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***“The Future of Europe”***

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It is really good to know that meetings like this one take place in Europe. I hope also that from time to time academics leave campuses, go out and talk to people about Europe. Europe must be talked, discussed, shared in debates. It is our duty to make people feel they are co-owners. So thank you, indeed, for the invitation. But as you invited me not as professor but as parliamentarian I would like to take you for a while away from theories and paradigms and talk politics. I would like to share with you my comments on issues which make our efforts to design future of Europe more difficult than ever. Things are happening as we talk. Governments are making decisions which go against democracy, uninformed referenda are held which create new political realities with consequences for generations. There is also a lot of strategic thinking about the future in the European institutions, think tanks, reflection groups, universities.

You might remember that when Lisbon treaty was finally adopted after the failure of referenda on the European Constitution in two member states, there was a general expectation that the direction for Europe had been set for years if not decades. But then new challenges came from global shifts and multiple crises that have forced us to have a more fundamental reflection. On legitimacy, on institutional efficiency, on role of state, on good leadership, on representation of citizens or importance of political economy perspective.

I fully agree with your previous panel that times we, as Europe, live are difficult. Our reality has been shaken profoundly. It is also true that it can be worse. Not only because of recent crises related aftershocks, felt here and there. Also, due to consequences of our action or, indeed, inaction.

Across Europe we are discussing nationalism, xenophobia, jingoism, populism, on how they undermine democracy in and legitimacy of Europe but also how a dysfunctional democracy, both at national and European levels, facilitates those currents in our life. We see member states where governments practice democracy bending the rule of law. We see democratic regression and ethnic and cultural identity tensions. We see that building democratic institutions and having free elections is not enough to ensure that democracy works when there is a lack of political democratic culture.

We continue demonstrating insufficient tolerance of the Other, aggravating already serious risks of the collapse of long treasured ideals, embarking more and more often on a rather disgraceful way of doing politics, facing

helplessness and anger of citizens. Skilful politicians, not only those labelled populists, build on it anti-European feelings and turn people against Europe.

A call for change and an expectation of change can be heard and sensed across Europe. This does not come as surprise. Throughout its history European integration has been in the process of a permanent and massive change, reshaping, reforming, surviving, redesigning itself, using subsequent anniversaries to reflect on its future.

But let me insist that this permanent transformation of Europe has never been an academic or utopian dream. The need for change has been always demanded by the reality around us. All new steps made Europe different but always faithful to its values which inspired the fathers at the beginning. And remained cast in stone. This is under risk today. And when values are lost, we are lost, too.

In mid seventieth, in the south of Europe, dictatorships came to an end. Then, at the end of eighties, a similar process of the end of a totalitarian system took place in the Central East European part of the continent. These were crucial processes leading to unprecedented enlargements of integrated Europe, adding new democratic space to Europe, working as integrating factors of unusual strength. Today, we face the challenge of the opposite. Disintegrating politics grow in strength. External anchors that would work as integrating pro democratic forces are missing. Party systems in democratic states get increasingly fragmented.

For the first time in the history of European integration, there is a risk that political demands inspired by nationalism can take Europe backward. That is why the change Europe needs is not business as usual, it requires a deep rethinking. Sense of urgency is stronger and more spread this time around. I sense also more openness for a critical self-reflection. But one has to admit that we have never had such a variety of opinions on the way to go forward. It is actually amazing when you compare the state of the union address with national perceptions of the Union. What a difference!

In short, if you ask what can happen tomorrow, I would exclude the implosion of the Union, as well as renationalization of Europe; scaling back of powers will not happen, even if subsidiarity arguments become popular; there is no mood for federalism, but federal solutions will continue to be adopted; subsets of states will continue to get together but no group of states would be willing to exclude another group. Taking into account all those contradictions I would say that there is a risk of a revival of a muddling through path of integration. This would imply the lowest common denominator in decision making, mostly reactive, ex post decision making meaning too little and too late type of approach, leaving too much unfinished businesses. But it is also true and would be very much in line with the European tradition that the results of national elections this year can change the mood and willingness to make a leap. Let us keep our fingers crossed.

Actually I am less worrying about the EU as an institutional framework than about Europe as such becoming more regressive, illiberal and backward

looking, I worry about polarization of societies, divisions between losers and winners of change, our ineptness in coping with sky rocketing inequalities, high propensity to bashing and scapegoating, growing openness to identitarianism.

If you ask about the major threat to the future of Europe, I would say nationalism. We, Europeans know it far too well. European history has been marred by nationalistic impulses, leading to bloody prolonged wars which eradicated entire generations.

Fathers of European integration had personal experience of the tragedy of both the first and the second world wars. Fortunately, we continue to bend over the ashes of the WWII but the way Europe entered the First World War, often forgotten, is in a way even more scary. It came from within the European family. The then national leaders seemed to be normal people, like most of those we know today. They were just eaten from inside by the worm of nationalism. Unfortunately, sometimes not the obvious evil is the most destructive. I think here of the hidden evil of good people who give in to bad impulses. Sometimes just to win national elections.

European integration replaced nationalistic impulses with feelings of European universalism. It is hard to imagine something less sexy or romantic than steel and coal. Still it made us friends. It made Europe a peace project. And Europe continues to be above all a peace project. But we somehow missed this moment when the initial legitimation became irrelevant for new generations, unfortunately also for European and national leaders.

What is also worrying for me is that far too often political leaders in Europe claim the need to choose between solutions based on visions and those stemming from a sheer pragmatism. Pragmatism seems to be the preferred option. One of important European leaders has stated proudly that if you need a vision go and see a doctor. My suspicion is that those who call for pragmatic solutions they simply do not have any vision. This is dangerous. It is actually hard to believe that having behind us the history of the First and Second World War, and the Balkans tragedy and the unfriendly neighbourhood, we still have politicians in Europe ready to undermine what has been built over recent decades. Some of them might assume that the European Union has such a strong construction that we may tinker with it here and there for the electoral purposes and it will still stand unmoved. This is not the case. The stability of the EU construction depends not only on formal laws, treaties, regulation, institutions, intergovernmental relations, but most intimately, on the commitment of people to the values that inspired the founding generations. And this commitment today cannot be taken for granted.

We tend to insist that European integration is a miracle that has happened to Europe which throughout its history had been a battle field rather than a paradise of peace. But this miracle did not just happen to Europe. It has always been a "men and women of Europe made" miracle. Future will not come by itself, either. Men and women of Europe will have to make it, create it with their own minds, hands and hearts. Legacy can help. But from both European and national leaders we hear voices calling for departing from the

legacy trend, for reducing the powers of European Institutions and returning them to the Member States, to national capitals as some say. One Member State is set to leave the European Union and "take the control back". The respect of the rule of law is being questioned by one or another government. Certain decisions by the European Court of Human Rights and the rule of law recommendations by the European Commission are considered by some governments as intrusions in national political choices. There are human beings around us who find themselves in absolutely devastating circumstances fleeing wars, poverty, and other disasters, and looking for a better destiny. And we as Europeans do not want them.

Some challenges we can easily see. This is Brexit, this is refugee crisis, and this is the unfinished business of Eurozone architecture and functioning. But there are also less visible, deeply rooted illnesses. I mentioned nationalism as the most serious one. There have been efforts to free Europe from nationalism after the First World War. But Europe was not fully cured. The illness of nationalism came back. The European project has been once again such an effort to eradicate nationalism from European reality. We failed again. Nationalism, xenophobia, jingoism are with us again. Again we are moving from the normal to the crazy. But it is not Europe that is falling, it is the national egoism that is blocking needed solutions.

Many leaders have become populists when it comes to international trade and globalization. Even if hopefully the CETA case will be salvaged at the end, the doubts about the Union's capacity to negotiate, conclude, ratify and implement international free trade agreements are here to stay. The next free trade agreement might be the one on the future relationship between EU and UK once it becomes a third country. And what if - with all due respect - Wallonia is not happy about it? We must be absolutely clear that international agreements cannot become hostages to national or regional interests. Today any of the 28 member states can seek to protect interests of a single affected industry or a company and this way stop any international trade deal. Europe can be paralyzed by narrow interest groups which can always emerge somewhere in the European Union.

There is something wrong with the European political class. Europe lacks political cohesion. There are political leaders in Europe that want to turn back integration clock. But Europe is also a Europe of citizens. Actually, Europe has always been of citizens and for citizens. Those of us who care about Europe should help citizens to free themselves from populists' lies and false promises. We all must get seriously involved in safeguarding and strengthening European democracy. When I say "we" I mean you, academics, people who should leave their campuses as often as possible and talk to others. I mean people like me, parliamentarians and here let me say, and again with all due respect, I worry about national parliaments' care for Europe.

Citizens are different today than sixty or even ten years ago. We must reach out to different ways and means to win public support for Europe but also for globalization. For this to become a reality, we must rebuild confidence capital and solidarity capital. These two European fundamentals have been largely

lost. But can be recuperated. And must be recuperated if we want to get back citizens' attachment to European values and principles. There are strong European democratic forces, there are cohorts of young people in European movements. We could see this when celebrating sixtieth anniversary of the Rome treaties. Given the lack of political leadership, only if we get people on board they can force politicians to start caring about Europe's future.

Designing Europe's future cannot be done with populists and nationalists but against them. I come from this part of Europe where people rejected, through a huge effort, the reality without democracy and freedom and decided through referenda to become part of a common political Europe. It can be done. We must denounce and fight populism but first fight against its causes. Because many of worries of European citizens are real and legitimate. The fact that young people do not vote for mainstream parties has its justification. But the response cannot come through the mainstreaming of populism. This year elections bring the risk that the narrative of disintegration can poison the large swaths of electorate in key member states.

Unfortunately, politicians continue to play the traditional anti-European blame game. They have discovered that in the time of populism it can help them to get nationally re-elected. Actually, it is hard to find leaders who would have courage to win elections under the flag of Europe. Those who sometimes happen to deliver a pro-European speech they do it outside their home country. This hypocrisy is a shame.

Of course Europe has never been perfect. Many mistakes have been done. Their list is rather long. But it is also clear that these collective mistakes require today a collective action. As I said before, Europe has always meant change. And Europe has to continue reforming, changing, with the Brits or without them. We started without them and we will carry on without them. Nevertheless Europe is different after the British referendum and will be even more different after the Brexit itself. Europe will be smaller. Preparing for negotiations we focus on technicalities, legal aspects, formalities. They are important but we should look more carefully into long term consequences. Not only economic, but also political equilibrium will change. The full effects will be known in many years from now. And if I think of the biggest challenge for the Brexit negotiations I would say that this is the capacity of both sides to identify common interests for the long term future. It is true that Brexit has been a unilateral decision. Triggering the article fifty is a unilateral decision but this is the moment when the process stops to be unilateral. Now we are co-responsible for the future of the European continent. There is a common interest between EU and UK, not only between the twenty seven.

Those who call for change in Europe are united in rejecting or questioning the existing status quo. I agree. But right after this short moment of agreement the differences come. Some of those who claim to care about Europe say we should rip the existing institutional model of Europe. We should water down the four freedoms, in particular the one of free movement of people. They say we should re think policies that for far too long had followed the same pattern. We should give up uniform standards and templates and go toward a Europe

à la carte based on a logic of a generous opt-in mechanism. I reject this way of thinking about the change.

Others believe that future, whatever it brings, is certain to progress in a way that is not so different from what is transpiring now. There will be some incrementalism here and there, there will be some exciting leaps forward. There will be some continuation, and some discontinuity. Like in the real life. And it does not bother them that this way of proceeding, of taking care of Europe day by day, would mean reacting ex post to events and processes, in short - being driven by crises. We cannot afford it.

Unfortunately, Brexit comes in a moment when the propensity to march into a folly of intergovernmentalism, reduced to taking the control back to national capitals, seems rather high. We clearly see that member states do not want to surrender their powers, even when there is no doubts that European solutions are the only way forward. This is neither safe nor reasonable. This is a sheer fight for power. In this context let me say a few words on the false reading of subsidiarity principle. It is very much en vogue today. It has come back as a buzzword. Even if nothing has been identified as qualifying for repatriation in the pre referendum UK investigation on EU competences. But it is interpreted as an instrument to defend people and member states from European invasion, defending people against Europe, as a tool to fight against the expansion of Europe. I cannot but reject this approach to the interpretation of subsidiarity. In the European reality of an ever growing objective interdependency subsidiarity is about repartition of responsibilities, about agreeing on what each level of decision making in Europe should do in a concerted way, to best deliver what citizens expect and need, about doing things together, acting toward a common goal. It is actually about solidarity and sharing and joint responsibility.

Europe has strong foundation to rebuild unity. It is our culture, it is our science, it is the rule of law, democracy, all values which we share. We need solidarity and ethics. This means also that every member states must be well governed. There will be always integration mechanisms that bring the risk of moral hazard. We will not avoid situations when we have to help a state. In those situations solidarity comes from joint interests. There is a rationale behind solidarity.

What Brexit as a momentum for reforms teaches us? It seems to tell us that euro zone will become the EU. So focusing on euro zone reforms makes political sense. With the departure of the biggest non euro country, major areas of EU integration will be more influenced by euro zone states and economies, in particular in the context of political dynamics in Central Eastern Europe.

The state of affairs outside the euro zone after Brexit will be very different from the current one. Europe will be about euro zone. Political weight will shift to the euro zone. Economic weight of those not sharing common currency will be much smaller. When combined with European scepticism of the political elites in the non-euro CEE states, it will make them less relevant. As euro zone will continue to deepen and strengthen its governance and functioning, most likely finding also a way to strengthen its democratic legitimacy, the integration gap will grow. There will be a need to ensure the integrity of the internal market, so safeguards will be needed, most likely under the European Commission responsibility. It will also have to ensure the consistency of policies between the euro area and the twenty seven. Additional safeguard might cover the separation of financial instruments which used to be the traditional concern expressed by the U.K.

Of course, the fact that City will be less influential, will not in itself give the monetary union stronger foundation. That also means that existing discrepancies when it comes to euro zone reforms between France and Germany will have to be overcome.

Strengthening Eurozone both in terms of its architecture and democratic governance will most likely continue to lead to heated political debates. These debates show lack of political will to move forward. This turns people against Europe. This will have to change.

There are many ideas on democratic Europe and democratic reforms floating around. One day they will all merge into one vision of a democratic Europe. Democracy is key to the future of Europe. The reflection that has been taking place for a while, as I said earlier, shows a rather high level of diversity of views, expectations and needs. It shows as well a certain divergence between the way societies have evolved and a general status quo ante when it comes to the institutional architecture of the Union. It proves that one size fits all requires a re definition. Without doubt factual federalizations of the Union has happened in the reaction to crises. Banking Union is an example of a purely federal institution. As this is happening in the time of high social tensions and strong populism, one might assume that a stronger move toward legitimation mechanisms is needed. I feel tempted to say that federal project has been on the European table for a while, maybe even always. And my intuition tells me that at the end of the road it will be implemented. But for the time being it will continue as a step by step adventure, entering at this stage only those areas where it is the only option to pick up.

It is clear that there are areas for potential change where there is the political will, like single market, digital, energy, CMU, financial services, even defence and migration.

There are areas however where the political will is not yet there, still limited appetite for the treaty change is one of the major challenge.

In my view if the idea of multi speed integration is to be taken seriously, we have to develop a treaty based framework in which some member states can do everything together and others can be less involved. The recent integration history teaches us that we will not proceed with the same speed in the same direction. Of the 28 states some already work closer on some issues. Euro zone states have banking union, common currency, coordinate closely budgetary policies. They have common stability fund, common approach to wind down failing banks, common fund. They will have EDIS. There are states with common external border and no internal borders. There is no reason to assume that this process should not continue. Member states will continue to share policies at different speeds. Existing treaty provisions on enhanced and structured cooperation might require re thinking of mechanisms and safeguards. Euro area members will integrate at a higher speed and depth, will share more policies and mechanisms of decision making, need a good legal framework to move effectively forward. Those outside must not have the right to prevent a deeper euro area integration.

In my opinion we should rather sooner than later have treaty provisions facilitating differentiated integration. One could even consider reversing the logic of the treaty. The normal will be the euro, the specific provisions will be for those who are not yet in. Lack of treaty framework will lead to international agreements. This would be a bad idea.

It seems worth to take note of an amazing fact that neither the depth nor the length of crises have been seen by politicians as providing strong legitimacy for difficult and far reaching reforms. This is particularly true in the context of the EMU. Its mechanism has been for quite a while an unfinished business of European integration. Unprecedented mobilization to reform took place but reforms were frozen again in search of a better balance between the risk reduction and risk mutualisation. The question is how much can still be done to get EMU governance stronger under the current Treaties. EMU challenge continues to be both its architecture and its common governance. In both areas changes are needed to reach an adequate equilibrium allowing the euro area to deliver. Diversity of political preferences does not allow today to make the system effective. Tribunal in Karlsruhe reminds us from time to time that one should not exaggerate with further stretching of the current treaties.

We need political unity and commitment. This is one of those moments in the history of integrated Europe when its disintegration is possible. It has never been an option and it must not be an option now. If we disintegrate we will disintegrate into twenty eight globally irrelevant states.

The tighter, more cohesive and mission-oriented EU, on the way to becoming an “ever close Union”, will have to muster all its institutional strength and the power of persuasion to face the growing populist challenge all across Europe. The electoral contests this year in which the enemies of Europe, encouraged by Brexit, may mobilize the dissatisfied sentiment for the likes of Madame Le

Pen or Mr. Wilders, can be followed by new calls for referenda on the EU, festivals of populisms, irresponsible accusations and false promise.

Many of you here would remember that in the European integration history there are moments where certain ideas and solutions seem unthinkable and undoable in a given moment and then another moment comes when all those taboo become good reality. So I am sure we can look at unthinkable with a hope.