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“Ventotene Manifests are about Europe for all”

Event of the donation and handover of the original document “Proposal of a Manifesto for a Federal Europe: sovereign, social and ecological”

European Parliament

Brussels, 11.10.2023

President Metsola, Guests, Colleagues,

Today’s event is an expression of the collective will of the European Parliament to renew our faith in the Union and to take responsibility for its future.

In the same time when Ventotete Manifesto was written, a Jewish German philosopher, Walter Benjamin wrote: “Nothing that has ever happened should be regarded as lost for History”. This is particularly important for the history of European integration.

At that time, the sense and the immediacy of history was acutely felt by all, but especially by us, Europeans. The imperative for the necessity of change was also present in one of the finest minds of the epoch, Altiero Spinelli. And today we want to give witness that the original Manifesto, as conceived and written at the cruel time of the World War II, cannot be lost for history, as an artifact of the past.

The new Manifesto, to which I am proud to have contributed, with my eminent colleagues, is honoring the original one, while also responding to our times and their challenges. I see the goal of our Manifesto as giving a new meaning to what European integration is now and is supposed to be.

When Ventotene Manifesto was written, integrated Europe was nothing but a dream. The aim was to prevent further wars.

Today the aggressive invasion in our neighbourhood makes it a question of not a choice, but of necessity, to look anew at Europe's existence, its unity and its future. It is truly a question of the survival of our values and our democracy.

Over decades of its history, Europe has never been perfect, and it will never be perfect. And those who care about Europe know its weaknesses and what it lacks. But we also know that there is no alternative to integrated Europe, even if those who pursue European goals sometimes travel different roads.

Europe does not exist in a vacuum, there is a global world around it. The world and its problems will not go away. That is why Europe must be at the heart of the global democratic alliance. And it is also clear that our member states cannot individually on their own cope effectively with the issues of global scale.

Challenges have stopped respecting national borders long ago. The need to respond collectively is unquestionable. Political will is needed to increase the European capability to agree on European public goods worthy of pursuing together. We need an accelerated Europeanization of our policies, uniting us around long term responses to what is missing or inefficient in all areas of Union's activities.

The rebooted enlargement based on geostrategic concerns helps in reinventing Europe, its institutions, policies and ambitions. Also, we have to be prepared for a long haul engagement with supporting Ukraine – not only in war, but also in peace, when the war ends.

We have to be decisive when it comes to defending our interests in the polarized world, without allowing protectionism to wake up. As we learned from recent crises, we need a well prepared crisis-management apparatus. But today is the time to think and act strategically. I could add here many more areas that need either restructuring, revamping or being built from scratch.

What all this comes to is the observation, that the reinvented Union can happen by deep reassessment of what we have and what we do and common reflection on where we want to go. The time has come for looking anew at our treaties. We have European elections ahead of us. There is a duty for all who love and care about Europe to bring citizens to our debates to make these elections truly European and fireproof our future.

The words like „solidarity” and „trust” should form a canopy of the Union we desire to leave to incoming generations. The words „firmness” and „resolve” should be our identification marks to the world.

Real reforms of Europe will come when Europeans will be ready to accept them as something that touches our individual and collective lives at the deepest level.

The way forward toward an „ever closer” Union will then become European citizens way.

Manifests, even if written by federalists, do not aim at an integrated Europe for federalists, both Ventotene Manifests are about Europe for all.

Thank you for your attention.