to nature, that is, as the results of human labour. *In the second place*, culture can be seen as that which unifies a people or ethnic groups and which allows us to distinguish cultures from each other. *In the third place*, finally, culture can be seen as “high culture,” as implied when we speak of being cultivated, familiar with literary traditions and art, etc. In Europe, all three notions have always co-existed at the same time. (Wolton, 1993, p. 312). Yet there were dynamisms and developments as Laqueur has pointed out (1970, p. 344) :

*With all its vitality, post-war European culture faced grave problems. The stultifying effects of mass culture, the standardisation of the mass media, the commercial production of cultural goods, constituted an insidious danger which in this form had never existed before. At the other extreme there were the futilities of an esoteric, precious, often sterile ‘high culture’, divorced from real life and from people, a dead-end rather than a narrow pass on the road to new cultural peaks. Culture had become less spontaneous and far more costly...*

Trying to relate these common sense notions to the debate on European political culture, Wolton says that empirically there are three national approaches with ingredients borrowed from these notions :

- ❖ *Le premier sens, “français” insiste sur l’idée d’œuvre, de création. Il suppose une identification de ce qui est considéré comme culturel, en terme de patrimoine et de création, de connaissance et de savoir.*
- ❖ *Le deuxième sens, “allemand”, est proche de l’idée de civilisation. C’est l’ensemble des œuvres et des valeurs, des représentations et des symboles, du patrimoine et de la mémoire tels qu’ils sont partagés par une communauté, à un moment de son histoire.*
- ❖ *Le troisième sens, “anglo-saxon”, est plus anthropologique au sens où il insiste sur les modes de vie, les pratique quotidiennes, l’histoire au jour de jour, les styles et les savoirs quotidiens, les images et les mythes.* (Wolton, 1993, p. 312)

### **Historical criteria**

To the extent that we wish to speak of a common European historical destiny, we would find that there are more competition, rivalry, strife, war and other forms of non-co-operative behaviour than forms of co-operative behaviour. In an attempt to

summarise the results of a historical survey of Europe's origins, Morin (1990, pp. 22-23) says that :

*L'Europe se dissout dès qu'on veut la penser de façon claire et distincte, elle se morcelle dès qu'on veut reconnaître son unité. Lorsque nous voulons lui trouver une origine fondatrice ou une originalité intransmissible, nous découvrons qu'il n'y a rien lui soit propre aux origines, et rien dont elle ait aujourd'hui l'exclusivité.*

In this sense, it seems inappropriate to speak of the long-term historical origins of a European identity, which – according to both *Webster, Le Petit Robert* and the psychoanalytical definition – would have to denote a form of sameness.

In the period before World War II, the term *Europeanisation* tended to express the effects on Australian, Asiatic, American and African cultures and civilisations of the peculiar civilisation that grew up in modern Europe – including what we today call Eastern and Central Europe – as a consequence of the Renaissance, the Calvinist and Lutheran Reformation and, later on, the industrial revolution.

As George Young wrote in the 1934 edition of *The International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* (1937, p. 623) :

*Europeanisation may be expressed politically by imposing the idea of democracy, in the sense of parliamentary and party government, or of sovereignty, in the sense of suppression or subordination of all government organs to the sovereign state, or of nationality, by creating a semi-religious solidarity in support of that sovereignty. It may be expressed economically by imposing ideas of individualistic capitalism, competition and control on community enjoying more elaborate and equitable, but less productive and progressive, collectivistic or communal civilisations ; or industrially by substituting the factory and the foundry for the hand loom and home craft.*

### **Subjective versus objective criteria**

Should we satisfy ourselves with just noting that “European” is what one is, if one says so ? If we reason along this line, National Socialists and Arab Socialists would be “socialists,” National Democrats (that is, Neo-Nazis of the 1960s) and representatives of the former “People's Democracies” would be Democrats. If political science equals the creation of political clarity rather than confusion, a purely subjective approach seems inappropriate.

For reasons of expediency, I would suggest that we opt for something like a *minimalist objective* approach. For a person to be “European” she or he would at least have to :

- be a citizen of a state, located by stipulation, to be geographically within a geographical entity called Europe ;

- speak a language which is officially accepted as one of the official languages of that state ;
- share a historical destiny with other people, within that state, speaking the aforementioned language ;
- share a cultural pattern with other such people, where the cultural pattern is seen as consisting of similar cognitive, evaluative and emotional elements.

*Citizenship* is a legal criterion. An Australian citizen would not qualify even if he had lived for a long time in a European state, neither would aspiring immigrants or refugees. *Language* is somewhat weaker as a criterion variable, as I have already mentioned. Shared *history* is also a weak criterion : What about people living in territories that historically have been contested such as South Tyrol, Alsace-Lorraine, Slesvig-Holstein, parts of the former Habsburg empire, or the former USSR ? What about the Basque separatists and Catalonian nationalists, not to forget the Balkan states ?

With respect to a notion of European identity, as opposed to the national identities of Europe's constituent states, peripheral territories will constitute problems since Europe is a peninsula, rather than a continent. Hence we have had problematic notions such as the old "cordon sanitaire" which was invented between the two World Wars to define a buffer zone between the Soviet "dictatorship of the proletariat" and the rest of Europe, and the "Partnership for Peace" within the new world security order.

Shared *culture* also seems insufficient when we wish to create a distinction between European and non-European identities and, besides, cultural criteria seem to overlap with the other criteria, as I have already mentioned. Since culture can be based on any of the three previously mentioned elements of a political perspective (identification, demands, and expectation), we run the risk of exposing ourselves to definitional circularity if we use that as an exclusive criterion.

### **Three kinds of motives**

Some people tend to perceive themselves ("to identify") on the basis of what they think they *are* and *have been*, and draw their political conclusions on this basis : "I am a Danish farmer or Danish farmer's son, so I must vote for the agrarian party." They are characterised by their "*because-of*" motives. Other people tend to conceive of themselves in terms of *what they want* : "In order to promote a free society I will vote for the liberal party." These people are characterised by their "*in-order-to*" motives. Still others perceive themselves on the basis of what they expect : "Activism is required if I wish to gain what I want or preserve what must be preserved ; in order to live a good life." "Fatalism or free-riding will be better for me than activism." This third group can be characterised by their "*optional-choice*" motives.

*The first requirement* for a political identification to occur is the recognition of a “self” distinct from others, i.e. “them”. This is “identification” proper. What is distinctive about being European today, if we compare it with being, say, Australian, Canadian, or Mexican? What are the significant characteristics of being European today in comparison to being, say, European before and immediately after the Second World War? The accumulated efforts of Schumann, Adenauer, de Gaulle, Monet, and Delors have all made a difference, but will it continue?

*In the second place*, there must be a recognition that this “self,” this “identification” is in opposition to “them.” This is regrettable for those who advocate world federalism and continued responsibility toward the Third World. In order for an identity to thrive there must be a *challenge*, a recognised *competitive edge* or *conflicts of interests*. The political self-recognition and the recognition of opposition between the “self” and “others” tend to reinforce each other, as in Marxist theory which claims that the class in itself (Klasse an sich) becomes more distinct as it fights for its interests against other classes, so as to emerge as a class for itself (Klasse für sich). As the social psychologists Hans Gerth and C. Wright Mills say in *Character and Social Structure* (1979, p. 288), “It is in controversies that symbol systems are tightened up”.

Although we may recognise a competitive edge and a conflict of interest with “non-Europeans” with respect to, say, economic issues, Europe is still integrated in a wider global community through GATT, the United Nations and NATO, etc. So despite attempts by the European Union to create a separate identity for Europeans, not unlike the Marxist notion of a “Klasse für sich,” there are other centripetal and centrifugal forces at work to create wider as well as more narrow political identities.

*The third step* in the establishment of a separate political identity involves a *cognitive simplification of the world*, where most events are interpreted in dual categories such as “European” versus “non-European.” The cognitive simplification process has two explanations, each of which is equally valid. Man faces great and complex problems but has limited capabilities to process information. In order to focus attention and regain perceptual control, aspects have to be disregarded, otherwise chaos follows. Politically this is also necessary, because the audience of the politically active must be influenced by simplified images that reach down to everyone.

When it comes to speaking about the identification of Europeans, such a simplified “black-and-white” perspective is probably (and hopefully) not an enduring characteristic of the electorates of Europe. Black-and-white thinking and stereotyping tendencies seem to have more in common with the kind of totalitarianism propagated within the ranks of the German *Republikaner*, the French *Front National*, *Vlaamse Blok* in Belgium and a few more marginal groups – perhaps inadequately described as “totalitarian” – such as the Danish *Fremskridtspartiet* and the Ulster nationalists. Not even the neo-fascist Italian *MSI* (now calling itself “the National Alliance”) and its sub-organisations can be accused of such xenophobia and single-mindedness as that which goes into simple cognitive dualisms.

Lowell Dittmer describes the process of identification when he says (1977, p. 573) that, “The process of political identification involves generalisation from objective perception to subjective wish-fulfilment...”.

However, Wolton (1993, p. 82) says that it is possible and even desirable to accept the old distinction of out-groups *versus* in-groups, but that it must be given a new content :

*L'Europe se trouve donc aujourd'hui confrontée au même enjeu : retrouver une figure contre-identitaire, ou inventer un nouveau mode de structuration identitaire.*

This new figure of contra-identification, according to the French intellectuals, should be anti-democratic political tendencies and sentiments.

*The fourth* and final requirement concerns expected and desired *goals*. Such goals can be elaborated as utopian systems or models, like the federalist and confederalist conceptions of a new European political, economic or security order, or as partial working solutions to pragmatically felt needs, such as those postulated by neo-functionalists.

There are at least six, more or less overlapping, contradictory and/or supportive models one can discern in the current debate on the integration of Europe and the development of a European political identity :

- ❖ The great Europe model – a confederal model, with an emphasis on *external* relations ;
- ❖ The united nations of Europe – a federal model, with an emphasis on *internal* relations ;
- ❖ The community model – a model for *inventories* of what has already been achieved as a result of so called neo-functionalist initiatives ;
- ❖ The Europe of the nations (de Gaulle) – a model which focuses on *definitions* of what should be included and excluded, and which would not necessarily include all European states in their geographical extensions ;
- ❖ The minimal Europe – a *liberal model* in which market forces are given priority, but in which political and monetary issues are played down ;
- ❖ The Europe of “espace publique” – a *democratic model* for Europe to be shaped, which ignores the traditional cultural cleavages and focuses on the democratic *versus* totalitarian modes of identity.

Dominique Wolton says that these models have the quality of “ideal types” about them but that (p. 218) :

*En fait, l'Europe n'est pour le moment, et sans doute pour longtemps encore, ni une Europe des régions, ni une Europe des nations, mais une mosaïque de*



*modèles et de responsabilités gouvernementales : supranationales, nationales, régionales, locales, municipales, où la souveraineté est partagée entre les différents niveaux de gouvernement.*

This is a reasonably pragmatic conclusion since it allows for the theoretical debate about European political identity to continue, and this debate is in itself a major source of political identification.

## **Conclusion and some practical proposals**

It makes a difference whether we speak about *plural identities* or a *plurality of choices* when we look at the fears and hopes for a new Europe to be built. Plural identities are not necessarily “good” from the point of view of psychology, since they may cause distress, paralysis and confusion. The French intellectuals seem to believe that when using different criteria as identity objects, one should not focus exclusively on geographical units, since the national state is unlikely to be perishing anyway. When they advocate multiple perspectives they say that *political* criteria must be used, and that way the debate is being transformed into a debate about the future of European democracy, a debate with firm roots in European federalism.

Since the establishment of the European Coal and Steel Community and the other European Union “pillars” there has been a change in the extent to which people regard themselves as European. This can be seen in the Eurobarometer surveys which show that the sense of being European is greater among citizens of Member States that have been members of the EEC from the beginning than among the “newcomers”. But even if this is so, it may be misleading, because such “identification” may be based on parochial expectations of economic and other gains for the national unit to which one belongs, as for example in the case of Belgium, where European integration is demanded, but on the basis that the European politicians will further Belgian interests in the first place, rather than European common interests.

What, then, can be done to further the idea of a common European identity tomorrow if the pace up till now has been slow and uncertain ? The answer to this question will greatly affect the future of the European Union. Since it is impossible to mention all possible projects that may contribute to a greater inner strength of the European project, I will confine my attention to some rather basic ideas which are within the scope of practical realisation.

It is now more than half a century since the end of the Second World War, and we have now seen the downfall of totalitarian Communism. But we still have traces of totalitarianism among us everywhere in the form of racism, bureaucratic arrogance, and even leftover sentiments of Communism, Fascism and even National Socialism in Europe. We have concerns about a sustainable environmental development and corruption among politicians, irresponsible bankers, and remote representatives in the Europe to which we belong. These are just a few issues to which many young people

pay attention but it is far from all who actually pay attention. If we can support those young people who feel concerned, and give them reasons to be grateful for what the European Union does to combat totalitarianism, racism and economic fraud, we may win over the next generation for the European project and make them feel more European than the older generations have felt. As the President of the European Union, Jacques Santer pointed out in his speech at a previous *carrefour* arranged by the *Cellule de Prospective* at the University of Lund in 1995, the great change in attitudes towards Europe will come with the next generations, those who know foreign languages and those who have lived abroad.

This leads me to the practical conclusion that all of us who wish to strengthen European identity should promote travelling in all its forms all over Europe, especially by subsidising continued *Inter-rail* travelling among the young during the summer holidays and whenever else it is possible. Since the birth of the European Union, through the implementation of the *Single European Act* in the early 1990s, many airlines have shown their good-will and launched cheap travel programmes for both adults and young people. But more can be done in this area. For example, arrangements can be made with the youth hostel organisations in Europe so that travelling and accommodation will not be confined to only those who are well off, have employment, and have received grants from various study programmes. Efforts can be made to maintain and enlarge already existing exchange programmes of students and teachers that are already effective, and an effort can be made to establish summer camps, where young people from all over Europe can come together for three to four weeks to learn more and discuss problems of concern to them, including their immediate concerns about youth unemployment. If possible, they could even work directly in projects of common concern to us all, such as the rebuilding of roads and villages in the former Yugoslavia, when it is safe to do so again.

The positive role of such initiatives for the strengthening of a European identity will depend upon the role played by the European Union. This role need not be too directly linked with our European institutions as they are today, and the most important thing is not to pour a lot of money into such projects, but let the beneficiaries know where the support comes from.

I envisage that the European Union could play the role of the *empowering agent* to institutions which already exist. We could awaken an interest in a *European* youth hostel movement, in a *European* Interrail Travel System, and in *European* Summer Camps for young people. Such projects could send a positive signal to all European adolescents, employed or unemployed, students, trainees and working class youngsters, a signal which says: "If you wish to know more about life in other European countries and if you wish to participate in furthering the goals of the new Europe, we are there to support you." Through such measures we can not only strengthen and build a future European identity, we can also make sure that the achievements of the past are safeguarded.

## Reference literature

- Bryder, Tom (1989). 'Political Culture, Language and Change'. Paper presented at the *ECPR*, Paris.
- Christiansen, Bjørn (1959). *Attitudes Toward Foreign Affairs as a Function of Personality*. Oslo : Oslo University Press.
- Deutsch, Karl W. (1953). *Nationalism and Social Communication. An Inquiry Into the Foundations of Nationality*. London : Chapman & Hall.
- Dittmer, Lowell (1977). 'Political Culture and Political Symbolism : Toward a Theoretical Synthesis'. *World Politics* Vol. XXIX, July 1977, No. 4, pp. 552 - 583.
- Eckstein, Harry (1988). 'A Culturalist Theory of Political Change', in *American Political Science Review*, 82, 3, (1988), pp. 789 - 804.
- Guéhenno, Jean-Marie (1993). *La Fin de la Démocratie*. Paris : Flammarion.
- Inglehart, Ronald (1990). *Culture Shift in Advanced Industrial Society*. Princeton : Princeton University Press.
- Keohane, Robert O & Stanley Hoffmann (Eds.) (1991). *The New European Community. Decisionmaking and Institutional Change*. Boulder : Westview Press.
- Laqueur, Walter (1970). *Europe Since Hitler*. Harmondsworth : Pelican Books.
- Lasswell, H. D. (1965). *World Politics and Personal Insecurity*. New York : The Free Press, (orig. 1935).
- Mackenzie, W J M (1978). *Political Identity*. Harmondsworth : Penguin Books.
- Minc, Alain (1993). *Le Nouveau Moyen Age*. Paris : Gallimard.
- Morin, Edgar (1990). *Penser l'Europe*. Paris : Gallimard.
- Nettl, J. P. (1967). *Political Mobilization*. London : Faber and Faber, 1967.
- Rycroft, Charles (1972). *A Critical Dictionary of Psychoanalysis*. Harmondsworth : Penguin Books.
- Simon, H. A. (1985). 'Human Nature in Politics : The Dialogue of Psychology with Political Science'. *American Political Science Review*, 79, (1985), pp. 293 - 304.
- Weiler, J. H. H. (1983). 'The Genscher-Colombo Draft European Act : The Politics of Indecision' *Journal of European Integration*, 6, (1983), pp. 129-154.
- Wildawsky, Aaron (1987). 'Choosing Preferences by Constructing Institutions : A Cultural Theory of Preferences'. *American Political Science Review*, 81, (1987), 1, pp. 3-21.
- Wolton, Dominique (1993). *La Dernière Utopie. Naissance de l'Europe démocratique*. Paris : Flammarion.
- Young, George (1937). 'Europeanization.' In *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, Vol. 5. New York : The Macmillan Company. pp. 623-635.



# What is it ? Why do we need it ? Where do we find it ?

Edy Korthals Altes

---

Identity has to do with the individuality of a person or - in this case - of the European Union. What are the specific characteristics ? In what ways does the European Union discern itself from other international or national agents ? Identity in the sense of 'being yourself' is closely connected with the relation to others, 'seeing the other'. In this sense, Cardinal Lustiger could state that ; 'solidarity with those who die for lack of bread is an essential condition for Europe to stay alive'.<sup>31</sup>

The classic response to the question of European identity is : unity in diversity. Ethnic background, culture, religion and history are certainly important factors for the European identity.

Decisive at this stage of the European integration process is however the question : what do we want to do together ? The answer depends on the perception of the need for a common response to the challenges of today's world. This is not an academic question but a matter of survival !

Identity is subject to change. It is not something 'static', given for all time. It is something that grows or withers away. Just as with individuals there is a process of development ( circumstances, events, inner growth).

The present identity of the European Union is not robust but rather confusing. It resembles a Picasso portrait, conflicting lines, different levels not the unity of a human face. Or if we want to put it in diplomatic language : "*the European Union is going through an identity crisis*". It is still uncertain about its place in the surrounding world.

## **Internal and external aspects of European identity**

Structure (decision making process : efficient /democratic/ transparent) ; Policies : (agricultural, regional, social ; just/unjust, greater inequality, exclusion) ; Economy : what are its objectives ? To serve man and society, to enable all people to live a decent existence. Or is it just the other way round : man and society sewing economics ? Accepting the tyranny of the iron laws of economics as an absolute, a given reality, something that cannot be changed. Economy as a goal in itself growth, maximisation of profits and power, etc.). Environment. Something to respect / to manage with great care and responsibility, or something to exploit whenever we feel like it.

---

<sup>31</sup> Jean-Marie Lustiger, *Nous avons rendez-vous avec l'Europe*, 1991, Paris, Mame.

If we consider the economic aspects, the European Union looks quite impressive : large internal market, major trading partner on a world scale, strong industrial base, great financial power, among highest GNP per capita, good infrastructure, seat of multinationals, impressive number of cars and TVs, etc.

A realistic vision is however obscured because of the highly unreliable way of assessing what is really going on (inadequate measuring instruments, poor definition of GNP). Counting ourselves rich at the expense of well being. The European Union is one of the greatest polluters in the world, among the greatest consumers of energy and raw materials. About 20 million unemployed, many poor. An increasing commercialisation of society, progressive deterioration of social and medical care, a degradation of education and universities (result-oriented, relevant for economy but at the detriment of education).

The opinion Europeans have of their own identity does not necessarily correspond with the perception of non-Europeans. While we may be indulging in the 'civilising role' of Europe in a largely 'underdeveloped world', other nations, e.g. in the south of the Sahel or in the Pacific, may be inclined to curse the European Union (or some of its member states) for its selfishness (Common Agricultural Policy) or arrogance (nuclear tests).

For the perception of our identity, deeds (actions/policies) are more relevant than words (declarations). African cattle-growers and local food producers suffer more from the negative effects of dumping of the European Union's agricultural surpluses than they benefit from fine words about the vocation of the European Union in this world. The same applies to import restrictions, policies on debts etc.

And what about the striking contrast between the commitments made in Rio and Copenhagen and the slowness of action of the European Union ? It should be clear by now that a drastic revision of extravagant production - and consumption - levels in the highly industrialised nations is a prerequisite for a sustainable world society. There will be no hope for an effective control of the environmental crisis without far-reaching adjustments in the modern world. The position of the European Union is here of particular relevance.

A common foreign and security policy : Picasso's portraits provide a good illustration of the present chaotic state of affairs. The unity of a well-integrated external policy is still a long way off. Several Commissioners are responsible for different aspects. Efficient policy-making is not possible with the present set-up under which the hands of External Affairs are strictly tied by the Council members ! A common security policy is not just around the corner ! And what will a common defence policy ultimately look like ? Will the European Union adopt an offensive stance with a nuclear component and a large military establishment or will it be content with a police function preferably in the context of the UN ? In the latter case, much more emphasis than to be found in the preparatory notes for the Intergovernmental Conference should be given to conflict prevention also in the economic sphere. This would also lead to a strict limitation of the production of and trade in arms and ensure careful scrutiny of R&D activities in the military industry.

## In search of the ‘heart and soul’ of Europe

Reflecting on the structure of the European Union, its capabilities and policies, is certainly very important as a preparation for practical propositions on how to express the European identity. But at this critical moment of a deep existential crisis both in our nations and in the world, it seems to me that serious attention should also be paid to the deepest motivation of our acting. In other words, we should tackle the fundamental spiritual crisis, so manifest in modern society. Jacques Delors’ pertinent question as to the ‘heart and soul’ of Europe has to be answered.

Indeed, what are we doing with this huge Brussels machinery wielding so much power ? What are we heading for ? More power and material well being, especially for the stronger elements ? Or do we have a vision of a sustainable and just society ? A society in which all people, whatever background (religious/cultural/national), have a right and the possibility to lead a decent life ? A society in which people have respect for life in all its forms. A European Union with a balanced relation between the individual and the community, sustained by citizens who realise that each individual has a unique value that may never be reduced to an object for exploitation. Man, freed from the yoke of a one-sided fixation on economics, rediscovering that he is infinitely more than the homo economicus to which he is now being reduced by the apostles of greed in a materialistic culture.

Man, part of a greater whole, knowing that he does not live by bread alone ! Man, with a destiny, a meaning of life, sharing life and goods in a responsible way with human beings in a global world.

Of crucial importance for identity is the spirit providing the deepest motivation for action. One rightly stresses the importance of Christianity for Europe. But what is this spirit now ? If we look at today’s reality, it will be difficult to maintain that we are living in a Christian Europe. Secularisation, materialism, hedonism and individualism are dominating modern culture. For many people, the sense for the transcendent has evaporated. (*Many people have lost the sense for the transcendent ?*) The ‘horizontal’ approach with its emphasis on a so-called autonomous “I “ has taken its place.

This has far-reaching consequences for our relations with mankind (ourselves, *fellow-beings*, the other and future generations) towards things and towards nature.

In all three fields, man has lost his orientation, his bearings. Vaclav Havel has made some relevant observations on this loss of the sense of the Transcendent (*loss of spirituality ?*) and the many problems of today as well as the incapacity of politicians to solve these (*to come up with solutions*).

Spiritually, the European Union is in a rather poor (*desolate*) state. Impressive technological and economic achievements abound, but a very meagre spiritual basis. Crisis of meaning is widespread, psychological problems, crime, drug abuse, *lack of respect* for life with an annual death toll of 50,000 in road accidents, although (*this number could be drastically reduced through the implementation of certain measures. Television programmes of a deplorable quality, etc.*

## We need a european identity

Only an effectively structured European Union (internally and externally) will be a relevant factor on the international scene, where the *final* real decisions affecting directly the life of all Europeans will be taken.

❖ *No European State is any longer in a position to meet the challenges of the modern world (ecological crisis, unemployment, poverty, rise of world population, armed conflicts, the spectacular increase in the destructive power of modern arms).*

❖ *The dynamics of power relationships (nations as well as multinational companies). Affected are therefore not only countries like the USA, Japan, Russia, China, East-Russia, etc. but also the major international players in finance and business.*

❖ *The serious threat to a 'social market economy' caused by overwhelming global forces call for a common ? Answer.<sup>32</sup>*

We cannot go on with our present rate of production / consumption/ destruction of the environment. If we want a sustainable and just society, we must make progress in the direction of 'enough is enough'. We need to accept an upper limit and pay much more attention to the unsustainability of the present economy.

We know that our planet cannot cope with a similar rate of economic expansion on the part of all other nations.

We know that 4/5 of *mankind* is in urgent need of development (aid ? ?) in order to enjoy a decent standard of living and to escape from hunger and starvation. *We must therefore* strive for a reduction of our impact on the environment if we are serious about a basic sense of humanity. *This cannot be achieved by* technological means, fiscal and other measures alone. A fundamental change in mentality, in basic orientation, is needed.

The obvious response to the global challenge should be a worldwide decision to set course towards a sustainable future. Heading off a collective disaster by managing the planet's scarce resources and environment in a responsible way. This will however take time - too much time. But why shouldn't the European Union - with its considerable economic leverage - take the initiative with a step-by-step approach, making it clear to the world that the one-sided emphasis of 'unlimited material growth' at the expense of real well-being is a fatal error ? Recognising that other areas may be in need for further economic development but that we have reached the stage of 'enough is enough'. That we are no longer victims of the false ideology that man has endless unlimited ? material needs which have to be satisfied. After all, it is from Europe that the industrial revolution and the expansion of our economic system started. A convincing European Union signal, illustrating a decisive turn in our economic approach might trigger off similar reactions in the US and Japan.

Politically speaking, this deliberate change of course will not be easy. It could be greatly furthered if the European Commission entered into a creative relationship with



those egos that promote a similar course of action. There may be a greater concern among many people about the loss of 'quality of life' than many politicians think.

One of the challenges is, as we have seen before, the rediscovery of the great spiritual resources that have been at the origin of the European civilisation. There will be no renewal of the European society without a fundamental reappraisal of man's place in the Universe. The relation with the Ultimate. As we live in a multireligious Europe, this is a shared responsibility not only for Christianity but also for other religions.

In the present situation of a morally disoriented Europe, a simple appeal for 'norms and values' will not be enough. Much more is needed. Values without deep spiritual roots will not stand up in the present harsh reality.

For example : the threat to the social model. It would be an illusion to think that it will be possible to maintain the 'social market' - now under great pressure - without a strong spiritual basis.

Europe urgently needs a radical change from its one-sided materialistic - horizontal approach to an attitude towards life which opens up towards transcendence. Christians throughout the ages have discovered in the cross of Jesus Christ the ultimate symbol - and reality - for this meeting of the horizontal and vertical lines. Jews and Muslims have other ways of expressing the reality of the transcendental experience.

### ***Where to find it ?***

The great temptation is to look for 'identity' in the structure of the European Union, its institutions, regulations, acts and policies. And may be even among its declarations. Ultimately, the European Union identity depends on the political will of member states and the way the European Union uses its competencies. But political action of states is highly dependent on public support. Whether there will be sufficient understanding for necessary 'painful policies' depends on the motivation of citizens. It is thus a question of the spirit. What moves (activates ?) people nowadays ? The spiritual desert in which many people live is well illustrated by the statement of a Dutch cabinet minister (environment) that 'the car cannot be touched because it is an essential element of the identity of a person' ! I doubt whether the European Union could ever develop its identity on the basis of this narrow materialistic concept of human nature.

The European Union identity will not be found in wonderful words about our common history and common sources of inspiration. Not in digging up long forgotten treasures of the past but in acting together. On the basis of adequate policies, meeting the present challenges.

Just three examples of missed opportunities - all in areas on our doorstep :

1. The end of the Cold War and breakdown of the communist system provided a unique occasion for a visionary approach of the new reality : a large-scale well-integrated economic co-operation programme addressing the actual needs.

2. The handling of the crisis in ex-Yugoslavia.
3. The creation of an all-European security system in the spirit of the Paris Charter.

*On these historic occasions, action would have given a greater impulse to the development of a European Union identity than a thousand seminars and numerous solemn declarations of politicians.*

Unless the European Union develops an adequate structure enabling it to deal effectively with the challenges of the modern world, we will not discover our common identity.

It is up to the member states to take a hard look at reality and decide to break the impasse of the present “Impossible Status Quo” !<sup>33</sup>

### ***Some practical and some more fundamental suggestions***

- ❖ Continue and expand the excellent initiative on the Carrefours d’Europe. If necessary even under more modest circumstances !
- ❖ Bring spiritual and cultural leaders together with politicians, managers, journalists etc. Strive for an equilibrium between bureaucrats of institutions and ‘independent’ Europeans.
- ❖ Consider the possibility of a substantial increase of inter-European exchange programmes for students and scholars.
- ❖ Bring forcefully to the attention of Council members and public opinion that the European Union has now really arrived at a crucial point which will be decisive for its future : whether it will develop an identity or become a non-entity. making clear that the latter option will inevitably also lead the proud member states on the same road towards oblivion.
- ❖ Deepening of the European Union should have an absolute priority over enlargement. The danger of further diluting the identity is great.
- ❖ Translating the recognition that the spiritual factor is crucial for the European identity in an active support of all those religious and cultural forces that can contribute to the spiritual revival in Europe.

*A new spirituality will liberate us from the dominance of economics, breaking the spell of the golden calf ! This would pave the way for a humane and just society, offering the possibility to lead a full human life in which values such as love, beauty, truth and goodness together with human rights, solidarity and justice are guaranteed for us and coming generations !*

---

<sup>33</sup> Club de Florence, Europe: L’impossible Status Quo, 1996, Editions Stock.

# European identity and political experience

Mario Soares

---

Let me make two points clear to start with. Firstly, Europe is not just the European Union ; secondly, I have no doubt that a European identity does exist.

When my country embarked on the process of joining the European Community it did so for very specific reasons, namely to consolidate our newfound freedoms. Portugal, like Spain, had just emerged from nearly half a century of dictatorship, and it was essential to consolidate our democracy to prevent any resurgence of military power. We could only counter this threat by turning to Europe.

This is not to say that we did not consider ourselves to be a European country before. Let me remind you that the Portuguese were the first Europeans to export the culture of our continent to the Indies, Japan and America. We were also the first to bring back to Europe the riches of the civilisations and cultures we discovered there, which were still completely unknown here. We have always regarded ourselves as Europeans, even if our country is on the periphery of the continent and faces the Atlantic and Africa.

I have mentioned the importance of sporting European colours to consolidate democratic institutions that were still in their infancy. But there was another reason for Portuguese membership : we were very late in embarking on decolonisation. Having been the first colonial empire in the world, Portugal was also the last. But once our colonial empire had finally disappeared, fifteen years later than those of our neighbours and in difficult circumstances, and we found ourselves face to face with new sovereign states such as Cape Verde, Guinea, Angola and Mozambique, we felt that integration in the European Community was the natural counterweight to this change.

We joined the European Community at the same time as Spain, in June 1985. At that point, it was not yet the European Union. Since then, we have seen the collapse of the Communist world and many profound changes. The European Community had two objectives : the most obvious, founded on Franco-German friendship, was to preserve peace on the continent. The second was to keep up with the United States and the Soviet bloc. With the end of bi-polarism, the Community found itself plunged into a completely new situation.

This was when Europe rediscovered its own values and escaped from the geographical and historical confines imposed by the Cold War. We realised that Europe was much larger and started to ask ourselves what we should do with the “rest” of the continent. We realised that we had a duty to reintegrate this “other Europe” into our Community –now a Union. But of course it is no easy matter : what will become of a Europe that was difficult enough to run with just 10 or 12 or 15 members when it expands to include 21 or 22 members in a few years’ time ? This is

a problem for the European institutions but it also touches on the very future of the concept of the European Union.

Europe cannot just be the European Union within the frontiers as they stand today. Hungary, Poland, Bulgaria, have the right to join our Community: their history and their contribution to the European identity fully entitle them to membership. They have contributed as much to the European ideal as we have. From these countries, I hear the same arguments that Spain and Portugal used for joining the European Community: we have freed ourselves from dictatorship, we have become a democratic country through our own efforts, without Europe's help.

We also had the right to democracy at the end of the Second World War, because Great Britain and France had defeated the dictatorships and Germany counted for nothing in the immediate post-war period. Who allowed the dictatorships to re-emerge in our country, if not "democratic Europe" ?

Though it pains me as a socialist, I have to say that if there was one champion of the rehabilitation of the dictatorships at that time it was the British Foreign Secretary. Driven by fear of Soviet pressure and fear of Communism in Western Europe – in both France and Italy – the democratic states of Europe took the view that it was more sensible and served their own interests better to overlook the fact that there were two dictatorships on their doorsteps. From 1945 to 1974, we continued to live under a dictatorship because of this sort of indulgence, because of the treachery of the democracies. They did everything to perpetuate the dictatorship in our country. It was the easier option: it was either that or risk letting Communism in through Spain or Portugal or somewhere else. This was the main consideration.

Once we had rid ourselves of these dictatorships, our first concern was to assert that we were democracies and that you bore a share of the responsibility for our period of fascist or authoritarian rule. This gave us every right to sit at the same table as you, particularly as our contribution to Europe has been every bit as important as yours in the past.

This is what we said to the European states. It is what our friends in Central Europe are saying to us today and it remains equally valid. They too can claim the right to sit at the Europeans' table. Economic reasons cannot stand in the way of this right. This is why it is our duty to find ways of dealing with the current situation and welcoming these states into the Union.

The question of greater Europe is not confined to Central Europe alone: Europe is also linked to the Mediterranean Sea and the Mediterranean basin. It is linked to what happens in Eastern Europe. Where does Europe end? On the Russian steppes? Is Turkey part of Europe? I was in Turkey quite recently and found that those who want to modernise the country proclaim their Europeanness. And rightly so. They have reasons for doing so. Is the European Union to be a club reserved exclusively for Christian countries – Protestant, Catholic and Orthodox? Are countries with a predominantly Muslim population not allowed to join? Is there some sort of religious bar to membership? I do not think so. But the problem of Turkey is a serious one for Europe.

How are we supposed to deal with an unprecedented situation like this on the institutional level ? On this point, my mind is made up : I agree with Chancellor Kohl that the construction of Europe is a vital matter for the next century, a matter of war and peace. Even if we had no problems of identity, if we fail to move towards a stronger European Union, if we fail to move rapidly along that road, Europe will find itself without a voice and will lose the importance it once had in the world. It is not just a matter of being heard throughout the world, but of having the strength to impose certain models which we believe encapsulate so many of the ideas which this ancient continent has produced over the years. The European model reflects serious humanist concerns based on fundamental human values : values of liberty and reason, solidarity and social justice. They are values without which the human race cannot successfully enter the XXI<sup>st</sup> century.

In other words, Europe's interests are not limited to Europe alone. It is not a matter of simply asserting Europe's position in the world, but of going further and making a contribution to the world as a whole. If we fail to make this contribution, something will be missing, and we will fail to explore the paths that are most rational and most conducive to human happiness.

This is how I see the situation and why I believe in Europe. I may sometimes criticise Europe with other pro-Europeans, but I do so because of my love for Europe. I do so because I am not afraid of the march of European progress, quite the contrary. I do not think there can be a solution which would unite 20 or 30 European countries but leave these essential values as the individual concern of each State. They must be pooled and managed collectively – and this is true of security policy and foreign policy as much as anything else. But it cannot be done without supranational European institutions. It cannot be done unless we move towards a united Europe, towards a measure of European federalism. I know that this word makes some people uneasy. But I have no qualms about using it. Like the founding fathers of Europe, I favour a structure which does not have to be identical to the one that already exists. It should be a new and original design. Others have already said as much in this seminar. It should evolve towards a United States of Europe, along more or less federal lines, perhaps with its own original touches, but basically federal, with a certain common direction. This requires the sacrifice of certain elements of states' traditional sovereignty, the pooling of national sovereignties. Without this, we cannot build Europe.

There may come a moment when we have to say to those Member States that do not want to go all the way that they have no right to stop the others from going further. This path offers the best solution available in the short term.

When I speak of Europe in such glowing terms, it should be clear that I do not mean Europe to be simply Europe of the free market, the single market, economic and monetary union and the single currency. Of course I support this, but only if we build a genuinely political Europe as well. Because if it is to be only an economic and monetary Europe I will withdraw my support. That is not the sort of Europe I am interested in. I am in favour of an economic and monetary Europe if it goes hand in hand with a political Europe and coordinated foreign policy : a Europe which defines its own security collectively, a Europe that is also a social union, a Europe of the people, a Europe with popular participation. I want to talk about the participation of

Europe's regions, which is as important as that of the states. I want to talk about the participation of the cities, the people, the NGOs, the general public.

This pluralism, this diversity, is the key to achieving a multi-faceted Europe capable of fulfilling its role in the world. This role is essential for maintaining equilibrium in the world and creating a new international order, without which disaster beckons. We are concerned about human destiny, about the environment, drug abuse, unemployment, the problems that preoccupy the younger generation. These are very serious problems which also affect the United States and, even more acutely, Japan, to mention just two important countries. But when we look at the countries of Southeast Asia, it is clear that their prosperity is based quite simply on slave labour. I was in China a few months ago, where I had the opportunity to meet various leading Chinese figures. My impression is that China is heading for an explosion that will be completely out of control, an explosion even more dramatic than the one that tore apart the Soviet Union, because things cannot go on as they are. You cannot maintain such a level of capitalist exploitation ; you cannot have a city like Shanghai with a very high level of development and staggering wealth and at the same time have public officials earning a pittance. A street trader in Europe would not accept such a meagre salary. Such inequality can only be sustained by high levels of corruption or crazy distortions which I am convinced will lead to social upheaval.

As I see it, the world is completely deregulated at the moment. We are all well aware of this. The United States cannot run the world on their own, even if they want to. This is why it is important that Europe carries out its allotted task. It is a major challenge for Europe and for us Europeans. We must be ready to respond boldly. Unfortunately, we have not seen any great leaders stand up to defend this sort of point of view loudly and clearly. For electoral reasons, political leaders find themselves conditioned, tied by the rules of normal democracy, the rules of parliamentary democracy. They want to please and respond to the immediate present, with the result that they cannot rise to the responses they are called on to make. They cannot provide answers to a much more serious problem which touches on the deepest aspirations of the individuals and societies of today. This is why we sometimes find ourselves deadlocked.

We can see that concern is becoming widespread in Europe : there is disenchantment about Europe in the countries which joined the European Union most recently. It is clearest in Sweden, but is not limited to Sweden. The same disappointment is to be found in Germany, France, Spain and Portugal, not to mention Great Britain. What is the cause ? There is a mistaken idea that the European Union is a bureaucracy based in Brussels which concerns itself with the details and tries to regulate the life of the ordinary citizen instead of allowing him a voice and the chance to do something for himself. I believe this to be completely false, but this is how things are perceived. Matters are made worse by the fact that the situation for young people is very difficult : unemployment, delinquency, drugs, social exclusion, AIDS are all problems which particularly affect young people. The solutions proposed tend to have an economic or technocratic slant : they are not the answer to these human problems. This is what young people feel and this is why people are pessimistic and suspicious about Europe.

Europe has to be relaunched. The European identity has been described as a changing concept and this is true. It has to incorporate the great values and aspirations of the

different nations. If we could do that, if we had the courage to do it and to speak the truth when dealing with the big problems, if we were able to resolve these problems by taking steps towards closer European integration, Europe would begin to respond positively to the great challenges of the day.

These great challenges may be stated in very simple terms : either we are able to understand and create a true political, economic, social and cultural union, which, for all its diversity and pluralism, remains Union on a grand scale, or we are unable to do this and we take a step backwards into the outdated nationalism and disorder of the past. For me, this is one of the most worrying prospects, not only for Europe, but for humanity as a whole.





## How to define the European identity today and in the future?

Ingmar Karlsson

---

The European identity is often described in a somewhat high-flown manner as having its foundations in antiquity; free thought, individualism, humanism and democracy had their cradle in Athens and Rome. On the other hand, neither Greek nor Roman civilisations can be described as European. Both were Mediterranean cultures with centres of influence in Asia Minor, Africa and the Middle East. When Alexander the Great set out to conquer the civilised world of his time, Egypt, Persia and India, he had no idea that he was acting on behalf of Europe.

Christianity, with its roots in Judaism, was also a Mediterranean, non-European religion. Byzantium was a Christian power which marked the limit to Roman claims of sovereignty, as did a large part of post-Reformation Europe. The result of the schism between Rome and Byzantium was the development of another culture in Russia and south-eastern Europe. Following the Reformation, a large part of continental Europe was preoccupied for several centuries with religious wars and rivalry between Protestants and Catholics.

More recently, historians have played down our antique heritage. European ideals are traced back to the Renaissance instead and the concept of the individual as the smallest and inviolable element of society. The Enlightenment and the French Revolution contributed to the demand for freedom, equality, fraternity, democracy, self-determination, equal opportunities for all, clearly defined government powers, separation between the powers of church and state, freedom of the press and human rights.

The ideas that are triumphant in Europe today are those of market economy and democracy. By definition, this also includes the USA, Canada, New Zealand and Australia as European powers. However, Europe does not only represent modernity and tolerance but religious persecution, not only democracy but fascist dictatorship as well - Hitler was the first to use the idea of a European house - for the collectivist ideals of Communism, colonialism and racism disguised in scientific terms.

In other words, European identity cannot be defined on grounds of cultural heritage and history, and even less can it be used as the basis for European domestic and foreign policies. The explanation is as simple as it is obvious. Economic and political integration between European nation-states has not yet progressed so far that it is possible to speak of coincidental interests. It is possible that they have diminished somewhat with the collapse of communism and disappearance of a common threat.

Instead, there is a growing need for a national identity and sovereignty in proportion to the increased levelling of European politics and economy. The greater the sense of diversity being under threat and that standardisation is rising, the greater the antipathy

to projects that promote integration. The European Community is already a reality as far as production and consumption is concerned, but there is popular opposition to a culturally standardised community. The more blurred and controversial the future of a common Europe appears to the common man, the more the nations will mobilise themselves against Europe.

In the interests of not becoming counterproductive, a balance must be struck between enthusiasm for the European project and awareness that European Union legitimacy will be in short supply in the foreseeable future. This view need not paralyse efforts towards integration, however. The phrase “an ever closer union between the peoples of Europe” could instead be useful in its general vagueness.

There may also be some validity for European integration in Edmund Burke’s wise words that political order cannot be created at a drawing board but has to emerge gradually. This, in turn, means that politicians and bureaucrats must concentrate on immediately essential and clear issues and on measures the consequences of which can be judged by citizens themselves.

Every new European competence must therefore be explained in concrete terms in order to achieve acceptance. Consequently, the issues should be carefully examined that require a European solution and which withstand centralised interference, particularly because an incorrect decision on, say, the agricultural policy, can have far-reaching consequences and undermine the credibility of Union projects.

A stable foundation of legitimacy for the European Union will only be achieved when Europeans perceive a European political identity. This does not imply that they would no longer feel themselves to be Swedes, Finns, Frenchmen or Portuguese, but that the sense of a European common destiny was added to these identities. Even after four decades of European integration, this development is still in its infancy.

Nation-states evolved after a long period, often filled with conflict. They are ideological constructions and a national identity is ultimately a political standpoint. A prerequisite for a strong national identity is that citizens have a sense of loyalty to the state because it redistributes social resources and provides education, infrastructure, a legal system etc.

The same prerequisites hold true for the creators of Europe as well. As in the process that led to the creation of European nation-states, the European Union will also be an elite project for the foreseeable future and the European identity an elite phenomenon. To be sure, the technocrats and bureaucrats in Brussels are a new European elite but are they representatives of European culture or merely an international “civil service” who, with the passing of time, increasingly alienate themselves from the people whose interests it is meant to serve? Is there not a danger that institutional loyalty will become stronger than “European awareness” which may spread among the elite of member nations?

The problem becomes more aggravated when these people arouse negative stereotype reactions among citizens. Eurocrats are not regarded as the first among Europeans, but as overpaid bureaucrats interfering in matters that do not concern them.

The creation of national symbols and myths and the rewriting of history were also part of the process by which European nations were formed. First came the state, followed by the formation of a national community within the territorial framework by means of gradual integration and cultural standardisation.

The architects of nations emerging in the XIX<sup>th</sup> century used such means as national conscription, compulsory education and the supra-regional spread of the growing mass media to create contact between the centre and periphery and seemingly natural boundaries on the basis of geography, language, ethnicity or religion. Above all, the arrival of national educational systems and mass media contributed to the sense of belonging to a national community, expanded cultural horizons and getting away from provincial narrow-mindedness.

## **Efforts to create a European identity**

Brussels appears to have had this in mind when taking the decision in 1984 that the EC would improve contact with its citizens and, so to speak, create a European identity, centrally and from above.

At a summit meeting in Fontainebleau, the European Council found it “absolutely essential that the Community fulfil the expectations of the European people and take measures to strengthen and promote the identity and image of the Community vis-à-vis its citizens and the rest of the world”.

The Adonnino Committee was set up for this purpose, with the task of starting a campaign on the theme of “A people’s Europe”. This work would be based on a quotation from the preamble to the Rome Treaty on “an ever closer union among the peoples of Europe”, and on the Tindemans Report of 1975 which recommended that Europe must be close to its citizens and that a European Union could only become reality if people supported the idea.

An outcome of the work of this committee was the decision that the EC should have its own flag. When the flag was raised for the first time at Berlaymont on 29 May 1986, the EC hymn - the “Ode to Joy” from the fourth movement of Beethoven’s ninth symphony was played for the first time. Thus, by means of a flag and European national hymn, the Union acquired the attributes of a nation-state. A European Day was also established. The choice fell on 9 May, the date on which Robert Schumann held a speech in 1950 that resulted in the first community, the European Coal and Steel Community.

Consequently, the Adonnino Committee appears to have assumed that a European identity could be created on the initiative of politicians and bureaucrats. In 1988, the European Council decided to introduce a European dimension into school subjects such as literature, history, civics, geography, languages and music. Legitimacy for future integration would be created by invoking a common history and cultural heritage.

This has resulted in a book, “Europe - a history of its peoples”, written by the French history professor, Jean-Baptiste Duroselle, which, to quote the author, covers a period from 5.000 years ago to tomorrow’s news.

The European Union is thus attempting to create a European identity from above. A common European frame of reference is being created by means of a standardised set of symbols and myths. A European driving licence already exists and an European Union passport, although it took ten years to agree on its colour and appearance. The Maastricht Treaty introduced the new concept of a citizen of the Union, although his/her rights and obligations have still to be defined. These activities are incompatible with the often-recurring theme that European integration must be a natural process and not imposed from above.

Every European people has its more or less genuine historical myths, experiences and view of history. There is no European equivalent to the Académie Française, Bastille, Escorial, La Scala, Brandenburger Tor or the opening of Parliament at Westminster. There is no European Unknown Soldier. Jean Monnet rests at the Panthéon in Paris. The fame of Robert Schumann's resting place at Scy-Chazelles cannot compete with Colombey-les-Deux-Eglises, where General de Gaulle lies buried.

Common history has been experienced by many as against and not with each other in the great European wars. The main task of the "Europe-makers" cannot therefore be to provide Europeans with a common identity originating in antique or medieval times but to develop political self-confidence and ability to act in line with the role of Europe in the XXI<sup>st</sup> century. This will not happen by elevating the European Union to a free trade zone in accordance with British ideas, or into some kind of American-style United States of Europe which is imposed on people against their will.

## **Basis for European patriotism and identity**

Only long-term, patient growing together will provide the basis for a democratic Europe comprised of its citizens. For many decades, the EC was a practical community. We are only now en route towards a community of destiny and experience. If anything is to be learnt from European history it is that Europe as an entity can only be completed in agreement with and not against the will of the nation-states and what they consider to be their legitimate interests.

At present, regionalism and nationalism undoubtedly have another strength than pan-europeanism. Perhaps Europe needs some 'multi-national shocks' in the form of an aggressive Russia, a new Chernobyl catastrophe or Gulf crisis to show our total dependency on the USA in conflicts that affect vital European interests.

Other problems will also arise that call for joint action and which in due course will aid the establishment of an identity, such as for example :

- the necessity to use our common strength to meet the technological challenge from Japan and the USA and, in the not too distant future, the "new tigers".
- common action to overcome environmental problems, pressure from immigration and to handle international organised crime.

A successful European policy in these and other areas could help in the development of "constitutional European patriotism" in the same way that "loyalty to the Constitution" ("Verfassungspatriotismus") became a reality in the Federal Republic of

Germany, replacing the nationalism that no German was able to feel after the terrors of the Hitler period.

An absolute precondition for developing a common political culture and constitutional patriotism in the European Union is that its citizens are informed about and participate in the super-national decision-making process. A European public opinion must emerge before there can be talk of a European citizenship.

As stated above, the European identity has no historical reference. European trade unions do not exist at present, nor other interest groups nor, above all, trans-boundary European parties and a European general public.

The Maastricht Treaty brought this deficiency into focus, negotiated as it was by experts in a European code incomprehensible to its citizens. As a result, the reputation of the European Union was further diminished. A prerequisite for a solid European identity is therefore the development of European parties, or at least a party network, and political debate on trans-boundary issues. When employer organisation and trade unions begin to meet at a European level to look after their members' common interests, we will have taken the first steps because politics will have reached beyond the national level.

The optimum we can achieve at the end of such a process would be a European "constitutional state" and European Union citizenship that is felt to be genuine and not an artificial construction.

The way is both difficult and long, however, and more likely to be curbed than speeded on by enlargement eastwards. It has proved difficult enough to bridge the cultural and linguistic differences between Catholics and Protestants, Latins, Germans, Anglo-Saxons and Scandinavians in Europe. The task of integrating the Baltic, Slav and Orthodox Europeans will be infinitely more difficult. The larger and more heterogeneous membership becomes, the greater the need to differentiate between various member states and a Europe moving at different speeds and where the political union, monetary union, common security and defence policy and inner market will not extend over the same geographical areas. A union of up to 30 members at varying stages of economic development can only function if it is organised along multi-tracks and at different levels.

Efforts to create a Europe around the hard core of a monetary union with the Euro as a magnet could be counterproductive. Magnets work in two ways, either drawing particles towards them or pushing them away. There is a clear risk that a monetary union will not only have a magnetic effect but the reverse as well.

## **Cultural diversity – obstacle or prerequisite for a European identity ?**

European political oratory often maintains that Europe can only be defined through its unique heritage of diversity and lack of conformity and that, paradoxically, its very diversity has been its unifying principle and strength.

However, European linguistic diversity is probably the greatest obstacle standing in the way of the emergence of a European political identity and thus the European democratic project. While multilingual European democracies certainly exist, the prime example is Switzerland, which has elected to remain outside the European Union.

A democracy is non-existent if most of its citizens cannot make themselves understood to each other. Rhetoric apart, not even leading European politicians are today able to socialise with each other without an interpreter, and very few can make themselves understood to a majority of European voters in their own language. Not one European newspaper exists, except elitist newspapers such as "The European". There is no European television programme apart from Eurosport, and most of its viewers watch matches between nations. In short, there is no public European debate, no European political discourse because the political process is still tied to language.

The question of language is basically one of democracy. Political discussion would be divided between A and B teams with many excluded because of their lack of linguistic knowledge if only English and French were the official European Union languages. At the same time, the problem of interpreting is becoming insurmountable. Over 40% of the European Union administrative budget is already spent on language services. Eleven languages make 132 combinations possible in the translator booths. The addition of another 10 Eastern and Central European languages brings this figure to 420 and 462 if Maltese is added. Some form of functional differentiation will therefore be necessary, making some languages more equal than others. although this would have a negative effect on European public opinion in the small member nations.

At present, an average 66% of European Union citizens are monolingual while 10% speak at least two foreign languages. Ireland is at one extreme with 80 and 3 % respectively, while only 1% of the population in Luxembourg is monolingual and no less than 80% speak at least two foreign languages. In order to function as Europeans and safeguard our interests, we Swedes must become tolerably fluent in at least one other major European language apart from English. Swedish remains the basis of our cultural heritage and domestic political discussions, but in order to play a constructive part in Europe we must develop into citizens of Luxembourg as far as language is concerned.

Consequently, Europe is neither a communication- nor an experience-based community, to use German expressions. Both factors are indispensable in the development of a collective political identity. This is created by sharing experience, myths and memories, often in contradiction to those held in other collective identities. They are, moreover, often strengthened by the comparison with those that are distinctly different. Not just Robert Schumann, Alcide de Gaspar, Jean Monnet and Konrad Adenauer should be counted among the fathers of European integration, but Josef Stalin as well. The Cold War enabled a sense of unity to be mobilised among Western Europeans, but who can play the role of opposition now in order to provide Europeans with a common identity ? The USA is part of the same circle of culture. Japan is of course a homogeneous and different society but is too far away and does not constitute any political or military threat. And its economic strength is directed primarily at the USA.

There is an inherent danger that Europe will choose to define itself vis-à-vis its surrounding third world neighbours and that the Mediterranean will become the moat around the European fort. The creation of a pan-European identity risks being accompanied by a cultural exclusion mechanism. The search for a European identity could easily take the form of demarcation against “the others”, a policy which leads to a racial cul-de-sac while at the same time the mixing of races continues to rise in Europe.

A European identity must therefore be distinctive and all embracing, differentiate and assimilate at the same time. It is a question of integrating the nations of Europe, with their deeply rooted national and, often, regional identities and to persuade citizens to feel part of a supra-national community and identity.

Can half a continent with 370 million citizens and 11 official languages really be provided with a democratic constitution ? In the ideal scenario for the emergence of a European political union, the European Parliament must first be “de-nationalised” and this assumes a European party system. Secondly, it must have the classic budgetary and legislative powers. The Council of Ministers must be turned into a second chamber and the Commission should be led by a “head of government” appointed by Parliament.

National parliaments would consequently lose their functions. They could be transformed into federal parliaments in smaller states, as in Germany, and would thus have the same position vis-à-vis Brussels that they have today. It is easier said than done to abolish the democratic deficit by giving greater powers to the parliament in Strasbourg, because the dilemma of representation versus effectiveness would immediately come to a head. If every parliamentarian represented about 25.000 citizens, as is the case in Sweden, the gathering at Strasbourg with about 15 member nations would have to be increased to 15.000. If in the name of effectiveness, the number was reduced to 500, with constituencies of more than a million citizens and everyone was guaranteed an equal European vote, Luxembourg would not be represented and Sweden would have a maximum 13 representatives in the European Parliament. It might be capable of functioning but could not by any means claim to represent a European electorate. The democratic deficit would continue.

Europe as an entity can only be achieved with the help of and not against the nations and their special characteristics. European integration will not be completed because of some natural necessity but only if enough political energy is brought to bear. The future of the European Union rests therefore in the common interests of member states and not on the political will of a European people for the simple reason that such a thing does not exist.

Regional and national identities will grow in importance in a world that is becoming every more difficult to oversee and which is ever more rapidly changing. Citizens will be living more and more in a state of tension between several loyalties, their home district, state, nation, Europe and the international community, increasingly required to think globally but act locally. New ancient regimes and new regions are emerging everywhere in Europe. By actively supporting the process of regionalisation, Brussels and individual capital cities can show that European Union is taking its institutions closer to its citizens and thereby creating greater scope for cultural and linguistic diversity than the nation-states have been capable of doing. By

contributing to a new vision - the Europe of diversity and regional government based on subsidiarity - the idea of Europe can be made more comprehensible and attractive.

In this way, the regional identity can strengthen the emergent European identity. Now that regions are increasingly turning to the European Union in their fight for resources for regional development and to attract investment, Brussels and the European Union will be seen as the friends of the regions rather than their national capitals.

The nation-state is thus being nibbled at from two directions. At the same time, we will experience a renaissance for nation-states and regions and their gradual merger in a transnational community. Those who support the region and nation must not necessarily reject Europe, but the traditional nation-state with community-based traditions, identity and loyalty will remain indispensable as a strength and source of political stability. Nation-states are therefore essential in order to legitimise a new European order but structural asymmetry, conflicting interests and unexpected courses of development will lead to relations between the nation-state and European integration that are difficult to manage and oversee. Europe will continue therefore even in the future to be squeezed between what the German philosopher Karl Jasper called "Balkan and Helvetian tendencies", i.e., between Yugoslav and Swiss development models.

Nations are not great once and for all, but are created. They are what Benedict Anderson called "imagined communities". The idea of a European community cannot arise from the German concept of "Blut und Boden", or from the idea of a European "Volk" or a European "cultural nation".

Nor can the European identity be created through central directives from Brussels or member nations' capital cities, or by being conjured forth at seminars and conferences but rather through the citizens of individual European states knowing that they personally have something to gain from integration and they hereby say yes to the European Union in their daily referendum.

As we have already experienced, a forced unifying process produces counter reactions in all the member countries. A European identity is possible only where there is a community of interests among the citizens. If this is missing or not felt to be sufficiently strong, the European Union will have a democratic deficit irrespective of what new competence is given to the European Parliament.

The single market will bring about trans-boundary mobility and thereby albeit slowly contribute to the emergence of a European identity but it will be one of many relativised by different national and regional identities (such as, for example, Benelux, Ibero-Europe, the Nordic countries). Immigration will strengthen the multicultural component that is indispensable for a new sense of identity. At the same time, it will nourish the social tensions and racist and nationalist comments, but can also lead to political mobilisation and the insight that these problems can only be solved at European level.

A European 'supra-nationality' will be accepted first in situations where there is no hierarchy of national, regional and supra-region identities but when every individual knows about them as self-evident and as part of their daily life. A policy for preserving diversity will thus be a precondition for creating a European identity that



neither should or would become a replacement for a national identity but which can create support and strength for political institutions that are neither national nor the framework of a European superstate.

Questions of cultural policy, education and a historically deep-rooted social system and values must therefore remain the concern of nation-states. It is thus a case of render unto the nation state that which belongs to it and to European Union that which is the European Union's ; a security and foreign policy structure, the single market, a common crime, asylum and immigration policy.

The hitherto clear links between state and nation will thus grow looser. European integration from this point of view will not mean that a new superstate will appear but that power is spread out. Cultural identities will remain rooted at national level but will spread further down to ever more distinctive regional identities. We will have neither a new European superstate or sovereign nation-states. Nations will not disappear but we will have nations with less state and national cultures with softer outer casings.

Relations between European and national identities could take the shape of a foreign and security policy in the wide sense as a fundament of a common European political identity, a "nation" to which one feels a sense of political belonging without the need to feel part of a European "Volk" or a European "cultural nation".

The German concept of a nation would endure at national level although in its original form as conceived by Johann Gottfried von Herder in which a nation need not necessarily express itself as a state. By standing on secure and solid cultural ground, every people with their own distinctive character and cultural capacity achievements can contribute to an international community.

Cultural nations will thus become divorced from a territory. People will have a sense of belonging to a special area and its cultural and political history but this area need not necessarily be linked to a nation-state with defined territorial boundaries. The European political identity could emerge in this way while at the same time leaving the cultural national or regional identity intact while European diversity will not only remain in place but grow as well. The democratic deficit can never be abolished unless this kind of development takes place, nor would the project of a European Union be realised.



# European identity - A perspective from a Norwegian European, or a European Norwegian

Truls Frogner

---

Norway is a part of Europe, but not a member of the European Union. We are integrated in many ways, and for practical and economic purposes (EEA Treaty) we are close to membership. The road to full and political membership is to be found in our visions and roots, both part of our European identity. In this respect, the Norwegian challenge is similar to that of all other Europeans. Since Europe has many countries on its fringe, the approach towards European identity could start from one of them.

Even the opponents in Norway said before the referendum in 1994 ; “YES to Europe, but no to the Union”... Membership of the European Union can never be more than the means to achieve other and higher goals. Integration as an instrument of cooperation is necessary, yet not sufficient. Institutions should reflect the dreams and needs of the population, and transform them into practical solutions of which they can approve.

The forthcoming “Citizen First” campaign may succeed in reminding the people of Europe of what has already been achieved during the four decades since the Rome Treaty was signed. Still it seems to many people that politics on the European level is something different and remote from national politics at home. And worse, sometimes national voices blame “Brussels” for unpopular measures, without giving credit for the positive impact of European decisions. Does the European Union suffer from a scapegoat syndrome ?

There are at least two answers. It is necessary to normalise European politics. To work for European solutions is a part of a general struggle for values and visions on the individual, local, regional and global level. In this perspective Europe is not something special, but the bridge between near and far. Europe is the gate to the big unknown world and the port when coming back.

The second answer is to develop a consciousness of our own European identity and the common ground of European values and history. The point is not to cultivate something European which is different than national, local or global, but to compose some ideas, sentiments and values as a platform, as an inspiration, for taking part in facing common challenges. The Norwegian “naysayers” cleverly connected their opposition against the European Union with a combat for positive ideals. But the supporters also fight for higher values, a better society and a sustainable development, however not yet communicating this message with the same one-sided self-confidence and conviction. Maybe because real Europeans have ambiguous minds ?

**Belonging** to the European Community is often said to be the major reason why the supporters are in favour of membership. It has to do with a cultural and geographical identity, also shared by many Norwegians. (Remember that rejection may be an indirect affirmation ; as the 5-year-old boy asked his mother : “Do you think God knows we don't believe in him”.) Identity is not free from contradictions. A lot of people are fond of their village or party without accepting all aspects. The alternative to a poor marriage is not necessarily divorce, but a better marriage. European identity does not exclude criticising the European Union. The next question is always : what is your proposal or alternative ? The dual critical and constructive approach represents the dialectical dynamism of European history – compromise after crises.

**Safety** is related to belonging. It is a positive feeling of security in itself and with others, in contrast to lacking individual faith and confidence in a greater community. The security in NATO, which almost all Norwegians rely on, is an example of a historical acknowledgement that no nation can or should stand alone to protect peace and prevent war. Only a binding international cooperation can offer the security of being treated equally in accordance with common rules, to avoid occasional infringements. Security in Europe is an idea which pervades our approach to political, economic, social, cultural, environmental and other issues.

**Solidarity** is, according to André Malraux, an intelligent form of egoism. In a European context this means it is in our own interest that outside countries, groups, regions etc., should be helped to develop their human, social and economic resources. We should have learned that too deep differences create instability with the potential for upheaval, conflict and war. Solidarity in Europe is about taking care of each other across national borders, demonstrated in practice by supranational measures for cohesion. European solidarity includes the rest of the world. The next debate in Norway may illustrate a shift from the last campaign. A possible ‘yes’ to the European Union next time can not mean better prospects for economic benefits for a prosperous nation in a Europe enlarged with poorer countries. It would demand an obligation and commitment to higher values, a safer society and a sustainable development in a broad Europe.

Then, as part of European identity, we find the classical political values.

**Democracy** was invented and developed in Europe, further developed in America where the most democratic constitution at the time was established in 1776. Thereafter, new democratic reforms emerged and the idea of government by and for the people spread throughout the world and gradually, or after revolutions, unfolded in a variety of forms, within the framework of the nation-state. But democracy is still not fulfilled anywhere, due to the fact that the idea of democracy is a relative concept, a complex concept and a political concept.

The relative concept of democracy implies that it is related to something outside the reach of voters and their representatives. Those who oppose federal, supranational democratic initiatives are without proper answers to the challenges from transnational companies, international capital movements, cross-border pollution and abuse of national sovereignty, for instance nuclear tests, suppression of ethnic groups and aggression against neighbouring states. From this, we realise that identity is closer to interdependence than self-determination. Identity is more a social, less an individual,

phenomenon, but still both exist in Europe where the (im)balance between collective and personal responsibility has been a driving force in society.

**National independence** does not have the same importance and impact as before. Now and in the future, nation-states have to find democratic ways of cooperation which preserve the positive dimensions of independence and limit its negative elements. Paradoxically, the notion of supranationality was also accepted by major parts of the opponent movement in Norway, in spite of their exaggerated belief in national self-determination. They approved of supranational regulation of national independence linked to peace, defence and security matters in the UN and NATO, at the same time they refused supranational regulation of national independence with almost the same countries in the European Union on civilian and political issues !

The Union is not in opposition to the nation. Supranationality is the strife to unfold the potential of the nations which they are unable to fulfil within their borders. A strong Union can not depend on weak nations. A strong Union strengthens its parts. Identity is not only unity in itself, but also a unity of contradictions. A political Union is how to bridge contradictions and the arena where different forces can do so.

Identity and democracy are both complex concepts, and consist of an inner power balance between different components. Both include dynamic processes. Neither identity nor democracy can stand still. It is a question of live or die. For a European it is important that each political institution has limited power, and nevertheless is capable of achieving political goals, while simultaneously securing an appropriate balance among representatives from Member states and the people of Europe. Democratic cooperation among many countries, some hundred parties and 280 million voters is more complicated. However, democracy must not only be dependent on small-size communities to function. Large-scale democracy becomes increasingly important to avoid close political bodies becoming local theatre. On the other hand, distant democracy presupposes information and dialogue, transparency and control mechanisms in order to avoid the danger of living its own life.

Nothing is more fitted to stimulate attention to a distant political structure than conflicts stemming from disagreement on how to solve the real problems of today and the future. From this fact follows a need to abolish unanimity and expand QMV. This will not be in contradiction to the need for consensus and respect for vital national interests. A European Union has in place of final goals, some common visions of peace, prosperity, social cohesion and partnership with nature. The Union is nurtured by the struggle between, and from, various interest groups working for their visions.

Europe is indivisibly connected to its cultural, Christian, humanistic, scientific, social and professional values, – the identity of Europe in our heart and minds. Europe has a magnificent heritage of art and science, architecture and philosophy, and a abundance of ideas and religious schools within a system of tolerance and legal protection, which make our continent attractive, exciting and challenging. Without expelling the tragedies and catastrophes Europe has brought upon herself and other continents, it should be permitted to remember that the cultural and political ideas have conquered, and will continue to overcome, prejudices, xenophobia, racism and other discriminating and suppressing powers.

And without degrading anyone, it is also convenient not to forget that the Nordic and European model of cooperation and conflict solving in the labour market, is advanced from a global point of view. Of course, there will always be nuances between various interest groups concerning the balance between politics and market, labour and capital, public and private sector, tradition and modernisation, men and women etc. But nobody should claim their interests to be superior to those of others or to suppress fundamental democratic and human rights.

A European House should be built on pluralism and equality, as the European wants for him- or herself. And as we are changing and enlarging this house, we strive for the good life today and tomorrow. European identity must be found in something we already know. Identity is recognition. To be a European is coming home to my own house.

# European identity - an anthropological approach

Maryon McDonald

---

Questions about European identity and about the future symbolic and practical content of 'Europe' are questions about the meaning of Europe : what does Europe mean, and what could it mean, to those who are its citizens ?

Questions or worries of this kind were not paramount when the EEC began. Between the late 1960s and the present day, however, questions of 'legitimacy' and 'identity' have come increasingly to the fore.

## **Legitimacy**

There have been two principal periods during which questions of legitimacy have been raised.

First of all, concerns were voiced in the late 1960s – a period when it was first noticed that the original, self-evident legitimacy of the Community, defined against a past of war, was losing relevance to a new generation. Amidst demographic changes, increased studentification, and the re-invention of the category of 'youth', a new 'generation' was self-consciously establishing itself in contra-distinction from its parents. Old certainties such as modernisation, progress, reason and positivism, many of which had informed the EEC project, were put in question. This was a time when cultural diversity was invented, a time of civil rights marches in the US, a time of decolonisation and counter-cultures, a time when the alternative worlds of regionalism, particularism and relativism appealed.

The world was de-naturalised, and the 'West' was re-invented as a category that the young might affect to despise. For this new generation. 'Europe', far from being the triumph of civilisation over irrationality, tyranny and violence, easily slipped into synonymy with this new 'West' to become another metaphor for post-imperial castigation and self-castigation, or one from which the authenticity and difference of alternative realities might be measured.

The response of the EEC at this time was to try to draw young people, against the prevailing current, back into the 'European' fold through youth programmes, largely exchange schemes, and then much later on through the active 'conscientisation' programmes of the 'People's Europe' project. The structural funds also developed, partly in response to the economism of the EEC.

The second period, which launched new worries about legitimacy, has come about since the launch of the Internal Market. This unprecedented flurry of perceived 'interference' from Brussels (however sound the original intention), with more directives in a shorter time than ever before, was bolstered and coloured by two other

sets of events. On the one hand, the Berlin Wall fell, and many old certainties fell afresh with it. On the other hand, the Maastricht Treaty was negotiated and seemed to threaten national identities in a context in which, with the Internal Market, Brussels 'interference' already appeared as established fact. Going beyond, nationalism had once seemed morally right in the years after the Second World War, but now this was widely perceived as a moral and political threat. Not surprisingly, referenda results sent any certainties still surviving in Brussels diving for cover.

## Identity

The 'People's Europe' project of the 1980s enlisted the old package of XIX<sup>th</sup> century nationalism to try to re-create Europe and European Identity – to make people feel European. But this old package is heavy with problems :

*Firstly*, the package that nationalism used to invent nations, a package of language-culture-history-people-territory, is not available in all its elements to Europe. Europe cannot easily construct itself, or be imagined, through this package, therefore, and be convincing. It will also seem to be competing with nation-states.

*Secondly*, the time span for the construction of European identity has been relatively short (mere decades where some nations have had two hundred years) and the construction process highly visible. Where the nation may feel 'natural', Europe is inevitably going to feel 'artificial'. And for those from national backgrounds which lack a historiography of self-conscious construction of the nation (such as Britain and Denmark, for example), some aspects of the self-conscious construction of Europe easily appear to be little more than propaganda.

*Thirdly*, the old package for identity construction was born of certainties that no longer pertain in a world of diversity and relativism. Europe is now often more easily identified with a capacity to question apparent certainties rather than with the old certainties themselves.

*Fourthly*, the old package assumes identity to be monolithic and culture to be a homogeneous, clearly bounded entity. However, identity is contextual and relational – and self and other, or sameness and difference, are constructed relationally in the context of daily imaginings and encounters.

And *fifthly*, it is easy to lapse back into the full racial force of this old package – with the boundaries of Europe unrelativised and read as the boundaries of ethnic flesh. The freedom of movement of 'persons' is then rightly confronted with more uneasy reflection on the definition of a 'person'.

## History

History was an important element in the nationalism package, and many histories of Europe have been encouraged as part of the 'People's Europe' project – apparently in the hope of appropriating the tool of history for the creation of European identity. However, we might say that there could, within current models of historiography, be two main ways of writing the history of Europe.



*Firstly*, there would be the old, historicist model, in which Europe might be assumed to exist from Ancient Greece, say, up to contemporary European Union. This is the historiography that nationalism used and that the histories of Europe now tend to use also. All the ethnological bric-a-brac of the classical world become virtual flag-wavers before the Berlaymont, and contemporary ideals are read back into the classical world and onwards to the present day. This historicism, which worked for nationalism, is the style of the vast majority of officially sanctioned 'History of Europe' texts (whether sanctioned by the Council of Europe or by EC funding). In this history, a continuous litany of features deemed to be inherent to Europe is paraded: this would include Christianity, democracy, citizens' rights and the rule of law, for example. This litany was especially important when it was first constructed, after the Second World War and then during the Cold War, in opposition to the East, but its appeal is not always self-evident now.

The *second* kind of history of Europe would involve a history of the category of Europe. If we were to trace the history of the category of 'Europe' from, say, Ancient Greece to the present, we would find 'Europe' travelling through different conceptual systems, finding new meanings, becoming a different reality as it did so. The geographical boundaries expand and contract, the salient conceptual relations change, the moral and political frontiers and content shift considerably, and Europe is invented and re-invented accordingly. This is the kind of historiography that postmodernism would readily encourage, and it is one in which – unlike in the historiography of nationalism – the simple clarity of being on the right side of history is ideally and deliberately lacking. Moreover, this historiography would not allow any simple continuity to be read back into the past – whether of territory, culture or ethnic flesh, for example.

The advent of postmodernism does not mean that we have to throw out the old history altogether. We can put certain key aspects of these two kinds of history together in a productive way. Elements from the old historiography which gave Europe its moral and political content – such as democracy, citizens' rights and the rule of law, for instance – can become important elements in a new understanding of both 'Europe' and identity as relative or relational. Without lapsing into any old historicism, such historical elements – or any one of them – can simply be drawn on or cited as the occasion or context demands. In other words, history becomes self-consciously part of the present, and the history of Europe is no longer historicist litany but part of our critical self-awareness. History is then an awareness of the changing and discontinuous contexts in which 'Europe' has been created in the past, and offers elements in the present that we might now choose to assume relationally in order to assert things 'European'.

## **Europe in action**

If identity is constructed relationally, the clearest identity is in conceptual opposition. You know most clearly who you are through what you are not. It is relatively easy to feel 'European' when visiting Japan, for example.

External relations might seem the obvious area in which a European identity can be constructed and expressed. However, this is also an area in which national identities are deeply embedded. Nation-states have in many ways been defined by their

external relations, and Europe does not have the now dubious advantages of war and empire, or of clear external threat, to help to define itself. It is perhaps readily understood that international linking systems help to avoid old fault-lines reappearing, but steps towards some notion of European representation in this area, or of more fundamental institutional reform, have to carry with them the same critical self-awareness that there is no better way to re-create and re-invigorate national identities and differences internally than to be seen to impose decisions from outside ('Brussels').

For most purposes, we are now in a Europe that can, in an important sense, be more relaxed about its identity. The stuff of a European identity is available in the policies and issues which the EU (whether all of it or part of it) creates : in environmental questions, in equal opportunities, in the market (where it most obviously both follows and creates globalisation), in the social arena, in Trans-European networks, in food and health, and so on. Many of these areas have been re-thought (equal opportunities is no longer about the 'women's rights' of the 1970s, for instance, but about issues such as gender and the new family etc.) and others still await re-juggling and re-thinking. Any one area of policy can, for better or worse, contextually enlist people to a 'European' self-consciousness (as we have seen recently in the BSE scare, with different sections of the British population suddenly calling for European compensation and solidarity). It is in its policies, in practice, that European identification comes alive.

No one is 'European' all the time, just as no one is Spanish, Portuguese, British or French, and so on, all the time. There are moments when being a father, being a businesswoman, being a tennis-player, or being from Coimbra (etc.) are the salient identifications, and these identities would normally occupy much of one's waking life. The overarching ambitions of an older European -identity-construction-kit do not take this into account. Just as the certainties once inherent in the symbolism and narratives of large political parties are having to change and even give way to single-issue politics, so a post-federal Europe has to look for recruitment through the contexts of issues and practice.

So, Europe exists. 'Europe' and 'European' exist as categories and people are contextually recruited into them, and there have been many successes of identification. Europe exists in action – in the contextual identification of people with specific policy-areas. Bargaining and compromise are acknowledged as the means to achieve desired policies internally, and the achievement of desired policies makes people feel better about being European, and more ready to compromise elsewhere. And so on. Europe, for many, is not a project, and the old narratives can be alienating. The future symbolic content of European identity resides in practice and action – requiring carefully re-thought policies, and the very European capacities for questioning and reflection, for self-criticism, and now the acceptance – without any naive federal model of a *Europe des ethnies* and without cultural fundamentalism – of diversity both at home and elsewhere.

# European identity and citizenship

Massimo La Torre

---

I do not intend here to deal, even tangentially, with the questions of God, the meaning of human life, transcendence, or universalism. What we are concerned with – if I am not wrong – is not “identity” in metaphysical terms, or either in anthropological, or mere cultural terms. Nor – I must confess – do I think that Europe without further qualifications is a useful category for political thought. By the way, the question “what is European identity” is also a trifle too broad and vague to find an appropriate answer. I assume that what interests and intrigues us is that identity which is relevant and needed for the construction of a political community at the European level. The identity to which I shall refer will therefore be that which derives or which is equivalent to membership to a polity.

It has been said that an identity can be built either from above or from below. This is, I think, quite correct. But I have some problems if one starts identifying top-down procedures with whatever legal measure, with law, and democratic down-top mechanisms with historical processes. Now, I think that the opposite is often the case, i.e. that history has an authoritarian character and law, a libertarian one. History, if seen as a collective process, something given by an intrinsic immanent “telos” of human events, excludes the reflective intervention of individuals on the direction of their social life. Destiny even if shared in a community is never democratic. On the other side, law is not necessarily a sum of authoritarian or repressive provisions. Law is conventional, whatever the legal doctrine says or affirms about it ; it is made by reflective and more or less explicit processes : as a matter of fact a custom becomes a legal practice only when it is contested and is reaffirmed either by collective majoritarian behaviour or by judicial decisions.

Law should be contestable in order to direct human conduct. But if the law is made, the real question will be whether it is made by one, the few, or the many. We are then called to choose the system of law we prefer. If we are liberal-minded, we would certainly have to opt for the rule given by the many, in a way that the law will no longer be authoritarian, that is, elitist, the artefact of the one or of the few, but will become the solid pillar of a democratic polity. I therefore dare to suggest that there is no political identity from below without democratic law.

Once the question of identity is reformulated in terms of political identity, that is, in terms of membership to a European polity, the main problem for us will be that of a European citizenship. In fact, it is citizenship what marks the political belonging, the membership to a polity.

## European citizenship and democracy

I would like to argue for a strong concept of European citizenship. This is fully justified from an internal legal point of view, since article B of the Treaty of

Maastricht holds as one of the main purposes of the Union “to strengthen the protection of the rights and interests of the nationals of its member States through the introduction of a citizenship of the Union”. We may also recall a decision taken by the European Court of Justice in *Commission v. Council* (May 30, 1989), confirming the full legality of the Erasmus Programme, which is then justified with reference to the “objectifs générant de la Communauté, tels que la réalisation d'une Europe des citoyens”.

A strong concept of European citizenship, characterised by a wide and rich range of rights ascribed through it and with independence from national citizenships, could powerfully contribute to solve at least partly but nevertheless effectively the democratic deficiencies of the European Union. A democracy is not only a representative or parliamentary political regime, but also and above all an association of equal citizens who are defined as such directly, that is without referring to intermediate social and political groups ; democracy is not only or even mainly given by the majority rule applied to political decisions, but eminently by the existence of a public domain of free discussion. But in order to have this, some requirements have to be satisfied : a feeling and a sphere of common concern, first of all.

One could and should decide on matters which can affect more or less directly one's own life. Autonomy, which is an ideal principle presupposed by democracy, and expanded by this into a collective practice, makes sense only if it is exercised within the individual's scope of interests and action. Beyond this scope there is no right of autonomy ; even worse autonomy, as individual decision and action, can be transformed into its opposite : heteronomy, disruption of others' private sphere and life plans. This holds a fortiori for an extension of the principle to collective entities, that is, for democracy. A democratic decision cannot go beyond the area of interests which are at stake within a specific scope of (collective) action, that is, beyond the area constituted by those individuals who are the holders of the right of democratic decision. Now, citizenship as membership to a body politic, even if conceived only in formal legal terms, can contribute to create the idea of a common concern, the concern which is common to persons who bear a same legal and political status.

To have a public sphere of discussion another requisite should be fulfilled : that of having procedures which allow a fair discussion. But in order to have a fair public discussion we need to assume that people when entering into that discussion share at least a few and “thin” principles : *contra negantem principia non est disputandum*.<sup>34</sup> We need to assume that people recognise reciprocally the autonomy (the possibility of a rational and independent action, in this case discussion itself) and therefore, the sincerity and dignity of their opponents or fellow discussants. We should thus assume that in a public discussion discussants have equal rights.<sup>35</sup> Citizenship (and European citizenship is no exception) is just the sum of rights which allow subjects to take part in a political deliberation and to discuss in order to arrive at a reasonable and well pondered decision.

---

<sup>34</sup> See A. SCHOPENHAUER, *Die Kunst, Recht zu behalten. In achtunddreißig Kunstgriffen dargestellt*, ed. by F. Volpi, Insel, Frankfurt am Main 1995, p. 38.

<sup>35</sup> See R. ALEXY, *Theorie der juristischen Argumentation*, 2nd ed., Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main 1991, pp. 238 ss.

This can mean that in order to promote democratic progress in a society, we can first create statuses granting common and equal rights among its members, and then proceed to find out a viable institutional device to render visible and effective the public discourse which has started with the ascription of those statuses. In the terms of the present political and institutional situation in the European Union we can therefore plausibly believe that we can have European democratic citizens even before having at the supranational level institutions endowed with effective powers of political direction governed by democratic procedures. If we have a European citizenship as an independent status granting rights such as political rights (rights to vote and to be elected) both at the supranational and infranational level (see articles 8b and 8c of the Treaty of the Union), or rights such as the right not to be discriminated as an alien against a national (see article 6 of Maastricht Treaty), or rights such as freedom of movement to and through any member State and freedom of residence in them (see article 8a), then, even if the European parliament is not a fully developed democratic institution (because of the limited range of its current powers), we shall have a society of democratic citizens which will represent a better condition for developing democratic decision making at the supranational level. Of course, to this purpose the rights which we have mentioned should be fully deployed in all their potentiality, and break the limitations which articles 8a-8c still impose upon them.

When democratic institutions are deficient, democracy can also be developed through democratic citizens. In particular, in the European Union whose member States actually are all democratic regimes what is fundamental is not to maintain a nationalist or ethnical view of democracy. We need a free sphere of public concern and the sense of participating in a fair cooperative scheme. A stronger and richer concept of European citizenship can be extremely helpful in this direction.

## Citizenship and 'demos'

“Es gibt keine Demokratie ohne Demos” – says Josef Isensee, a well-known German constitutional lawyer<sup>36</sup> –, whereby he means that democracy is built upon a collective subject pre-existing to it, endowed with a proper intense life, that is, a people seen as a homogeneous cultural and ethnical body. Moving from this premise the German lawyer then draws the conclusion that there is no possible legitimisation basis for a European democracy (that is, for the European Union), since there is no European “demos”, that is, a European folk.

It may also be remembered that the same author has successfully fought against the introduction, in the Freie und Hansestadt Hamburg, of an aliens' right to vote for the election of district councils, endowed of indeed poor competencies, with the argument that State officials and representative bodies (at whatever level and of whatever size) enjoy of democratic legitimisation only and only if they receive their mandate from

---

<sup>36</sup> J. ISENSEE, *Europa – die politische Erfindung eines Erdteils*, in *Europa als politische Idee und als rechtliche Form*, ed. by J. Isensee, Duncker & Humblot, Berlin 1993, p. 133. For a more sophisticated but in its core quite similar view, cf. D. GRIMM, *Does Europe Need a Constitution ?*, in “European Law Journal”, 1995, p. 295 : “Here, then, is the biggest obstacle to Europeanisation of the political substructure, on which the functioning of a democratic system and the performance of a parliament depends : language”. According to Grimm the European Parliament, even reformed and fully empowered as a legislative assembly, could not be considered as a European popular representative body, “since there is as yet no European people” (*ibid.*, p. 293).

the “People” in its entirety, that is, from the “German People”. The German Federal Constitutional Court unfortunately accepted Isensee's argument,<sup>37</sup> thus reformulating the concept of “people” mentioned in article 20 of Grundgesetz (“Alle Staatsgewalt geht vom Volke aus”) into that of German people<sup>38</sup> and twisting this into an ethnically defined community of fate<sup>39</sup> which has constitutional relevance even before the drafting of the constitution itself. Democracy – says the German Court – should not be seen as “freie Selbstbestimmung aller”, free self-determination of all (as was formerly held by the Court itself)<sup>40</sup> but as a power which derives from a unique and unitary entity whose individual members as such have no constitutional right of participation to collective political decisions; they can exercise democratic self-determination only jointly, only if considered as indivisible group.<sup>41</sup> The idea that democracy means the right for the people (in the plural) concerned by the laws to contribute to their deliberation and enactment is dismissed.<sup>42</sup> Now, this is indeed a peculiar concept of democracy. It is based on a romantic idea of “people” or “nation, which has represented a reaction against the originally liberal concept of democracy, based on two basic pillars : individuality and public reason.<sup>43</sup>

In the romantic protest against liberal democracy, the very concept of political representation is deeply modified : representation is no longer expression of the concrete will of concrete individuals, but is rather expression of the existence of a community. In this second acceptance of representation, connected with a people idealised as a compact, tight and uniform ethnical entity, which has been cherished by “democrats” such as Carl Schmitt,<sup>44</sup> even a dictator can “represent” a community, and in the end even a dictatorship may be legitimately be considered a... democracy. If, to have democracy what is required is on the one side a folk and on the other a special existential (ethnical) link between the folk and its leaders (this being the proper Repräsentation of the folk), then it is not at all contradictory to have an authoritarian and even a totalitarian leader and nevertheless “democracy”.<sup>45</sup>

---

<sup>37</sup> “Das Volk, welches das Grundgesetz als Legitimations- und Kreationssubjekt der verfaßten Staatlichkeit bestimme, sei das deutsche Volk”(BVerfGE 83, 60 [65].

<sup>38</sup> See also BVerfGE 83, 37 : “Das Staatsvolk, von dem die Staatsgewalt in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland ausgeht, wird nach dem Grundgesetz von den Deutschen, also den deutschen Staatsangehörigen und den ihnen nach Art. 116 ABS. 1 GG gleichgestellten Personen, gebildet”.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. BVerfGE 83, 37[40] : “Das Bild des Staatsvolkes, das dem Staatsangehörigkeitsrecht zugrunde liege, sei die politische *Schicksalsgemeinschaft*, in welche die einzelnen Bürger eingebunden seien. Ihre Solidarhaftung und *ihre Verstrickung in das Schicksal ihres Heimatstaates*, der sie nicht entrinnen könnten, seien auch Rechtfertigung dafür, das Wahlrecht den Staatsangehörigen vorzubehalten”(italics mine).

<sup>40</sup> See, for instance, BVerfGE 44, 125 [142].

<sup>41</sup> “Das demokratische Prinzip läßt es nicht beliebig zu, anstelle des Gesamtstaatsvolkes jeweils einer durch örtlichen Bezug verbundenen, gesetzlich gebildeten kleineren Gesamtheit von Staatsbürgern Legitimationskraft zuzuerkennen”(BVerfGE 83, 60).

<sup>42</sup> See BVerfGE 83, 60 [72]. See also BVerfGE 83, 37[42].

<sup>43</sup> Cf. D. GAUTHIER, *Public Reason*, in “Social Philosophy and Policy”, 1995, pp. 19 ff.

<sup>44</sup> See C. SCHMITT, *Verfassungslehre*, 3rd ed., Duncker & Humblot, Berlin 1957, p. 209 : “Repräsentation ist kein normativer Vorgang, kein Verfahren und keine Prozedur, sondern etwas *Existentielles*. Repräsentation heißt, ein unsichtbares Sein durch ein öffentlich anwesendes Sein sichtbar machen und vergegenwärtigen” (emphasis in original).

<sup>45</sup> “According to this view, democracy and dictatorship are not essentially antagonistic ; rather, dictatorship is a kind of democracy if the dictator successfully claims to incarnate the identity of people” (U. K. PREUSS, *Constitutional Powermaking for the New Polity : Some Deliberations on the Relations Between Constituent Power and the Constitution*, in *Constitutionalism, Identity, Difference*,

Indeed, in a democracy the people is not given by a “authentic” demos, but by its citizens, that is, by those individuals who publicly share a common concern and adhere to the fundamental principles by which the democracy defines and builds itself. In a democratic perspective “people is rather only a summary formula for human beings”.<sup>46</sup> As a matter of fact, there is no “demos” without democracy, that is, without individuals who recognise each other rights and duties. A people in political and legal terms (a “demos”) is a normative product : “populus dicitur a polis” – wrote Baldus de Ubaldis in the XIV<sup>th</sup> century ; it is not there to be found before one starts the difficult enterprise of building up a polity. A people in political and legal terms is the outcome of political and legal institutions : it cristalises around them (“civitas sibi faciat civem” – said Baldus' master, the great Bartolus de Sassoferrato). A people in democratic terms, a demos, the people of a democratic polity, makes thus itself in as far as it aggregates along the rules of democracy. We can recall a famous phrase of Kant where he defines a constitution as the act of general will whereby a multitude becomes a people (“den Akt des allgemeinen Willens, wodurch die Menge ein Volk wird”).<sup>47</sup>

The story going on between people and democracy is more or less the same as the one of the egg and the chicken. Which came first : the egg or the chicken, demos or democracy ? Now, as far as the latter pair is concerned, we can confidently solve the enigma : they were just born together ! In short, es gibt kein Demos ohne Demokratie.

This is another reason, and a fundamental one, why European citizenship is so important : because it is a stone, and a founding one, in the building of a European democracy. Democracy needs at least two poles : decision-making authorities and citizens towards whom those authorities are called to account for their decisions and the corresponding behaviour. If we have democratic citizens, persons endowed with a rich patrimony of rights, we should then have democratic political authorities. If we have democratic citizens, we already have a demos. And to have citizens in legal and political terms is only a question of common rights and duties.

In the organic view of democracy, we are confronted with a dangerous confusion of the notion of public opinion with that of ethnical and cultural homogeneity. This confusion unfortunately seems to be perpetuated in the “Maastricht Urteil” by the German Federal Constitutional Court. “Demokratie, soll sie nicht lediglich formales Zurechnungsprinzip bleiben, ist vom Vorhandensein bestimmter vorrechtlicher Voraussetzungen abhängig, wie einer ständigen freien Auseinandersetzung zwischen sich begegnenden sozialen Kräften, Interessen und Ideen, in der sich auch politische Ziele klären und wandeln und aus der heraus eine öffentliche Meinung den politischen Willen verformt. Dazu gehört auch, daß die Entscheidungsverfahren der Hoheitsgewalt ausübenden Organe und die jeweils verfolgten politischen Zielvorstellungen allgemein sichtbar und verstehbar sind, und ebenso daß der

---

*and Legitimacy. Theoretical Perspectives*, ed. by M. Rosenfeld, Duke University Press, Durham and London 1994, p. 155).

<sup>46</sup> B.O. BRYDE, Die bundesrepublikanische Volksdemokratie als Irrweg der Demokratietheorie, in “Staatswissenschaften und Staatspraxis”, 1994, p. 322.

<sup>47</sup> I. KANT, Zum Ewigen Frieden. Ein philosophischer Entwurf, in ID., Kleinere Schriften zur Geschichtsphilosophie, Ethik und Politik, ed. by K. Vorländer, Meiner, Hamburg 1959, p. 128.

wahlberechtigste Bürger mit der Hoheitsgewalt, der er unterworfen ist, in seiner Sprache kommunizieren kann”.<sup>48</sup>

I find it correct to affirm that democracy, in the sense of majority rule, presupposes some fundamental pre-legal conditions as much as some fundamental normative (moral and political) principles, a vigorous and open public discussion and an influential public opinion. Democracy as a political institution needs, in other words, a civil society. But first, a civil society does not necessarily need to coincide with some Schicksalgemeinschaft, a homogeneous ethnical and linguistic community. (Suggestively enough when the German Court tries to establish a clear-cut separation between national citizenship and European citizenship does not find anything better than making recourse to their different level of existential tightness: “Mit der durch den Vertrag von Maastricht begründeten Unionsbürgerschaft wird zwischen den Staatsangehörigen der Mitgliedstaaten ein auf Dauer angelegtes rechtliches Band geknüpft, das zwar nicht eine der gemeinsamen Zugehörigkeit zu einem Staat vergleichbare Dichte besitzt”).<sup>49</sup> And, second, a civil society becomes a “people”, in the sense of the sum of a polity citizens, only by interacting with constitutional rules and institutions. This point is clearly expressed in the following statement by Ulrich Preuss: “Neither pre-political feelings of commonness – like descent, ethnicity, language, race – nor representative institutions as such are able to create a polity, be it a nation-state, a multinational state or a supranational entity. Rather, what is required is a dynamic process in which the will to form a polity is shaped and supported through institutions which in their turn symbolise and foster the idea of such a polity”.<sup>50</sup>

Sure, a common language among citizens and between civil society and political institutions is needed in order to have public discussion and thus public reason. However, a common language can be a conventional or an artificial one. To be citizens, individuals should be able to communicate with political authorities: they should be able to understand each other. But this does not imply at all that to this purpose individuals should use their own mother tongue. Any other language will do, provided it is common to the parties.

It may be the case that in the European Union, we do not still have such a common language. Nonetheless, such a language can be found. We can think of a lingua franca emerging in the ongoing process of European integration or of a net of various national or regional languages employed each at a different level and for a certain occasion but allowing a continuous flux of information.<sup>51</sup> Moreover, the common language does not need to be in any occasion the same. We could perhaps apply a kind of subsidiarity principle to the use of the different languages, choosing the one or the other according to the context and the dimensions of the issue at stake and the

---

<sup>48</sup> BVerfGE 89, 155 [185], italics mine. For a powerful criticism of the constitutional *Weltanschauung* of the German court as expressed in this decision, see J. H. H. WEILER, *Does Europe Need a Constitution? Reflections on Demos, Telos, and the German Maastricht Decision*, in “European Law Journal”, 1995, pp. 219 ff.

<sup>49</sup> BVerfGE 89, 155 [184]. Italics mine.

<sup>50</sup> U.K. PREUSS, *Problems of a Concept of European Citizenship*, in “European Law Journal”, 1995, pp. 277-278. Italics in the text.

<sup>51</sup> See what Jürgen Habermas opposes to Dieter Grimm's defence of cultural homogeneity as legitimation for democracy (J. HABERMAS, *Comment on the paper by Dieter Grimm: 'Does Europe Need a Constitution?'*, in “European Law Journal”, 1995, pp. 303 ff.).



people (and the languages) concerned. “Zweitens – as was pointed out by Edmund Bernatzik, a leading public lawyer of Austria Felix – kann man ja eine fremde Sprache lernen”.<sup>52</sup> In any case successful European experiences such as for instance the Erasmus Programme or the European University Institute in Florence (a university is an institution for which communication is of utmost relevance) show that it is possible at least to have a European university even without a European folk.

Europe admittedly is not a nation, European citizens as such either. It is high time perhaps that the one (Europe) and the others (European citizens) combine their plans, leaving the nation to its old-fashioned nightmares of blood and soil.

## Belonging to a European polity

I am not so much concerned about the sociological evidence supporting the romantic thesis according to which peoples and nations are homogeneous ethnical and cultural entities. My stance towards this thesis is quite radical. Should it be true, should nations be Volksgemeinschaften, that would not still be a legitimisation ground for a genuine democratic polity. Since democracy is based on intersubjective discourses and representation, any process which would work without an explicit reference to individual and interindividual will formation, would not be appropriate to offer any democratic legitimisation to a polity. The demos of democracy certainly is not ethnos.

Yet, in order to defeat the foolish resistance, we might recall a historical fact : that in most cases the so-called Schicksalgemeinschaft is the outcome, an artificial product, of the State or of other reflective political processes.<sup>53</sup> This was recognised in 1933 by Hermann Heller, he himself a strong defendant of nations as Schicksalgemeinschaften (and therefore quoted in the “Maastricht Urteil”),<sup>54</sup> when he is confronted with the rise of the Nazi regime. “Weder das Volk noch die Nation dürfen als die gleichsam natürliche Einheit angesehen werden, die der staatlichen Einheit vorgegeben wäre und sie selbsttätig konstituierte. Oft genug war es [...] umgekehrt die staatliche Einheit, welche die “natürliche” Einheit des Volkes und der Nation erst gezüchtet hat. Der Staat ist mit seinen Machtmitteln durchaus im Stande selbst aus sprachlich und anthropologisch verschiedenen Völkern ein einziges zu machen.”<sup>55</sup> Peoples in the cultural sense, in some cases at least, are not prior but posterior to the State's (sometimes brutal) intervention. The “ethnical” homogeneity

---

<sup>52</sup> E. BERNATZIK, Die Ausgestaltung des Nationalgefühls im 19. Jahrhundert, in ID., Die Ausgestaltung des Nationalgefühls im 19. Jahrhundert – Rechtsstaat und Kulturstaat. Zwei Vorträge gehalten in der Vereinigung für staatswissenschaftliche Fortbildung in Köln im April 1912, Helwingsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, Hanover 1912, p. 27.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. what is said by Oswald Spengler, an author certainly not to be suspected of any “abstract”, “formal”, “thin”, universalist liberal political views : « Die “Muttersprache” ist bereits ein Produkt dynastischer Geschichte. Ohne die Capetinger würde es keine französische Sprache geben[...] ; die italienische Schriftsprache ist ein Verdienst der deutschen Kaiser, vor allem Friedrichs II. Die modernen Nationen sind zunächst die Bevölkerungen alter dynastischer Gebiete » (O. SPENGLER, *Der Untergang des Abendlandes. Umrisse einer Morphologie der Weltgeschichte*, DTV, München 1986, p. 779).

<sup>54</sup> See BVerfGE 89, 155 [186]. Cf. the sharp critical comments by Brun-Otto Bryde (B.O. BRYDE, *op. cit.*, p. 326, note 37).

<sup>55</sup> H. HELLER, *Staatslehre*, 6<sup>th</sup>, rev. ed., ed. by G. Niemeyer, Mohr, Tübingen 1983, p. 186.

of Pale in Bosnia could never be claimed as the outcome of an organic process of communitarian growth.

On the other side, as far as a European “demos” is concerned, we might affirm that, in spite of the lack of one (and only one) common language, there is something like a common European cultural identity. A common history, common tragedies and sufferance, common values, common “myths”– if you like<sup>56</sup>– have made of the French, the Italian, the German, etc., a common “people”. Though a Sicilian can manifest some perplexity in front of a guy dressed in leather pants and a feathery hat drinking litres of beer, she will still identify him as a European like her, with more things uniting than dividing them.

In a democracy to be a citizen, to develop a sense of belonging to a democratic polity, one should overcome one's own rooting in unreflective communities, and be for a moment naked, a mere human being. Moving from this nakedness, one can then freely decide whether and how one wishes to cooperate. Only from this nowhere will persons be able to build up fair terms of co-operation, since in that hypothetical condition there will be no room for discriminatory grounds. Democracy as a polity of equals, should presuppose a kind of “transcendental” nakedness: “Democracy is a system of government according to which every member of society is considered as a man, and nothing more”.<sup>57</sup>

The European identity meant as membership to a European polity can only be the outcome of a reflective adhesion to an institutional body ruled by democratic rules and offering a rich comprehensive set of rights. Thus, the European identity we are in search for passes through the consolidation of a meaningful European citizenship.

---

<sup>56</sup> Cf. F. CHABOD, *Storia dell'idea d'Europa*, Laterza, Bari 1995.

<sup>57</sup> W. GODWIN, *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice and Its Influence on Moral and Happiness*, ed. by I. Kramnick, Penguin, Harmondsworth 1976, p. 486.

## From poetic citizenship to European citizenship

Claire Lejeune

---

If I dwell from the outset on the fact that in this reflection a matter of motives peculiar to a woman, a poet moreover, it is precisely because the citizenship of women and that of poets has been, at the very least since Plato, an object of exclusion. This is to say that both have on European culture and identity, or simply on identity, the other view, a different discourse which has difficulty in making itself heard in public debates. And yet, without it, there is no possible democratic dialogue.

Should we not begin by calling into question the very sense of the word “culture” ? The globalisation of the market economy has made culture a commodity, an **object** of production and consumption. To revitalise it is to give it back its function of well-thought-out action. In the situation of rupture that we are living at the end of the XX<sup>th</sup> century, **cultivating one's mind** means not only enriching one's knowledge of the heritage (patrimony) to be able to enjoy it and be able to transmit enjoyment of it, but chiefly becoming capable of generating a societal **project** of giving birth to the future ; literally, delivering our mentality of the XXI<sup>st</sup> century that it bears so painfully but which it is, however, alone in bearing. I am not of those who believe that “History has more imagination than men” : to trust history to invent the future is necessarily to go in its direction, let oneself go from upstream to downstream, in other words, leave it to its fatality, its determinism, whereas any creation supposes that thought **resists** the force of the mainstream, that it climbs back against the tide of the course of History, that it thinks about itself from downstream to upstream, that it returns to the sources of patriarchal History, not nostalgically to re-immense itself in it, to find in it the ideal original **purity**, but with the ethical intention of bringing to light the foundations of this fratricidal civilisation the endless agony of which we are living through.

### A desire for Europe

All those, men and women, who are set asking about the future of the planet through the collapse of the socio-political systems, the sudden growth of fundamentalist and nationalistic perils, agree that it will not happen without our mentality and behaviour undergoing genuine transformations. We know that the only power capable of undermining and undoing – from the inside – the supreme reign of money can only be born from the intensive development of conscience lagging frightfully behind that of science and techniques, in other words making each citizen aware of his/her responsibilities. That said, what is left is to put this awareness in hand, create and organise this network of resistance to generalised mercantilism, which culture will necessarily have to be in the XXI<sup>st</sup> century.

European citizenship does not exist when it is legitimised by a Treaty only ; when it has no other body than the lifeless body of law. For it to become lively and active it must be desired, it must be rooted in memory's emotional depths where desire reigns.

Creative citizenship cannot do without the order that comes from law any more than without the energy that comes from desire : it becomes of our daily aptitude to embody dynamically the conflictual relationship that the logic of reason and that of passion keep alive in us. From the beginning of our reflection lucidity obliges us to recognise that if Europe does not lack a body that makes law, it generally lacks the desire that makes sense, in other words passion, the emotional motivation that it needs to build itself. Without wanting to psychoanalyse our relationship with Europe, we shall have, for it to come to life, to feel it, to think it out in terms of feeling, and this feeling will have to find the words to spread. Between the murderous hatred of Europe that nationalism and the platonic love which inspires its bigots testify to, it is a matter for qualifying, embodying, humanising this European citizenship which is yet only an indispensable fiction.

The question is that of the existence in us – real or virtual, latent or revealed – of a “desire for Europe” (I say “a desire for Europe” as one would say “a desire for a child”) with which the legislator has hardly been concerned up to now. If this desire exists, what does it correspond to in our imagination ? Does there exist between the strata of the individual unconscious a European unconscious as one says that there exists an African unconscious ? Does an initiation into European citizenship necessarily come through discovering the places of this unconscious, through a recalling of the European mythological sources (Judeo-Christian, Greco-Roman, Celtic, Germanic) ? We know today that myths are, in the memory, where high human energy is focused, the complex and very real places of a violence capable of both destruction and creation. Knowing the deep psychic manipulations that fundamentalism and nationalism, religious and political totalitarianism operate through the unequivocal and dogmatic interpretation of myths and symbols, what work of searching and critical analysis must be undertaken, to become aware of these occult sources of history ? What work of deciphering and enlightenment to turn them into sources of creative energy for a transnational, transpolitical, transcultural Europe ? How shall we go about it so that traditions cease to be the prisons of thought ? How to open them ? What must we do for them to become the very sources of freedom, of the fertility of thought, i.e. of something truly new ?

Everything leads us to believe that it is to the deep level of myths and symbols that we must go back, with open eyes, to free European imagination – the entire imagination – from its historical conditioning, to put it in a position to desire both the diversity and community of its destiny, in other words to motivate conscience to invest its high energies into the construction of a decompartmentalized society. It is clear that if this work of deconditioning, of genuine secularisation of mentalities, is not done, planetary solidarity is doomed to remain a utopia. Humanisation is not self-evident : it is the fruit of working continually on oneself, in other words a culture in depth, in the most down-to-earth sense of the term. No doubt even, it could be said that one is not born human, but that one becomes so. It is of this work without respite of thought on the contents of memory that a society of persons with unlimited responsibility can become.

At the time when women allow themselves – how painfully – to speak on the scene of political disaster, one must know that this speech is new, that its forms of legitimacy are still to be invented. A woman's citizenship does not have to recreate a political-cultural space, but quite simply to create it for itself, for the first time, from the ruins of a History where she ever had only the right to speak in the name of the Father and of the Son, in the name of a sex which is not hers. What seems vital to me today is to rethink the very concept of identity, to understand that the identity principle is also the principle of third-party exclusion. The identity logic is that which invalidates any truth stemming from the crossing of the thought of I and that of the other. It is on the rejection of disturbing strangeness, of impurity, of all that is not white or black, masculine or feminine, dominating subject or dominated object, that the xenophobic History of Nation-States was based. To want to rebuild on the same foundations would be wholly irresponsible.

The human resources that the history to come can rely on are those which were inhibited, doomed, sacrificed by patriarchal History to ensure the stability of its Order. If life on the planet stands a chance of saving itself, of over-arising, it is in the repressed part of patriarchal History that it is buried. What twenty-first century thought is going to have to set off, i.e. cultivate to re-generate oneself, is precisely what Patriarchate has excluded, gagged, burnt to ensure the continuity of its domination. This treasure of the possible is buried in our memory. It is up to each of us (woman or man) to work on their own mental field, to cultivate it for it to become an oasis of true life, a space of creation – both of projection and reflection – in the pervading cultural wilderness.

## **To sex the question of identity**

Faced with the ravages of the evil of exclusion, the most universally prescribed remedy in this fin de siècle is, of course, communication between people, sexes, ethnic groups, and cultures. The term “communication” enjoys a theoretical fortune without precedent and, on the other hand, the technical means that are available to us to attempt to communicate are today fabulous. But never, no doubt, has the hiatus between the virtual and the actual of communication been more gaping than today. It is in the daily passage to the act of communicating that communication breakdowns are the most flagrant, that powerlessness is the most tangible, the most dramatic. But it is nevertheless there where we strongly experience the difficulty of communicating, where we suffer from it personally in our flesh and in our heart, that desire lies, i.e. the chance of delimiting and overcoming it.

If communication is overabundantly provided with theory and technology, we are obliged to note that its ordinary practice is still in its infancy, that its language is still to be invented. The logos of communication are not the mono-logos, they are the dialogos, i.e. the language that is conceived and developed from the interactive knowledge of I and of the other. Dialogue is the communicating language, the interacting language, that which foils the principle of exclusion towards the impure third party. Now, dialogue – the dia-logic of included third parties – forms the subject of no initiation, no learning at school. It is increasingly manifest that a male or female citizen's dialogic capacity – his/her capacity of opening to the other – is the *bête noire* of all forms of religious and political fundamentalism since the latter can only reign through exclusion, through division, to begin with, between the sexes. To create

spaces where this aptitude to opening, exchange, dialogue which is responsible citizenship is to create conditions indispensable to the advent of a real democracy.

It is no longer defensible today not to see the identity question, to stay deaf to the nascent speech of the other subject who is the I of feminine gender. In the light of the recrudescence of fundamentalism it becomes impossible to ignore that the very matrix of any xenophobia is gynophobia, and not the reverse. Now, gynophobia is not only the work of men. We have to note that women themselves can be the patriarchy's worst accomplices. The fear – alas understandable – that they have of being themselves, i.e. different ; to dare think, say and act otherwise than men is still far from overcome ! If the common stake is the advent of a society of persons with unlimited responsibility, this supposes that an end be put to the childish moral codes based on making one another guilty. An adult feminism can only be a matter of solidarity not only of women among themselves, but between lucid women and men, in search of a happy outcome from the patriarchal impasse.

It has not been well enough seen how much the health of the political depends on abolishing the rule of linguistic clichés, in other words, on the male and female citizen's aptitude to form one body, sexed body with his/her language. Everyone agrees that the great remedy to the ravages of hatred and indifference is love. Yes, but how can love be reinvented ? How to free Eros from the murderous empire of Thanatos ? It must first be understood that the eroticisation of the social body necessarily passes through the eroticisation of the body of the language and that the eroticisation of the body of the language necessarily passes through its sexualisation...

In the architecture of a construction there is always – more or less conscious – a logic at work : a logic of closing or a logic of opening. A socio-cultural space is built according to the identity principle (xenophobic exclusion of the impure third party) or according to the solidarity principle (logic of inclusion of the impure third party). According to “eliquishness” or “workshop spirit”. This is to say that an effective democracy can only come from an alliance without precedent of consciences where the humanity of the solidarity principle has prevailed over the inhumanity of the identity logic. It is at the level of the founding principles that the true political cleavage lies. We shall come alive out of this societal crisis, which most agree to qualify as structural, only if thought of the political becomes deeper – not without vertigo – till it gets right to the bottom of its rational and irrational foundations. A cultural act, if ever there is one !

In the current debates on the European Union's political structure, attention is often focused around the word nation. How can we revive a form of nation which is not a people's defensive withdrawal into itself, which is not in advance undermined by the demon nationalism ? The rights and duties of the European Union citizen will not be those defined by the Nation-States patriarchal History. The idea of a European fatherland must be given up. Europe will be a brotherland or will not be. To pass from a closed nation to an open one, of the fatherland-nation to the brotherland-nation will only be done through recognising the effective existence of two equal and different human genders, irreducible to each other. We no longer ignore that we are all bisexual, all impure, all half-castes. A woman's femininity is not a man's as a man's virility is not a woman's, which means that in the relationship between a man and a woman, there are four sexes in continuous interaction. If women's thought proves other than men's it is due not only to the cultural memory difference (the

feminine has not crossed history as dominating subject but as dominated object) but also to the difference in body memory. While a man keeps indelible the physical and emotional memory of having had a mother, he is deprived of having been the belly required by the generation of the other, this place not only of conception and gestation, but of expulsion of another. The link to otherness fostered by feminine identity is undeniably different from that fostered by masculine identity. To recognise this difference in natural and cultural memory between men and women, find words and images to make it noticeable and intelligible instead of continuing to ignore it does not go without giving thought what it needs to regenerate itself.

## A postscript

In deciding to develop as a postscript to my introductory text the words that I spoke during the “Carrefour” I want to testify to that wave which passed among the participants and which Marcelino Oreja called : “the Coimbra spirit”. For the European that I am, clearly there will henceforth be a pre-Coimbra and a post-Coimbra.

In the reflection document that Thomas Jansen has drafted, we are reminded that determining the “political finality” of the European Union must be done on in the perspective of a project of “world federation”. I feel my European citizenship as an interface, as the indispensable mediator between my awareness of belonging to a local, regional community and that of belonging to the world community. European identity can make sense for an individual who wonders about what it means only in relation to a project of planetary citizenship. Even then this individual must of course be motivated to do so, which first assumes that he is wondering about the meaning of his own existence, in other words that he has reached a certain degree of maturity.

The concrete forms of the *we* can only be implemented if desired, imagined, thought up and meant by a multiplicity of *I*. A pluralistic world can only be built by communities of responsible singulars. Real inter-nationality, and inter-culturality can only be conceived and expanded on the basis of a well-thought-out and theorised practice of *intersubjectivity* which would be at the very basis of education.

The mental revolution which can be expected to lead to the advent of a world democracy is occurring at this moment within the family, school and university. The numerous signs given by the current mutations are still being perceived and interpreted as negative signs of disarray, signs of the monological order of the patriarchy collapsing. The high psychic energies – repressed by history – which these mutations are delivering will be translated by acts of destructive violence as long as they do not have available the tools of thought which enable them to transmute into creative power, as long as they have not found the language that actualises the *strangeness* of each man and each woman (the real object of xenophobia) as the very essence of their universality. Over a century ago, Arthur Rimbaud wrote in : *La Lettre du voyant* : “to find a language ; – besides, every word being an idea, the time of a universal language will come ! /.../ This language will be soul for the soul, epitomising everything, scents, sounds, colours, thought catching thought and pulling. The poet would define the amount of unknown waking up in its time in the universal soul : he would give more – than the formula of his thought, than

the annotation of his march to Progress ! Enormity becoming norm, absorbed by everyone, he would truly be a multiplier of Progress.”

The first condition of the advent of an *adult Europe*, responsible both for her own future and that of the planet, is that she worries not only about informing but about forming her citizens, not only about their access to the multiplicity of knowledge, but about their initiation into the *act of thinking for oneself*. Finding a language to express the strangeness, the continual newness of this self-generating thought, necessarily passes through the capacity of *imagining*, the development of the resources of the personal field and the collective field of our imagination. One is not born a creator, one becomes one. Even then one must discover the logics, the dialogics of creation and communication, the tools of interactive thought and learn to use them. Only a culture of *intersubjectivity* will enable us to overcome the spiritual and affective handicap of modern mentality distorted by the exclusive reign of scientific *objectivity*.

What the thought of our times most evidently lacks is neither faith nor reason, it is *vision*. But visionary speech is the fruit of that logic of creation – logic of the included third – which *poïetics* is (*poïein* : to make).

To Hölderlin's question : “Why poets in times of distress?” I would answer first : because the poets who think the world *pre-see* how a utopia destroys itself, an “ideal City” which excludes them, and how a “real City” which integrates their turbulent presence can be built. “Poetry will be in front”, and “the poet will be a citizen”, writes Rimbaud when prophesying the *real* democracy he longs for.

Blind faith in a “lendemain qui chante”, without that visionary lucidity of which René Char tells us that it is “the wound closest to the sun”, can never lead humanity to anything other than a *utopia* doomed sooner or later to collapse.

I hasten to say with Lautréamont, another prophet of real democracy, that “poetry will be made by all”, which means that everyone will have to awaken in themselves the poet that western civilisation has excluded to found its order.

There is only one vision of the future which can pull us out of the belly of the past, project us ahead of ourselves. We must be able to imagine the future ; see it revealing itself (in the photographic sense of the word) on our inner screens ; we must be able to give birth to a picture of the *common* future which is *specific* to us, which is *particular* to us for it to mobilise our deepest energies.

## Spiritual foundation

*Re-enchanting* the world at which a pedagogy of creation and communication aims – a pedagogy of the *inter-* and of the *trans-*passes through questioning thought about its tools.

What makes the difference between the logic of the divisional (of excluded third) and that of a visionary thought (of included third) is the coordinating conjunction of opposites. For the logic of knowledge and power I can be only I *or* the other (the inter is interdicted, i.e. unsaid) ; but when I enter the field of creation and communication, I



am both I *and* the other, co-existing in an analogical relation which underlies their dialogical link : *I am to you as you are to me*. According to the principle of pure reason, A is A and B is B : I cannot be another. Between identity and alterity, all impurity, all ambiguity, all common ownership – all strangeness – has to be deprived of active citizenship.

Europe, said Husserl, cannot forget her spiritual foundation which takes root on the Greek soil of philosophy. I believe that the very notion of “poetic citizenship” cannot be grasped and shared but by the double reference to Plato who excludes it and to Rimbaud who predicts its resurgence. Let us first remember that Plato, in the name of the principle of reason, sees it as his duty to put the poet out of his republic. Like women, children and lunatics, the poet is excluded from taking part in the business of the “ideal City” ; his (magical) thought is deprived of legitimacy, i.e. of citizenship. This is what Plato writes in *The Republic* :

*That was, I went on to say, what I meant, returning to poetry, to justify myself for previously banning from our republic so frivolous an art : reason made it a duty for us to do so. Let us also say to it, so that it may not accuse us of harshness and rusticity, that the dispute between philosophy and poetry does not date from today. Notwithstanding, let us protest strongly that if imitative poetry which has pleasure as its object can prove for some reason that it must have its place in a well-ordered society, we will bring it back into it wholeheartedly.*

As to Rimbaud, he predicts the return of the poet in that prophetic letter which was called la *Lettre du voyant* :

*Eternal art would have its functions, as poets are citizens. Poetry will no longer punctuate action ; it will be ahead. These poets will be ! When the infinite bondage of woman is broken, when she lives by her and for her, man – so far abominable -, having given her the sack, she too will be a poet ! Woman will find things unknown ! Will her worlds of ideas differ from ours ? – She will find strange, unsoundable, repulsive, delicious things ; we will take them, we will understand them.*

Cross-checking these two texts, twenty-three centuries apart from one another, the one the founder of our civilisation, the other predicting its end, is, in the current socio-political context, prodigiously enlightening.

That you invited me to speak among you, I, poet and woman, both delights me and makes me feel hugely responsible. I must find the images and words capable of expressing my own vision of the world being born, knowing that this risks disturbing yours, but at this cost only does it have a chance of *acting*, of inciting you to find whatever words and images will express yours and contest or meet mine. *He who comes into the world to trouble nothing*, says René Char also, *deserves neither consideration nor patience*.

For a real dialogue, an effective democratic game, to occur there have to be at play two different speeches and two different listeners, who *affect, respect, greet one another*, who cease being *indifferent* to one another. A conflictual relation can start generating a trans-personal, trans-cultural, trans-national, trans-political thought only by means of this quadrivocal dialectic which prevents communication from getting

bogged down in the rut of consensus, from being trapped in the homogenisation where what it is to-day agreed to call “la pensée unique” thrives.

## Perception of oneself (conceiving of oneself)

I attempted to make you see in my speeches how links between my poetic citizenship and my European citizenship are woven ; so, these speeches are of the order of the testimony.

Thirty-five years ago occurred in me the illumination – the poetic experience – where I was initiated into my own existence and into the vital need to find a language to express that *disturbing strangeness* which suddenly served me as identity in a basically xenophobic and misogynous society.

The instant before this literally apocalyptic instant (of revelation), I was present neither to myself nor to the world. The instant after my patriarchal imagination was in ruins, I had, on pain of death or madness, to build another one, a dynamic, self-generating imagination. Starting from the desire to become who I really am, I had to re-create for me a love imagination, a family imagination, and a social imagination. To put it in other words, I had, *by means of visionary thought* and of the work of writing, to save myself from chaos : no saviour would do it in my place. Let us say, briefly, that my spiritual dimension – verticality made up of height and depth – was born of this wild initiation into the genesis of consciousness. Conceiving oneself is experiencing the primeval consubstantiality of space and time, of I and the other, of both the woman and the man that I am ; it is reaching the lightning nucleus of SELF of which André Breton said that it is : *the POINT of the mind from where life and death, the real and the imaginary, past and future, what can and cannot be communicated, top and bottom, cease being perceived contradictorily*. He added: *the point in question is a fortiori the one where construction and destruction can no longer be brandished one against the other*.

I understand that the Europe of today too is seeking to know herself, to know her soul, to become aware of who she really is in relation to the world and to put in a token appearance in it ; to express her **project** of post-modern future. In other words, Europe is more or less confusedly seeking to become an adult **we**, i.e. a community of persons and nations with full and entire responsibility.

*It is indispensable for us to produce symbols, images, metaphors*, said Jérôme Vignon. We must give tools of communication other than conceptual but which can be linked to the conceptual to revive it, to re-nature it, to re-humanise it. We must bring into the world – beyond the great hardships of History – a new understanding of the real.

Of this post-modern thought born of the reconciliation of poetry and philosophy, I like to say to myself that it is post-socratic, in the sense that it recalls that prodigious pre-socratic thought which was current before they split.

Thinking as a poet is being able to put oneself into the other's place, being SELF (consubstantially I and the other), but also being able at the same time **to embody**, from the smallest to the largest, all the circles of collectivity I belong to. What would

be the soul of a people other than the one their poets gave them ? If I think Europe as a poet, I identify with her, I espouse her cause, I form one body with her present, I lend her the strength of my visceral resistance to all forms of totalitarianism ; thus I commit myself personally in her quest for a non-fatal outcome to the unprecedented impasse where she is at the end of this century. Let us say that I see my own experience of emancipation as an illuminating **metaphor** of the trying search for herself which Europe is pursuing today. I draw from this analogy not only my motivation but the daily energy that is needed to provide this project of a trans-national, trans-cultural Europe with a body of writing radically other than her “body of laws” which will never have anything but a set language ; that is to say, with a poetic existence without which it will stay a dead letter. Only the influence of an adult poetry – in the sense that it has freed itself from the condition of minor thought where western philosophy confined it -, irresistibly confident in its real power *to change life*, could truly **re-enchant** the world.

If, like Ariadne, I undertake to pursue the metaphor to better understand all that was exchanged thanks to the Coimbra forum, I say to myself that Europe will get out of her crisis of growth, will become a big adult woman only if she dares to call into question the dogma of economism which threatens any moment to “topple her over from the market economy to the market society” : a striking formula which Zaki Laïdi gave us of the peril which is threatening us. Put differently, Europe will not recover from her disaster unless she appropriates the freedom of self-determination, the freedom to choose the model of globalisation to which she wishes to belong. We heard Mario Soares tell us forcefully that he “does not want a Europe exclusively determined by economic and monetary demands but a political, social Europe, a Europe of citizens, a Europe of participation” ; not a Europe that we would have to *suffer*, but a Europe that we have to *make* happen. From the moment that the European Union knows not only what she does not want, but *what she wants to be*, she must change her history, i.e. her relational logic ; she must pass from the identity principle based on the exclusion of *the third's strangeness* which determined the building of xenophobic Europe, to an interactive dia-logic based on the integration of this strangeness, on the actualisation of all mediation between identity and alterity. Only the development of a such a citizenship in the process of building the Union can save Europe from the twofold peril which threatens her : homogenisation or atomisation.

It is urgent to understand that a democratic space can only be built from a mentality structured by the “solidarity principle”, a principle of the interactivity of opposites. Subject A is to object B what subject B is to object A : I am to you what you are to me; logical translation of the principle of Christian charity : love (respect) the other as you love (respect) yourself : a universal formula of a laity to which any religion of love can rally without betraying itself.

## The game of interactivity

As soon as we understand that there are really at play in any human relationship at least two subjectivities and two objectivities, two identities and two alterities, i.e. four elementary truths, the problem of thought is completely transformed. “Telling the truth” supposes from that moment that our four truths recognise one another, interfere, interact, that a dialogical language is invented able to translate not now the duplicity

but the quadruplicity of the real. In this great dynamic game of interactivity, all horizontal, vertical, diagonal relations are authorised. *What disappears in the dynamic structure of real democracy is the inevitability of exclusion.* All aesthetic, ethical and political revival, all possible regeneration of the social body, will proceed from this metamorphosis of the structures of our relational imagination.

The identity of the European Union should appear as that of a societal model which not only succeeds in safeguarding entitlements, but in integrating the great historical, political, economic, technological and ethical upheavals. Which supposes the conception and the implementation of a *logic of construction* which is a *logic of integration* of differences.

The image that I have of the Europe to come is less that of a continent in search of an intellectual leadership able to face up to the rise of the (economic, political and religious) fundamentalisms than that of a living and thinking organism, capable of *metabolising* what has happened to it and what continues to happen to it for better or worse ; so as to be able to build for itself a great contagious health the influence of which works not only to relieve but to heal the extreme misery from which the world is suffering.

I see the European building site as the main, if not the only, chance our planet currently has of saving itself from the perils which threaten it, *of building with new tools of thought* its first “real City”, its first adult democracy, its first trans-national *phratry* on the ruins of xenophobic patriarchate.

# L'identité européenne comme engagement transnational dans la société

Rüdiger Stephan

---

## European identity as a transnational commitment in society

A terminology debate is of no value in the face of the real challenge. The term “identity” is merely a starting point. Psychologists would say that it covers both continuous identification with oneself and permanent adherence to certain traits of character which are specific to a group. On the one hand, identity appears as a criterion for acts intended to provide a synthesis of the self, while on the other hand it signifies a feeling of solidarity with a group. Thus, there are two aspects :

- identity is linked to the individual, the person ;
- identity reflects a state of existence, an outcome, the end of a path.

On this basis, what is the answer to the original question, how can we express this identity which must take on a European dimension ? First of all, it is the individual, the European citizen, who must both give and receive the reply, in the context of his relationship with himself and his environment. The citizen should be able to express this identity, which in turn must be developed together with the citizen. Furthermore, if the identity of the individual is a fulfilment, the sum of a personal history, then European identity is made up of a huge and varied heritage. European identity appears here as being linked to the past, and the future is not a factor. To express European identity through heritage only, however rich this may be, would be to limit oneself to conservatism without a future.

Europe needs visions which relate to the future. The development of a European identity can play no part other than through a European consciousness, bringing in itself movement and evolution, a European consciousness which captures the national identities in their diversity and conceives them as having a common future. Expressing this identity – a forward-looking European consciousness – implies the abolition of antagonism between national and European identities. European identity-consciousness is founded on national identities, and finds its expression in cooperation and interaction. We need this European identity-consciousness in order to avoid wars among ourselves or with others, to pool our resources, and to join forces in the face of the challenges of our time, which transcend national and continental boundaries. We draw this identity-consciousness from a heritage which expresses what is common to us, or what we recognise as being common to us. We draw it from history, the common European traits of which we are rediscovering, after two centuries of nationalism and nationalist interpretation. We draw it from the memory of the past, our memory banks – what are our European memory banks ? We draw it from the symbols which we have succeeded in creating and which we shall be capable of creating in the future. We find it in the democratic institutions and rules which

structure and define life within our societies, the relationships of the individual and society, and the rights and duties of the citizen.

The European Union has neither a political nor a social structure which would give it an “identity” and allow it to develop a citizen's European consciousness, or which would allow the citizen to develop a European consciousness. The Council of Ministers is not European, but inter-governmental. The European Commission acts as if it were inter-governmental. In order to have our voice heard, we must use the channels of the national representations or even national bodies. The European Parliament, the political representation of the citizen, is not truly recognised as such, because its powers, responsibilities and image do not correspond to what the European citizen, accustomed to the role of his national parliament, can or wants to expect from it. Nevertheless, it is the European institution with which the citizen can identify most easily, because it is supranational, or European, and because Parliament fights to give legitimacy to Europe, which also gives it symbolic value. However, there are forces within society which are not representative of national interests and are non-governmental, non-State and transnational by nature. First of all, there is the economic sector, or at least the bulk of it. Industrialists spend all day telling us that their vision is no longer national or even European, but global. The economy creates its own identities – corporate identities, which are neither national nor European. This is what is called the “IBM identity”. The question remains as to whether, with the single currency, the economic sector can also help boost European identity.

There is, however, another sector of society which is developing rapidly. It is known as the “Third Sector”, a term which is both vague (in that it takes in the most diverse forms of organisation) and precise (in the sense that it refers to non-governmental organisations). Civil society translates the will and aspirations of the citizen and quite naturally goes beyond the national context – in fact increasingly so. As every domain of society is affected by, or is open to, international pressures, these organisations nowadays all engage in activities which to a greater or lesser extent go beyond national confines.

This “Third Sector” – the expression has come to represent organisation, solidarity and community – represents the commitment of the citizen within society and through society. The Third Sector is not a third country, but a sector of present-day society which should become an increasingly important communication partner, a forum for proposals and for implementing new solutions needed to resolve the major problems facing us today. If we wish to develop European identity-consciousness, this movement towards more Europe, in and with the citizen, if we wish to organise participation and interaction, we must find, or in my view create, a way of organising relations between the Third Sector and the European institutions.

As the social and cultural organisations of the Third Sector reflect this commitment on the part of the citizen to non-State and non-public forms of organisation and institution, it is necessary to create a space in society giving the citizen a voice outside the national framework, a European space in which the citizen's commitment to society can be expressed. This societal space should be able to communicate regularly with the European Parliament, whose powers would have to be extended, and with the European Commission. Participation and interaction could be expressed and organised around major subjects of civilisation, such as work and integration into

society, national and European memory banks, European citizenship training for the younger generation, and the development of a European language policy.





## Security and a common area

Adriano Moreira

---

One way of analysing comparable transitions from unity among nations to a united Europe is to see it in peaceful terms as the setting of a boundary against a hostile power which threatens freedom and integrity.

Let us say that as a general rule the fact of being subjected to the same climate of aggression generates a common defence system and the emergence of an identity through the feeling of security experienced in relation to the threat. Although Toynbee regards the West as the present-day aggressors, identified as such from outside by the peoples of the former colonial territories, the fact of being surrounded by a common threat has more than once united Europe.

This was the situation in Western Europe for more than half of a century dominated by the military pacts (NATO and the Warsaw Pact), until it came to an end in 1989 with the fall of the Berlin Wall, and yet Western Europe was involved in defending a plan to unite the area from the Atlantic to the Urals. It thus firmly refused to be "*le petit cap au bout de l'Asie*", as Valéry used to put it.

### A political era

Identity implies a *common area* which has a geographical form, but this will only have a border if, for unambiguous reasons of security, solidarity among the peoples involved and well-established sociological proximity, that identity is assumed. Article 0 of the Maastricht Treaty lays down that any European State may become a member, but it does not attempt to define a European State.

In fact the supposed common area is divided by various formal frontiers which do not coincide but were laid down for pragmatic reasons with a view to achieving the overriding objective. The European Union has 15 members since 1995 (when Austria, Sweden and Finland joined) and is considering admitting another 12 at the beginning of the next century, which is nearly upon us. The Council of Europe has 39, including Russia since 1996, which should make us wonder whether the area is broadening out or joining up. Meanwhile the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) has 54, which raises the very same question in a more complicated form.

The sea frontier is extremely long, from the North Sea down the Atlantic seaboard to the Mediterranean, a fact which raises the opposite question to the one about the Council of Europe, i.e. whether the European identity has the effect of fragmenting the Atlantic identity which is still best expressed through NATO.

This multiplicity of formal frontiers, outlining areas which do not coincide, points towards a definition of a *political area* demarcated by a series of common threats facing

it and a common determination to confront them. In Europe's experience, historical internal conflicts are identifiable as such and are not to be confused with external threats.

Title V of the Treaty of Maastricht defines as one pillar of the European Union a common foreign and security policy, leading eventually to a common defence policy, but does not make a distinction between the internal frontier formed by the threat of the recent past and the external panorama constituted by a world context in flux.

It should be remembered that the founding fathers of the new Europe, Jean Monnet, Adenauer and Schuman, had in mind to free Europe forever from the spectre of civil war, with Germany and France in the leading roles, and in the area of security it is WEU which reflects that rivalry most clearly : the United States came over to Europe to fight twice in the same generation because of that historical conflict, and the object of WEU was to define a restrictive arrangement for the entry of the Federal Republic of Germany into NATO.

The external threat is a different issue, and that was reflected in the Atlantic Alliance for the half-century when the world was divided into two opposing camps.

## Europe and the Atlantic Alliance

At the present time, when diplomacy conducted as a Nixon-style strategy, with the three pillars formed by the United States, Russia and China, seems once more to be to the fore, the question of a European identity in the political field of security and defence, which will be responsible for defining whatever geographical frontier is eventually adopted, seems to be couched in the following terms :

a return by Russia to the historical nation-based strategic concept, with the idea of a “*near-abroad*” (the former satellite countries), and an attempt to reconstitute the geographical borders prior to 1989, in response to the creation by the Atlantic Alliance and Europe of “*near friends*” from the Baltic to the Mediterranean, a development made very clear by the Barcelona Conference this year ;

the Western security organisation, to which the former Eastern European bloc is applying, and NATO, a group of countries which all aspire to be admitted to the European Union as well, thereby showing that they treat the two frontiers, the economic and political frontier on the one hand and the security frontier on the other, as autonomous ;

in the Mediterranean region, NATO is also being pressed to provide a security frontier by the countries in the North African corridor, while it is from the EU that they also seek support for their political, economic and social development ;

NATO is consequently being forced to give thought to adopting a new profile :

- in addition to the collective defence objective, it now provides logistical and military support for the peace-keeping operations flowing from the UN's *Agenda for Peace* of 31 January 1992 ;

- it has laid bridges for cooperation with the East such as the North Atlantic Cooperation Council of 1991 and the Partnership for Peace of 1994 ;
- against this background, WEU has once again been brought into action as a point of reference for the Europeanisation of defence.

Here it seems that the ongoing overhaul of the United States' strategic concept and the process of formulating a European strategic concept which is now under way are bound to acknowledge that the European security frontier and the NATO security frontier are still tending to coincide. In that case, the common defence policy, or any common defence system for the European Union which emerges, is clearly first and foremost an internal question for the Atlantic Alliance, following half a century of solidarity.



## Neither Reich nor Nation - another future for the european union

Roger De Weck

---

What is it that keeps us Europeans together ? What is it that links the British, who so love to rage against the Continent, to the Poles or the Portuguese ? What do we have in common ? What are the differences, which not only divide but also unite us ? Is there a European identity ? The very fact that we raise the question of identity betrays the European in us.

The French philosopher, Edgar Morin, speaks of Europe's "manifold unity" or "unitas multiplex". For all the variety of North America, its binding forces are obvious to the observer. The most striking feature of our continent is its diversity.

Certainly, the whole of Europe shares the inheritance of Christianity ; indeed for centuries awareness of "Christendom" was much stronger than the notion of "Europe". But as Europeans desert the Christian churches in their droves, this last vestige of the Western heritage loses its relevance. Christianity no longer unites Europeans, but nor does it divide them.

As time goes by, our other great legacy – the Enlightenment – becomes less and less specifically European. Other regions of the world have long drawn on this inheritance (just as other continents have become more Christian than our own).

But more importantly, if the spirit of the Enlightenment forms part of European identity, then this particular part has been damaged since the Holocaust. The interplay of nationalism, imperialism and totalitarianism, which, sad to say, is all too European, brought disaster. Europe proved incapable of saving itself by its own efforts. We had to be liberated. Our fate hung on the United States, and that has undermined our self-confidence. In a century that has seen the most terrible of wars, the North Americans too have often gone astray. But they have always rejected totalitarianism. The United States is not only stronger as a result, but also more decisive. There was no American Voltaire, but nor was there an American Hitler.

### **What is not European**

All of us in Europe have at least one identity, which we experience again and again and which can sometimes break right through to the surface – I'm talking here of a "negative identity". We may not know exactly what it is to be European, but we are quite sure of what is not European. We Europeans have never had hard and fast criteria for determining what counts as Europe. Our continent is ill defined both politically and culturally. Not even geography can help us – does our Eastern border really run along the Urals ?

During the Cold War, many Westerners forgot that the “far-off” countries of Central and Eastern Europe were utterly European in character. Despite all the anti-American feeling prevailing at that time, they felt much closer to America and still do. Even so, seldom do we feel as European as when we watch an American television series, which may explain why they are so successful. They are foreign to us and yet familiar.

According to one of the classic interpretative models used by psychologists, identity stems from negation. Europeans are hardly ever as united as in their determination to marginalize others. But there must be more to Europe than that, for in the long run negation is not enough : it offers a weak identity in which we protect our own egos by demonising others. For example, the British make a habit of “splendid isolation” and the Swiss nurture their “hedgehog” mentality. It is as if the Confederation would collapse were it not surrounded by enemies : the rabble-rousers on the Swiss right brand the EU as the “Fourth Reich” and one Green politician has waffled on about the “Empire of Evil”.

## **Expressing a common sense of purpose**

Europe is in fact made up of former enemies. When British Prime Minister John Major picks a fight with the European Union, his crisis team in London is immediately dubbed the “war cabinet”, proving that the past is still close at hand. And yet wherever Europeans have finally come together, they now live in peace. New wars in Western Europe are virtually unthinkable and the Cold War is history. However, war and civil wars will remain a distinct possibility in Eastern Europe until its countries are able to join the European Union.

The German Chancellor Helmut Kohl was right when he observed that ultimately the European question is still a question of war and peace. And just as Switzerland sees itself as a nation created by an act of will, there is in Europe a growing identity, both in the literal and in the figurative sense, that is also based on an effort of will. The vast majority of Europeans share an “identical” and hence “identity-forming” will to establish a peaceful, united Europe. What is at work here is a positive identity : the twin concepts of will and reason are very much European. No doubt, the European Union will face many setbacks in future, but it will hardly sink to a point so low that disintegration could mean destabilisation and even lead to war.

This is because of the workings of what the French call “le sens de l’histoire” – in both senses of the term : Europe is moving in a certain “direction” and in so doing is giving itself a “purpose”.

Individuals object to having an identity foisted on them. Identity cannot be decreed from above by nation states or by the European Union, for it is something organic, which develops from small beginnings and either thrives or withers away. The EU is simply a powerful expression of a common sense of purpose shared by many Europeans, who, after centuries of war, have finally become aware of their responsibility for their own continent. A Europe of the nations may be the rallying-cry for some, but Europe is first and foremost a warning against the hubris of these same nations.

“Verfassungspatriotismus” – or loyalty to the constitution – is a familiar concept in Germany. Underpinning the European idea is a kind of “loyalty to peace”, which, however, is now fading away fifty years after the end of the Second World War. As time goes by, the younger generation which was spared those horrors has less and less sense of purpose and, in this respect, resembles the directionless and disoriented Swiss, since they too escaped the heavy toll in human lives.

The EU Member States were not far enough down the road to a common security policy to prevent the carnage following the break-up of Yugoslavia. If Europe had been up to the task, the question of identity would hardly be raised any more. Identity is also a matter of success.

## **Competition between world regions**

Is success at all possible in an era of mass unemployment where the virus of social disintegration infects everything which is not already geared to out-and-out economic warfare? Globalisation (internationalisation) threatens both national and European identities – as if one day the only remaining form of identification will be that of the worker with the mega-firm that employs him.

Yet the EU is not perceived as a force for order and moderation which is striving (for example through monetary union) to control the forces of globalisation and, logically, to steer in the opposite direction, something the nation states have long been incapable of. On the contrary, the EU is seen – albeit unjustifiably in many cases – as one of the mainsprings of the globalisation process which is oppressing countless individuals. This provokes national resentment. National politicians heighten the mistrust by claiming for themselves the credit for all political successes and laying the blame for failures at the EU’s door.

However, Europe is not merely a scapegoat, but at the same time the exact opposite: the hopelessly overburdened standard-bearer of hope, which is bound to disappoint, because so many people would like it to disappoint. Europe acts as a blank screen on to which the Frenchman can project his yearning for “grandeur”, the German his deep-seated need to belong, the Briton his uncompromising cries of “I want my money back”, and the Eastern European his desire for stability and a guarantee of democracy, the rule of law and human rights.

While we are on the subject of human rights, in the vast globalisation process now under way, the old European claim to universal values is rebounding on Europe itself. Now that our continent is no longer at the centre of world events, Europeans must face up to the competition of values and identities. Just as the Swiss always feel the urge to retreat into their little corner, many Europeans also tend to withdraw into themselves in order to protect their own egos.

Yet if there is one single characteristic that defines Europe, it is that curious capacity for openness, which our continent displays time and again and has contributed to the “infinite richness in a little room” that so delighted Marlowe. Europe has left its mark over the whole globe, but it has also proved to have a voracious appetite itself, being perfectly capable of absorbing influences from all over the world and positively devouring foreign ideas, without surrendering any of its own identity.

However, globalisation unleashes the forces of homogenisation. It also throws open the question of the balance of power between continents. Must – indeed can – Europe summon up the will to compete as a united force against other regions of world ?

Since the passing of Charlemagne, the diversity of Europe has been ranged against the concept of a single European power. Our instinct is not to concentrate, but to divide, spread out and split up. Our logic is not that of a single centre, but of multiple centres. The concept of a “European nation”, which is ultimately bound up with power politics, is a contradiction in terms. Balkanisation is the real danger. The European Union lies somewhere in between.

For far too long, Europe has swung between Scylla and Charybdis, between the Reich and the nation. The EU does not fit into this pattern ; it breaks the vicious circle. It is neither Reich nor nation and hence truly modern. Perhaps European identity is actually to be found in the new and lasting phenomenon of networks, which was first developed by the generation of '68 and took off with the electronic revolution. In many ways the European Union is – and is at its best as – a network. What the Swiss fail to understand, as outsiders with little first-hand experience, is that the EU has something more important than its institutions : the network of connections, the day-to-day working relationships remote from diplomatic channels, the exchanges. And these exchanges give rise to the “manifold unity”, which according to Edgar Morin is the life-blood of Europe.

## **Identity is a process**

Our generation has experienced both the integration of Western Europe and the disintegration of Eastern Europe. In the West the decades-long enthusiasm for the unification process – identification with the EU – has been somewhat dampened, particularly where closer union has degenerated into homogenisation. In the East, many people see Europe as providing an ersatz identity. This is just one of many examples that identity is not something static and does not always remain what it was.

Identity is more of a process, and processes have driving forces, restraining forces and opposing forces. Identity always springs from contradictions and never becomes fully – and inhumanly – coherent. On the contrary, identity contains within it crisis in the original Greek sense of “krisis” – decision. That is one of the reasons why the European Union often cuts a poor figure, just as the Swiss Confederation presented an unflattering picture for most of the 550 years before the founding of the Federal State – civil war, treachery, pacts with foreign powers, intrigue and ineffective parliaments. It is actually growth which prompts the outbreak of identity crises.

In a brilliant essay for the literary supplement of the “Weltwoche”, Adolf Muschg recently asked « How much identity does Switzerland need ? ». Similar questions on the quantity and in particular the quality of identity could be asked about Europe. However, Muschg also went on to ask, « What is it that Switzerland still has to protect from Europe ? » Perhaps the difference is that Europe is looking for a new identity, while Switzerland is trying not to lose its old one.



# What does it mean to be a European ?

## Preliminary conclusions

Jérôme Vignon

---

From the very outset, at the preparatory meeting for the Coimbra Seminar, the historian **Gilbert Trausch** warned us that the task we faced was one fraught with difficulties and risks. “Though the search for a European identity is a classic exercise, indeed almost a commonplace for the social science disciplines, the quest for an identity specific to that very new arrival among the ranks of political animals, the European Union, is a much tougher proposition.” In other words, to the historian's mind, the shaping of a collective identity is a long process, in contrast to the brief span of time occupied by the integration of Europe so far. Let there be no misunderstandings on that score.

With this caveat ringing in its ears, the Coimbra Seminar proceeded to business. Advancing in stages, it started with what it means to be European as a general concept, then moved on to the challenges raised by political unification of the European continent in the here and now. The discussion progressed by way of the idea of a “European project” which arose spontaneously as participants made their contributions. Alongside the centrality of the political necessity of 'the European project', four other main categories emerge : legitimacy, necessity, the project and interactivity.

### Legitimacy

Was it proper, for the proponents of an integrated Europe, to seek to mobilise the many facets of a European identity – history, culture, values and so on – to their own advantage, so as to construct some kind of political legitimacy for themselves ? In so doing, were they not falling into a double trap ?

A collective identity was the outcome of an approach which needed to be seen in context and in proportion. If it was supposed to appeal to “ordinary people”, then it could only be from the standpoint of their particular perceptions and experiences where we stand now at the end of the XX<sup>th</sup> century.

To seek to exploit the material traditionally used to forge national identities was to ignore the special qualities of openness and multiculturalism, which were the marks of a truly European identity.

**Jose Vidal Beneyto** disposed elegantly of these two posers. Reminding his listeners of the academic achievements chalked up by the sociology of knowledge, he stressed that there was no going back on what the experts now agreed on : “Like individual identities, collective identities exist *de facto*. It is not improper to refer to them,

provided we recognise that the European identity evolves in step with whatever age we live in : it is a moving thing, not a thing established once and for all. And it goes much further than that : a collective European identity is bound to encompass not just variations but – especially – contradictions, contradictions which must be managed, and that is the job of politics. The purpose of a 'project' is just that, to reconcile contradictions, at the same time using the lessons we have learnt from the past and from a shared culture.”

## Necessity

The bond between the identity of the European Union and a common project is not something which has come about in a void, simply through the inspiration of a few founding fathers, or a historical accident. It also owes its being to necessity, and to the will to which it gives rise.

Here, the Coimbra Seminar brought out a telling parallel between the 1950s and the 1990s.

We are, in a sense, entitled to say that there was more to the setting up of community of countries belonging to the Western European camp from the time of the Hague Conference onwards than a deliberate plan by the Fathers of Europe. This community of belonging also sprang up and developed under pressure from a political necessity, the necessity created by the East-West dispute. An economic integration process, one might say, was a way of responding to a geopolitical necessity, in which case the brainwave of the pioneers of European integration was to harness this economic vehicle up to a prior objective which went much deeper, a plan for solidarity and reconciliation which went beyond the immediate geopolitical challenges. This was the sense in which **Filippo Pandolfi** was able to say that “it was only after 1989 that the full scope of the European project could be seen, its *raison d'être*, if you like.”

**Marcelino Oreja** reminded us that today, it was economic constraints, bringing with them the nagging challenges of competitiveness, which were the driving forces in integration. The progress made from 1985 to 1991 led to a political leap, the Economic and Monetary Union, which was itself reinforced by the geopolitical demands of enlargement. The Intergovernmental Conference now under way ought to graft a collective project adapted to meet the challenges of the present day.

To put it another way, in the 1990s as in the 1950s, pressure of necessity created an opportunity for a new collective departure. If there was a secret behind the identity of a Political Union, it was that it should be capable of giving a generally accepted sense to the sweeping changes occurring in the European continent, over and above the geopolitical momentum behind them.

## The project

What should such a project consist of, “now and for the future”, if that shared sense was to unfold ? What, in other words, was to be the *telos*, the ultimate objective ? Are we not entitled to expect an answer to this question from those responsible for European integration, from those who govern, but also from the intellectual elite ?

Some speakers stressed the importance of overhauling the European social model, threatened as it now was by its inability to reconcile opening out to the world with maintaining social cohesion (**José Vidal Beneyto**). **Bonaventura Sousa Santos**, in fact, proposed focusing our efforts back on restoring the *State* and the *community* once the other pillar of the European social model, the market, had outgrown itself.

Others wanted to go still further along the path of reshaping the model. Defining their stance in relation to the global challenges of the environment and population growth, they saw a contemporary European identity as an awareness of the urgent need for changes in lifestyles and patterns of consumption. **Edy Korthals Altes**, for example, saw it as a moral awareness with the capacity to answer the questions about the meaning of life. The same global view of developments in Europe today would, in the eyes of **Zaki Laïdi**, seek to identify Europe with efforts to act as an effective mediator for the world. President **Mario Soares** went so far as to say that the world needed a Europe capable of translating the spirit of democracy which was the only foundation it had at the present time into acts of international solidarity.

Those who identified the European Union with a way of giving a deeper dimension to democracy alluded to a project which was as much a cultural as a political exercise. In the words of **Massimo La Torre**, it was a matter of establishing, by law, a genuine European citizenship. Freed of any ties to the prior possession of a particular nationality, it would be the seedbed of an identity linked directly to democratic ideals, a sort of constitutional patriotism in the pure state. For **Claire Lejeune**, the Political Union should be one where the implicit subjection of men to women would have been overthrown.

While invoking the urgent need for the European project to have a *telos*, those attending the Seminar stressed that the *demos* must be involved in the work of putting such a project together. In other words, to give expression to a European identity today meant embarking on a process of exchange, of listening and of interaction.

## Interactivity

Warnings against the risk of overintellectualising came from intellectuals themselves. **Heinrich Schneider** pointed to the risk of totalitarianism lurking behind the concept of an avant-garde, if it were one enlightened not by reason but by a moral consciousness. **Truls Frogner** spoke of what the most deprived groups in Europe really expected in terms of jobs and unemployment. **Maryon McDonald** insisted on what made sense to people. This brought the meeting back, when it came to what it meant to be a European, to the sphere of “communicating”, to “how to share, listen and receive”, to “how to inspire and deserve trust”. This was the point in the Seminar at which speakers' contributions became more specific and closer to the work being done by the European institutions. Under the subject heading of an *interactive identity*, four aspects were discussed : the institutions in the strict sense of the word ; communication ; new forms of mediation ; and, lastly, the need to foster interaction between the Member States and the Union.

1. **Heinrich Schneider**, a veteran of the battle for federalism, thought it was time to build something new out of the old federal mould. The institutions should be judged less against the yardstick of unity than on the basis of new criteria : whether the

executive inspired confidence, whether joint action was effective, whether someone was visibly answerable for the exercise of power. It would have been hard to find a better definition of some of the challenges facing the IGC.

2. In the view of **Elemer Hankiss**, who was Head of Hungarian Television from 1991 to 1992, what the European Commission needed to overhaul was not so much its messages (though these, he said, were still not getting across strongly enough in his country) as its methods. Opportunities for working out what European integration meant in the present day needed to be provided in the shape of hundreds of forums like the Coimbra Seminar, where intellectuals, people from cultural and scientific backgrounds and journalists would debate the underlying issue, the *raison d'être* which **Filippo Pandolfi** had referred to. One was reminded of Denis de Rougemont saying that the search for Europe was itself Europe.

3. Many participants felt that the Commission did not allow enough space for mediation by associations acting as relays to develop, meaning the many hundreds of NGOs already structured into European networks which were capable of expressing the European sense of an operation carried out at local level, not to mention acting as the expression of a moral consciousness. **Edy Korthals Altes** spoke for them when he spoke of the practice of dialogue between religions at the European and Mediterranean levels.

4. We should stop acting and talking as if the Union and the nations in it were in competition. Nations were part of what it meant to be European, **Maryon McDonald** maintained. Bearing in mind the immense symbolic challenges posed by a single currency, we should leave it up to the national apparatuses, with their huge capacity to influence and respond, to talk to European people about Europe. Nor should we forget that farmers, students, textile workers, bosses of small businesses, doctors and trade unionists, in the publishing business, experienced Europe in the first instance through their day-to-day occupations.

*When the debates were over, some self-criticism emerged. Perhaps our group had taken too much of a consensus view. Had it allowed enough space for the anti-Maastricht protest voice to be heard? Did it reflect the doubts and bewilderment in the minds of some grassroots voters? The unconscious temptation to preach to the converted was certainly there, and we should bear it in mind when later Seminars came up. But a Seminar on Science and Culture was not there to do the work of a parliament: what it aspired to do was to think matters through and go back over the experience of the past. In that sense, Coimbra was a great help to us.*

## Annex:

### A dialogue on unemployment between Truls Frogner and his Neighbour

---

You have not yet heard the trade union voice.

Some people think that trade unions are fading away. Well, in Europe we have the ETUC, the *European Trade Union Confederation*, with member organisations from 33 countries, after the enlargement eastwards last December. Now, some 55 national organisations, representing more than 50 million members, come together in the ETUC to discuss and decide on common matters and then take care of our joint interests in the European Union and the *European Economic Area* (EEA).

Do you know any other and more representative non-governmental European organisation ?

In the European Union's search for its identity, a trade union has a relevant message. In my context, to be in a union means to take care of each other, knowing that acting together may give better results for all than acting individually.

Let me also add that in Norway, *community* has a more positive connotation than *union*, since my country, for many years, was the weaker part in unions with other countries. A *union* in Norway is also associated with foreign rule.

In our discussions today, I have heard that the magic words “European identity” contain the concepts of *diversity*, *legitimacy* and *transcendence*. My neighbour in Norway does not understand this and seldom speaks of identity. But he lost his job some months ago, and I can see this is doing something to his identity.

I told my neighbour last week that I was going to Coimbra to discuss the “European identity.”

- What is that ?, he said.
- Well, we are supposed to find out, I replied.
- Do you have to go to Coimbra to find that out ? Why not here ?
- No, it is easier to see what you are from the outside. In Sweden, I feel Norwegian. In Brussels, I feel Scandinavian and in Tokyo, I feel European. When I'm in a pub in Boston, I'm still in Europe.
- I understand. As an unemployed person, I feel the importance of a job...
- So, my friend, what is the European identity to you ?

- Nothing ! Does it create jobs ?
- It depends...
- What do you mean ? Does it or does it not ?
- It creates peace. What kind of employment policy is possible in Bosnia ?
- Stop ! The European Union did not prevent war in ex-Yugoslavia.
- Agreed, but in the old days, local war spread through all of Europe. The European Union, together with NATO, made this impossible.
- OK, peace is a natural thing now. War will not happen in Europe again.
- Are you sure ?
- To be honest, no. I'm not sure of anything. Without a job, I don't know where I belong. How could I identify with the European Union if it does not create jobs ?
- European Union made a report on "Growth, competitiveness and employment"...
- Reports are not reality. The European Union is a marketplace. Growth and competitiveness yes, jobs no !
- With 20 million unemployed in Europe, it seems you are right. On the other hand, the European Union may change its treaty and enshrine employment in it.
- Interesting, but paragraphs don't create jobs. Moreover, national governments don't follow up.
- Should the European Union be the scapegoat if national governments fail in their economic policy ?
- I admit you have a point. Moreover, unemployment is high outside the European Union, too. Except in Norway where it is 4% and the inflation rate is below 1%. But still, these positive figures don't help me.
- We take you seriously. Within a short time, you will be offered a job, a labour market (professional training ?) course or another active alternative. And this is not mainly thanks to oil and gas, but to our social model and cooperation for employment.
- Why can't the European Union do the same ? Isn't cooperation a part of what you call the European identity ?
- Good question. Maybe because... eh... maybe...
- Well, Truls, come on !
- I'm not really sure why the European Union has not used its potential.

- Can't you ask them in Coimbra ?
- I will.
- Do you know what I think ? I think the European Union pays too little attention to the social dimension and too much to economic matters, or they have too narrow a concept of economy.
- Yes and no. Where else in the world will you find such close relations between the social partners and politicians ?
- Now you're talking me around again. It doesn't help me if you, on the one hand, speak of a fine European social model in a global context, and on the other hand, you have welfare cutbacks and rising unemployment.
- It is a part of the European political identity to say one thing and do something else.
- Ah ! Now I know what the European identity is : *contradiction over unity*.
- It's true, but it could also be *unity over contradiction*.
- Please tell me, Truls, why should I – being unemployed – identify with the European Union ?
- The answer is both simple and complicated ; at one and the same time, the European Union identifies with you and with 20 million more people without jobs.
- In that case, I will wait and see.
- Oh no, this time I will challenge you. Why should you wait to see what the community can do for you ? Shouldn't you also ask yourself what you can do for the community ?
- Hmm... let's make a deal. I will, in spite of unemployment and a poor private economy, keep my trade union membership and join the European Movement. But you should take an initiative to strengthen the European Union with what is important to my identity – employment. In practice ! Not only in fine words.
- Agreed. You have a deal.
- Not quite. Only a temporary deal.
- Of course. Europe is not finished yet. Identity is something moving and invisible – an Unidentified Flying Object !





## List of contributors

---

**Tom Bryder**, Senior Research Fellow, Institute of Political Science, University of Copenhagen

**Truls Forgnér**, Director of Political Affairs, Federation of Professional Associations in Norway, Oslo

**Thomas Jansen**, Adviser, Forward Studies Unit, European Commission, Brussels

**Ingmar Karlsson**, Ambassador and Head of Policy Planning Unit, Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Stockholm

**Edy Korthals Altes**, former Ambassador of the Netherlands; President, World Conference on Religion and Peace (WCPR), New York

**Claire Lejeune**, Poet; Secretary General of the Interdisciplinary Centre for Philosophical Studies at the University of Mons-Hainaut, Cléphem, Belgique

**Maryon McDonald**, Appointed Senior Fellow, Department of Social Anthropology, Cambridge University, Cambridge.

**Adriano Moreira**, former Minister, Professor, Technical University of Lisbon

**Heinrich Schneider**, Professor Emeritus, University of Vienna

**Mario Soares**, former President of Portugal

**Rüdiger Stephan**, Secretary General of the European Cultural Foundation in Amsterdam

**Massimo La Torre**, Professor, Department of Law, European University Institute, Florence

**Gilbert Trausch**, Professor Emeritus, University of Liège

**Jérôme Vignon**, former Director of the Forward Studies Unit, European Commission, Brussels (1989-1998). Director for the Strategy, Délégation à l'Aménagement du Territoire et à l'Action Régionale (DATAR), Paris

**Roger de Weck**, Editor of "Tages-Anzeiger", Zürich