

N°59/June 2017

# EPFMA BULLETIN



European Parliament Former Members Association

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## Focus on Social Europe



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Opening of the House of European History on 4 May 2017. Enrique Barón Crespo participated in the ceremony as FMA President and Former EP President.

Cover: ©Flickr-MarchforEurope

## CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS:

The Editorial Board would like to thank all those members who took the time to contribute to this issue of the FMA Bulletin. We would like to draw your attention to the fact that the decision to include an article lies with the FMA Editorial Board and, in principle, contributions from members who are not up-to-date with the payment of the membership fee will not be included. Due to the long time lag between the call for contribution and the publication, some articles may be outdated.

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# Message from the PRESIDENT

Dear Members,

This issue will be devoted to 'Social Europe' and the 30th anniversary of the Erasmus Programme. We all envision a common foresight for a society that combines economic growth with high living standards, good education and working conditions. According to the Historian Tony Judt, what binds Europe together is the European social model in contrast with the 'American way of life'. For Europe to succeed, elements like pension and employment need to arrive to stability and cohesion. You will read more about the subject in the focus of this edition.

Our Annual meeting held on 30-31 May consisted of many activities including a visit to the newly opened House of European History, the Information Seminar jointly organised with the EPRS on 'Looking ahead: From the Rome Declaration to the European Elections 2019' and the FMA Annual Memorial Service to commemorate the former MEPs who passed away in 2016-2017. The Vice-President Bogusław Liberadzki, represented the EP President, Antonio Tajani during this touching ceremony and the Former President of the European Parliament and of the FMA, José María Gil Robles Gil Delgado, delivered the final oration. These events were followed by a lively dinner debate with the Guest Speaker H.E. Reinhard Silberberg, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Permanent Representation of the Federal Republic of Germany to the European Union. The General Assembly was well attended

with interesting debates on the current and future activities of the Association. I take this occasion to thank those members who participated in our satisfaction survey which proved a genuine interest of the members of the Association with their comments and proposals. I would like to warmly welcome the re-elected committee members, Lord Richard Balfe, Monica Baldi, Jan-Willem Bertens, Teresa Riera Madurell and the newly elected Edvard Kožušník. I want to express gratitude to the outgoing FMA Committee member, Mr Bill Newton-Dunn who served on the Board over the past two years.

I am delighted that the visit to Malta, the country which has taken the presidency over the first half of 2017, was completed with great success the 3-4 April. The programme included high level meetings with the Maltese authorities and a visit to the EU Asylum Office as well as to the Armed Forces of Malta Maritime Base HQ. I want to warmly thank the President of the Maltese Association of Former Parliamentarians, Prof. Rizzo Naudi and the President of the European Association of Former Parliamentarians, Mr. Lino DeBono for their hospitality and friendship and for their valuable assistance in the organisation of the visit. You will read more in this issue.

Our 'EP to Campus programme' is resuming with favourable outcomes where Universities can benefit from the expertise and experience of former MEPs and students who will share their insights into how the EU institutions really work. From the positive feedbacks we get from Universities and Former Members,

students benefit from engaging dialogues and exchange of views which allow them to shape and construct their own conceptions about European matters. With the year 2017 marking 60 years from the Treaties of Rome, co-operation with the European University Institute (EUI), and in particular with the Historical Archives of the European Union (HAEU), has carried on forward with great acknowledgment of the participation of our members in educational programmes. The destination for the 2017 Study Visit will be Washington. A tentative programme will be sent in the coming weeks.

Lastly let me thank all those who contributed to this issue with their insights and opinions. I look forward to meeting as many of you as possible at our next events.

Best wishes,

Enrique BARÓN CRESPO  
FMA President

# Letters to the PRESIDENT

## “ We want sixty years more

Dear President,

Allow me to add something more to the already written in the special number on the 60th anniversary. With the noise of the battles of World War II still ringing in Europe's ears, T.S. Eliot said that only a foreigner could really become European. When the two Europes had not yet been 'stitched together', as my esteemed friend Bronislaw Geremek so aptly put it, Milan Kundera recalled that he only felt European when he left Europe. Just recently, the Prime Minister of Canada, Justin Trudeau, said that 'the European Union is a truly remarkable achievement and an unprecedented model for peaceful cooperation (...) a vital player in addressing the challenges that we collectively face (...). Indeed, the whole world benefits from a strong EU'. These three testimonies, dating

from 1943, 1980 and 2017 respectively, illustrate the singular nature of the cultural, economic and political model that we in Europe enjoy. But since Europe is based on nation States, it is not surprising that what happens in those States also affects the supranational entity. We are currently witnessing a crisis in political representation spurred on by the technological and digital revolution and the anti-European challenge laid down by populist and nationalist forces. And yet it is in Europe that we find the power of our principles and the strength of our convictions in order to stand up against those who seek only to destroy what has been achieved in these 60 years of peace and prosperity. What should we do? We should concentrate on those tasks that affect all Europeans and that therefore require European solutions: giving a boost to economic growth, job creation and social progress; addressing issues

linked to our continent's freedom and security, particularly in relation to migration and the fight against terrorism; and bolstering our foreign and security policy. How should we go about it? The 'Report of the Five Presidents' describes many paths leading to greater economic, fiscal and political integration. Who should tackle this challenge? All those who have always believed that the slowest should not be allowed to drag down the speed of the fastest. Personally, as I said in the speech I gave at the Humboldt University of Berlin two years ago, I believe that the centre of gravity leading to greater integration in these areas should be the eurozone. Sixty years ago, Chancellor Adenauer, one of the protagonists in the signing of the Treaties of Rome, described the signatories as 'a group of friends going to the notary to formalise their membership of a bowling team'. The time has come for our Heads of Government to show leadership, conviction and a willingness to meet the challenges now facing Europe and all of its citizens.



Conference of Presidents. 60th Anniversary of the Treaty of Rome ©European Union

**Íñigo Méndez de Vigo**  
EPP, Spain (1992-2011)  
Minister for Education, Culture and Sport and Spokesperson of the Spanish Government  
@IMendezdeVigo



# EP AT WORK

## KEY FACTS

### Energy deals with third countries: MEPs approve rules on EU Commission help (March Session - P8\_TC1-COD(2016)0031)

The rules requiring EU member states to inform the EU Commission of their plans to negotiate energy supply deals with third countries before opening negotiations were approved by MEPs.

### Defence: MEPs urge member states to show political will and join forces (March Session- P8\_TA-PROV(2017)0092)

Member states can and should use the treaty tools in place to build a truly common defence policy.

### MEPs adopt 2018 budget priorities (March Session - P8\_TA-PROV(2017)0085)

Growth and jobs, particularly for young people, must remain key EU budget priorities, along with tackling migration and climate change.

### Parliament approves Ukraine visa waiver (April Session - P8\_TA-PROV(2017)0129)

Ukrainian citizens will be exempted from EU short-stay visa requirements, after Parliament endorsed an informal deal with the Council.

### Brexit negotiations (April Session - P8\_TA-PROV(2017)0102)

The European Parliament set key principles and conditions for its approval of the UK's withdrawal agreement. Any such agreement at the end of UK-EU negotiations will need to win the approval of the European Parliament.

### Fundamental rights in Hungary: MEPs call for triggering Article 7 (May Session - P8\_TA-PROV(2017)0216)

The situation in Hungary justifies the triggering of the procedure which may result in sanctions for Hungary, MEPs say in a resolution.

Other main dossiers discussed in the plenary sessions were:

#### March 2017

- MEPs propose **ways to make medicines more affordable** and call for measures to improve the traceability of R&D costs, public funding and marketing expenditure. (02.03.17)
- Parliament asks EU Commission to press for full **US-EU visa reciprocity** given that Washington still does not grant visa-free access to nationals of five EU countries (Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Poland and Romania). (02.03.17)
- **New tools to sharpen big EU firms'** focus on their long-run performance were approved by Parliament. (14.03.17)
- MEPs voted in favour of making EU companies take **responsibility for the origin of the minerals**

they import for high-tech equipment. Their mining and illegal trade are often controlled by armed groups. (16.03.2017)

- MEPs call for **measures to protect the vulnerable Arctic ecosystem**, ban oil drilling there and keep it a low-tension and cooperation area. (16.03.17)

#### April 2017

- MEPs approved new rules to make **money market funds (MMFs)** more resistant to crises and market turbulence. (05.04.17)
- Data Privacy Shield: MEPs alarmed at **undermining of privacy safeguards** in the US. (06.04.17)
- MEPs adopted stricter rules to ensure that **medical devices** are traceable and comply with

EU safety requirements. MEPs also approved laws to tighten up ethical requirements for diagnostic medical devices. (04.04.17)

- MEPs to urge **Venezuela** to respect its constitution and separation of powers, and to free political prisoners. (27.04.17)

#### May 2017

- EP urges EU countries to speed up **relocation of refugees**, particularly children. EU countries must fulfil their obligations to take in asylum-seekers from Greece and Italy, giving priority to unaccompanied minors. (18.05.17)

For more information, please visit : <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/plenary>

# CURRENT AFFAIRS

## FINANCING THE EU BUDGET DIFFERENTLY

The EU budget is much in need of reform - on both the revenue and expenditure sides - so as to meet today's huge challenges and prove to EU citizens that it serves a useful purpose. That is the main conclusion of the report drawn up by the High Level Group on Own Resources, under Mario Monti's chairmanship, and presented to Parliament on 12 January 2017.

Budget questions have always constituted an area where different visions of Europe - and, of course, sometimes contradictory national interests - have clashed. The common agricultural policy, regional policy and European research might be talked about a lot, but how the EU finances these policy areas very often remains a mystery to EU citizens. There is nothing surprising about that: 75% of funding comes from national contributions with which they have no direct link.

Those contributions form part of the EU's system of own resources, i.e. resources that Member States assign to the EU budget. A decision to assign resources is no trivial matter: it

requires unanimous agreement and then ratification in each Member State (normally by the legislature). The current system has not changed much since the 1980s; it has further entrenched a very simplistic conception of the EU budget, with 'beneficiaries' and 'contributors' clashing in a zero-sum game in which there is no place for our common objectives and European added value. One Euro spent for the benefit of all, e.g. to secure the EU's external borders or respond to the migration crisis, is regarded as benefiting the country in which it is spent (Greece, Italy, etc.) and as a cost for all other countries. That is disastrous for the EU's image; not only that, but it is not true either and is not conducive to reforms on the expenditure side, where every country tries to safeguard its allocations or rebates. Our group, made up of members designated by Parliament, the Council and the Commission, has accordingly submitted nine recommendations to make the current system more transparent, simpler and fairer, with more effective democratic oversight. Recent crises have put the budget under great pressure and have also shown where EU-level action would be the most appropriate and most effective action: domestic and external security, defence, combating climate change, decarbonising the economy, and medium- and long-term investment for growth and employment. If public confidence is to be restored and EU policies are to be rooted in legitimacy, the EU budget must be able to show that headway is being made with today's major challenges.

We sought to produce pragmatic recommendations that can be acted on under the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) and do not advocate a systematic increase in the budget: the size of the budget depends on the MFF adopted unanimously by the Heads of State and Government, not on the structure of revenue. Any new own resource will therefore reduce the GNI resource<sup>1</sup>. We also explain that own resources are not EU taxes, since tax-levying powers remain Member State powers. That is a very important point: it means that the budget can be ambitiously reformed without Treaty change and without altering the various institutional actors' respective powers. The ball is therefore now in the Commission's court: the Commission will need to submit proposals concerning both revenue and expenditure for the next budget period. We shall also have to closely follow the work carried out by Parliament, which has always treated this as an important matter and has already announced its intention to take a political stance on the future financing of the EU in advance of the Commission's formal proposals.<sup>2</sup>

### Mario Monti

Chair of the High-level group on own resources (HLGOR)  
Former Italian Prime Minister and EU Commissioner



Mario Monti

1.- The GNI resource is a levy - the percentage is laid down annually by the EU budget - on each Member State's gross national income, or GNI.

2.- Read our nine recommendations and our [final report](#)



## COMPLETING THE ECONOMIC AND MONETARY UNION

Over the centuries, Europe has consistently taken the lead among the world's continents. Europe has been the birthplace of all major cultural and artistic currents – such as the Baroque movement or romanticism – economic developments – the Industrial Revolution or the single currency, for instance – or ideological movements, e.g. Christian democracy or social democracy. Several of these movements have influenced society the world over, not merely in Europe. Now, for the first time in history, Europe is no longer the prime mover in the historic changes the world is undergoing.

The European Union is mired in profound and complex crises, all of which originated abroad and which share two other characteristics. Firstly, all of the crises ravaging Europe are systemic. It is therefore essential to embark upon a systemic analysis if we wish to alleviate or neutralise their effects. The outbreak of the sovereign debt crisis and the decisions taken in response to problems in Greece are the perfect illustration of this.

If we wish to address all of these crises we need to take a medium- to long-term approach. The responses to these successive crises are almost always ad hoc in nature. There have mostly been small in scale and underpinned by a very short-term vision.

Europe must strike a balance ensuring three essential aspects: oversight, trust and stability. In this context, the onus should be placed on completing the Economic and Monetary Union, which will only become a reality if the banking



*'March for Europe Brussels' on the occasion of the 60th Anniversary of the 1957 signature of the Rome Treaty ©European Union*

union, the capital markets and automatic stabilising mechanisms are finalised and guaranteed by endowing them with greater fiscal capacity.

**'Europe must strike a balance ensuring three essential aspects: oversight, trust and stability.'**

When economies are unbalanced and it is impossible to devalue the currency, the other commonly used mechanisms are rendered useless. As for employment, its mobility is very low and cannot therefore serve as a shock absorber in the event of asymmetric shocks. Another possible solution would be to provoke a correction by means of an adjustment of prices and wages, but this has not proven to be very effective and takes a heavy toll on society. It also happens to be the case that the business cycles of eurozone Member States are not fully synchronised, which means that they are at risk of asymmetric shocks. Finally, the close financial and trade relations within the eurozone increase the risk of an endogenous

shock limited to one Member State turning into a wider systemic risk. This all goes to show that fiscal union in the eurozone is the systemic response that the economic and monetary union needs, since it will be able to absorb shocks too great to be effectively managed at national level.

Some Member States may find themselves in the difficult position of participating – often by means of cash transfers – in efforts to neutralise risks which they have done nothing to cause. This is what the British call 'moral hazard.'

But if we choose to adopt an approach akin to a social-security system, over a sufficiently long period of time the system balances itself out, with all Member States receiving transfers until their net position is close to zero.

Let us all agree that if we obsess over moral hazard we will never be able to set up social-security systems or reap the benefits of any collective endeavour.

**José Albino da Silva Peneda**

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## BREXIT

I dedicate this book to my dear British colleagues who, I hope, did not object to the book I have published entitled Brexit: une chance...? ('Brexit: an opportunity?'), although I did soften the impact of that title somewhat by adding a question mark and, of course, the subtitle 'Rethinking Europe'.

I am aware that the argument I put forward came as a surprise at a time when many were desperately hoping that Remain would come out on top. But it was what I believed at the time and is what I still firmly believe today. In recent years, the European project has become so distorted that many EU citizens have become severely disillusioned with it.

**'Brexit therefore brings some clarification. But it also forces the EU to take a careful look at its future.'**

In the article, I provide an analysis

of the causes of this slow and painful decline:

- the rise of technocracy,
- the use of Europe as a convenient scapegoat,
- the shift towards ultra-liberalism despite the fact that Europe was, and still is, in a state of crisis,
- the failure to live up to expectations in areas in which the public wanted the EU to take action,

- the disastrous management of successive crises: firstly the financial crisis, during which 'austerity measures' were so brutally imposed on certain countries that their once strong pro-European sentiment has been eroded; and then the migration crisis, where self-interest prevailed, showing Europe to be powerless and, what is even more worrying, to have abandoned its values.

As a result, over recent years the European Union has appeared bereft of direction, of vision; rudderless. It was for this reason that I became thoroughly convinced that if Brexit went through, although it would



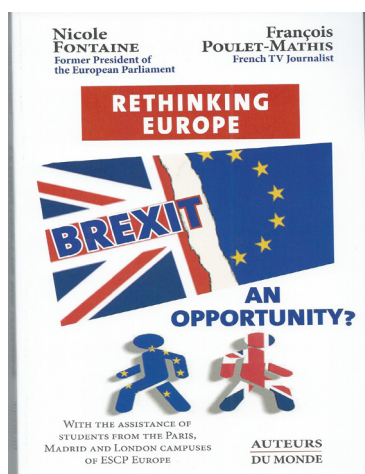
Nicole Fontaine ©European Union 2017

of course be a great shame, it would at the same time provide an opportunity to RETHINK EUROPE. I am, of course, fully aware of the close ties that we have with the British. No one will ever forget the role they played in the Second World War. And there have been many committed pro-Europeans in the European Parliament, including dear Julian Priestley, who sadly passed away just recently, but who we will always remember. However, we cannot ignore history: the United Kingdom's membership of the European Union has always been deeply problematic. Right from the start, it was based on a deliberate deception: when it joined the European Economic Community, the UK in fact wanted nothing more than access to its market. So opting out became the solution to every problem: opt-outs from Schengen, the euro, certain areas of social policy, asylum policy, the Charter of Fundamental Rights and in the area of justice policy, and a partial budget opt-out, with Margaret Thatcher securing her famous rebate after declaring 'I want



European newspapers front pages in the context of Brexit - Activation of Article 50  
©European Union 2017.





my money back!’

Brexit therefore brings some clarification. But it also forces the EU to take a careful look at its future. For historical reasons, the primary responsibility for finding a way forward for our Union lies with France and Germany. But we must show absolute solidarity with the southern Member States. We will need to come together to look more carefully than we have up to now at how we can reconcile the need for economic rigour to reduce our deficits with the need to restore growth.

We need to pinpoint the areas in which we need ‘more Europe’. But we have to be realistic: it will be difficult for all 27 Member States to move forward at the same pace.

Enhanced cooperation is increasingly viewed as a viable option. Even though this idea may anger some Member States, we will have to find harmonious solutions that will allow those Member States that wish to go further and faster in certain fields to do so and others to join them at a later stage.

The areas that EU citizens see as most important must be addressed first, namely:

- reviving growth and employment;
- internal and external security;
- and the influence of the European Union around the world.

To address these, we should look back to our beginnings and move forward, as Robert Schuman advised, on the basis of ‘practical steps’.

To revive growth, the investment plan drawn up by the President of the Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker, needs to be much more ambitious. The competitiveness of our Member States needs to be given a massive boost by the introduction of common policies on industry, energy and digital technology.

Access to employment for young people needs to be facilitated by the introduction of an Erasmus for apprentices programme, which everyone is talking about but which, to date, has got no further than a pilot project involving a limited

number of countries.

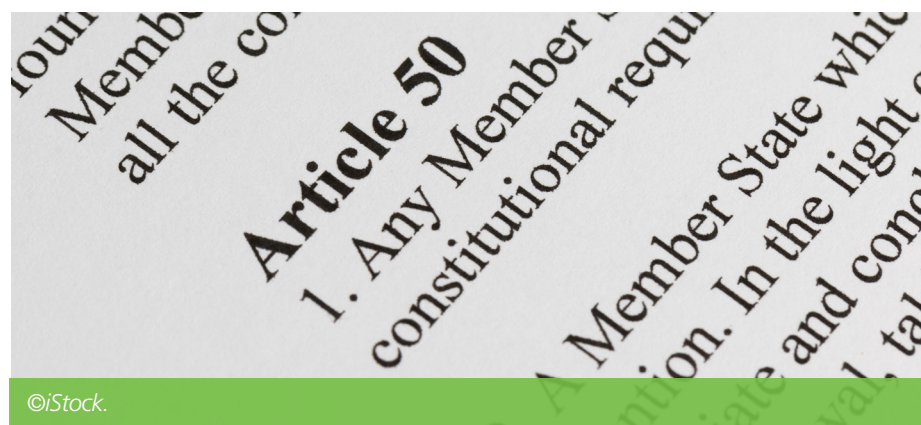
As regards security, strengthening our external borders is a priority. Some progress has been made, but not enough. The same is true in the area of police and judicial cooperation.

Finally, European defence policy, an area in which EU citizens have always been keen to see advances, must move forward with those Member States which support it and, why not, with the UK as well, even after it leaves.

The European Union has been admired and envied throughout the world for the values that it embodies and promotes. It needs to regain its status as a beacon for others by doing all it can to implement a migration policy, a common external policy which can anticipate and respond to geopolitical changes and a development policy which meets the expectations of our closest neighbours.

To conclude, I would point out that young people, who have high expectations, appear to be rallying once again behind the European project, as evidenced by the fact that a majority of young people in the UK voted Remain.

The coming months will no doubt be difficult but I am convinced, my dear British friends, that future generations will see this as having been nothing more than a temporary parting of the ways.



## Nicole Fontaine

Former President of the European Parliament.

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## UNITED IN DIVERSITY

The last 60 years have been years of hope, enthusiasm, disappointment and then fresh hope for those millions of EU citizens like me who still believe that only the EU can guarantee greater stability and justice, through peace and social progress.

**'In the European Convention, we wrote that we were 'united in diversity' as a way of symbolising our duty to respect and be aware of our different cultures and our past and more recent shared histories, and to highlight the solidarity that Member States should show one another, particularly when tackling problems.'**

In order to turn these hopes into reality, the EU must find the political and cultural will to return to its origins and combine the ideals of 60 years ago with the reality of today and our aspirations for tomorrow. In the European Convention, we wrote that we were 'united in diversity' as a way of symbolising our duty to respect and be aware of our different cultures and our past and more recent shared histories, and to highlight the solidarity that Member States should show one another, particularly when tackling problems. Today, the EU is divided, as demonstrated by the responses to the issues of immigration and the reception of migrants and the Member States' failure to work



March for Europe in Berlin. 60th Anniversary of the Treaty of Rome celebrations ©European Union

together to tackle the problems of terrorism and new and ever more widespread poverty. In the absence of any kind of shared vision, the EU is taking risks with the economy and disregarding the traditions of individual countries: the plethora of bilateral agreements between the EU and non-EU countries, which cover more than just trade, are damaging the farming and manufacturing industries that are the mainstay of every Member State's GDP.

**'If we want to prevent the EU's collapse from becoming inevitable we need to make significant progress towards establishing a political union, a common defence policy, a harmonised tax system and a new concept of EU citizenship!'**

Having failed to form a political union, the EU has focused instead on adopting a steady stream of regulations and directives which

smother everything in red tape and hold the Union back, rather than addressing the need to harmonise its tax and customs systems. In short, over the last few years excessive regulation and bureaucracy have led ordinary people to turn their backs on the European dream and has given rise to dangerous Eurosceptic movements. Sixty years after the Treaties were signed, if we want to prevent the EU's collapse from becoming inevitable we need to make significant progress towards establishing a political union, a common defence policy, a harmonised tax system and a new concept of EU citizenship! But are any of the EU's political leaders capable of meeting this long-standing and fundamental challenge?

**Cristiana Muscardini**

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## THE REVIVAL OF EUROPE AND OF THE TREATIES OF ROME

At a time when the EU is facing one of the most difficult moments of its history, we are celebrating the anniversary of the founding treaties that were drawn up in accordance with the wishes of a diverse group of leading figures motivated by the same ideals of peace, unity and prosperity. The political far-sightedness of the founding fathers – Alcide De Gasperi, Altiero Spinelli, Jean Monnet, Robert Schuman, Joseph Bech, Konrad Adenauer and Paul-Henri Spaak – and their hopes for the future of Europe were both influential and extraordinary. On 25 March 1957, Italy, France, West Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg signed the Treaties of Rome, the birth certificate of what was then the European Economic Community. Precisely 60 years later, the current 27 European leaders met once again in Rome, in the same Sala Orazi e Curiazi in the Campidoglio (Capitol), to sanction a fresh start and sign the text that commits them to relaunching European integration over the next ten years and summoning up the courage of the founding fathers once again. A major absence was that of the United Kingdom, which, on 29 March, formally launched the EU exit

procedure – Brexit – under Article 50 of the Treaty of Lisbon.

Today, the European Union is made up of 27 states with a population of over 500 million. It is the largest economic community on the planet that can make its voice heard, as regards both the economy and human rights, to the rest of the world.

The celebrations highlighted the new constituent phase that has to be based on the end of selfish nationalism and requires specific action. The 27 leaders and the EU institutions signed declarations of intent for the revival of Europe and unanimously affirmed the indivisibility of Europe. They identified common interests and vowed to work towards greater harmonisation and cooperation between states, reiterating the importance of all countries moving forward in the same direction, even if at varying speeds. For the Italian Prime Minister Paolo Gentiloni, the document being signed 60 years on represents ‘a step forward’ in renewing ‘trust in a common project that can continue to excite’. The President of the Commission, Jean Claude Juncker, confirmed ‘We are here to renew our vows and reaffirm our commitment to our undivided and indivisible Union. Only by staying united can we rise to the challenges we can face together’.

Many celebratory events were held at the Quirinale Palace, the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies, including addresses by the most high-ranking Italian and European authorities, such as the Extraordinary Conference of the Speakers of EU National parliaments at which the President of the European Parliament, Antonio

Tajani, stated: ‘The occasion of the anniversary of the Treaties can be a time for a political, ideal, non-bureaucratic revival that will enable Europe to play a leading role’.

Personally, I believe we need to have the courage to jointly determine forms of cooperation that take into account our common values by rebuilding our citizens’ trust, by responding with tangible measures to important issues such as: growth, investment, employment and training, combating poverty, migration policies, security and defence, unity and solidarity. It is for this reason that a travelling exhibition has been organised at the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs by the European University Institute, entitled ‘An ever more united Europe’. The exhibition was inaugurated at the conference ‘The Re-launching of Europe and the Rome Treaties’, organised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in collaboration with the Istituto Affari Internazionali (International Business Institute). In this exhibition, the Historical Archives of the European Union tell the story, through documents, images and testimonies, of the entire history of European integration, from the Ventotene Manifesto to the present day, taking a look also at the future challenges that await us.



**Monica Baldi**

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## WHY DEVELOP ENHANCED COOPERATION?

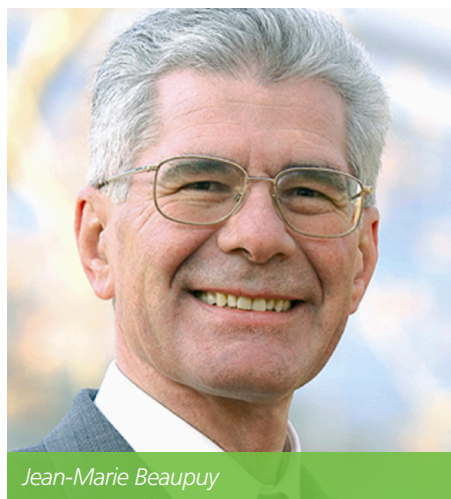
The history of recent decades shows us that alliances between states are vital in finding a solution to common concerns:

- Benelux, with Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands;
- The Visegrad Group, with Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic.

And there are numerous other instances of cooperation – economic, military, and diplomatic – that can be added to these.

For some weeks now Angela Merkel and other political leaders have been talking about the possibility of establishing new instances of enhanced cooperation. As has already happened with the euro (19 Member States) and Schengen (26 Member States).

**‘Individual countries acting alone cannot stop this particular type of fraud, so who would dare to say this new instance of cooperation is not highly important!’**



Jean-Marie Beaupuy



Celebration of the 60 years of the Treaty of Rome in Campidoglio ©European Union

On Friday 10 March, in Brussels, 17 Member States voted in favour of a new agreement to combat fraud. There was no mention of this in the media. And yet its impact will be significant, involving the recovery of EUR 50 billion lost from national budgets every year as a result of cross-border fraud!! Compare this with the European Union's budget (EUR 160 billion). Individual countries acting alone cannot stop this particular type of fraud, so who would dare to say this new instance of cooperation is not highly important!

Enhanced cooperation is an excellent means of resolving problems that cannot be tackled at national level by one country alone. Provided, that is, that establishment of this cooperation is pragmatic, and not political. And that it is then adjusted to correct shortcomings (as appears blatantly obvious in the cases of the Euro and Schengen).

On 25 March, the 27 Heads of State or Government met to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Treaty

of Rome. This meeting cannot be confined to being just a ceremony of remembrance. Let us not forget that, as was said in 1957, the construction of Europe has to be a dynamic and continuous process.

Along with all the other officials and members of numerous European organisations, we expect the Heads of State or Government to announce new goals and present a new dynamic for the EU. The establishment of enhanced cooperation in new areas, for example; cooperation on defence and in diplomacy is absolutely vital in our extremely turbulent world. Of course, these new initiatives must be complementary to action at Community level to strengthen the European Union of 27 Member States.

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## EURO-NATIONAL PARLAMENTARISM

**'Europe's future lies in our own hands. We pledge to listen and respond to the concerns expressed by our citizens and will engage with our national parliaments.'**

The Rome Declaration marking the 60th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Rome makes no mention of the European Parliament, but refers only to the national parliaments. This is not surprising.

The nature of the European Union is laid out in two clauses placed at the beginning of its 'constitution': the Lisbon Treaty. One says this: 'The functioning of the Union shall be founded on representative democracy'; the other says this: 'National parliaments contribute actively to the good functioning of the Union'. It is the word 'functioning' which links these two clauses. It signifies that the involvement of the national parliaments in the life of the Union is not confined to a particular sector, but is in fact all-pervasive. Thus, when the Union's constitution says that 'representative democracy' is its 'foundation', it is referring not only to the European Parliament, but also to the parliaments of the Member States. These are not just abstract statements, set in isolation in the Treaties; they

have practical implications.

The Union's representative democracy has both a European and a national component. European Parliament decisions have a bearing on what happens at Member State level, but the reverse is also true: national parliamentary scrutiny can also have an impact at European level. Legitimation thus works both ways. National parliaments have a shared power to influence economic decisions which would otherwise fall entirely outside their remit. The European Parliament shares its power over areas which are mostly off-limits to the national parliaments, such as security and common defence.

On 16 February 2017, the European Parliament recognised that 'the provisions of the Lisbon Treaty and its protocols have not yet been exploited to their full potential' and that it saw 'the need for closer cooperation between the committees of the European and their national counterparts' with a view to exercising scrutiny over their respective administrations.

It is not democracy that is missing from the current European institutional structure and legislative procedures, as the Eurosceptics maintain. There is, however, a 'democratic disconnect' between the various levels. All the wires are there.

It is just a matter of connecting them up to generate light. But claiming that these wires do not or cannot exist, in the name of the 20th century's preoccupation with sovereignty (which led to disastrous world wars), is akin to yearning for the dark.

In a Union context, 'parliamentary democracy' means a system which not only incorporates the European Parliament, but which is 'parliamentary' because it creates an interlinked – and formal – network bringing together all the Union's parliaments. In other words, it is the Union itself which is 'founded' on this Euro-national system. The system is its basic building block - its DNA if you like - the backbone which supports everything else and from which it derives its legitimacy. I say this because at the heart of it all lies the vote cast by the European citizen: a vote which has an impact in many different ways. Every time a citizen votes in Europe for their 'parliament', they are in fact expressing their support for the European Parliament and for all the other national parliaments of the Union. Today, no vote is cast in isolation and its 'impact' is felt throughout the Union.

It is clear that this is the source of the Union's unity: the 'unity in diversity' of its parliaments. The legitimacy of the Union itself is founded on the interconnection between its parliaments. This was, in a nutshell, is the import of the Rome Declaration celebrating the first 60 years of the European Union.



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## THE FOURTH POWER

The 20th anniversary of the introduction of the Euro gives us cause to think back to that exciting time between 1988 and 1992 when we at Parliament, and we in the Economic and Monetary Affairs Committee (ECON) in particular, held discussion after discussion about it. In the 1980s, floating exchange rates had already been steadied to some extent through the establishment of the European Monetary System (EMS); under the system, exchange rates could fluctuate within a band 2.5% above or below the dollar peg. From 1979 onwards, as the EMS began to prove its worth as a method of preventing the largest Member States' exchange rates from drifting too far apart, a consensus began to emerge that the time had come simply to do away with the exchange rates which acted as a buffer offsetting differences in Member States' growth rates (productivity).

Once the single market seemed to have been completed in 1992 and the efforts to replace state monopolies with greater competition in the form of privatisations seemed to have succeeded, there was a groundswell of support for a single currency.

Belief in the common currency as a unifying force was unshakeable; as Helmut Kohl assured me, the very fact that all EU citizens had the same currency in their pockets would automatically lead to closer integration between states. My economic understanding was that a common means of payment, calculation unit or store of value would be impossible without a fiscal union, which would 'crown' monetary union ('coronation theory').

The 1990-92 debates on the monetary union therefore turned on what system to use, which Member States would join, and who the first President of the European Central Bank (ECB) would be. Although in 1998, when they were set, it was not known whether Italy would meet the convergence criteria, speculation against the lira had begun as early as in 1992, the start of the 10-year resolution period, so that the EMS, despite two central bank interventions to keep the lira exchange rate within the margins, proved unsustainable anyway. On 1 May 1998, the members of the monetary union and the first President of the ECB were to be decided during what Helmut Kohl later described as the 'longest working breakfast in history' (it lasted from 10.00 on 1 May until 4.00 on 2 May). The Dutchman Wim Duisenberg, who was still faxing hand-written notes to our EPP Group at their meeting in Berlin, was astonished to be appointed the first President for a period of eight years, only to read in the press that he was to be replaced after only four years by Jean-Claude Trichet, the Governor of the Bank of France, the candidate the French had been desperately pushing from the start. Duisenberg actually resigned after four years, but not by choice. One particularly interesting fact to emerge from the discussions in the ECON committee was that French MEPs were sceptical of the Bundesbank model, which was based on central bank independence and, therefore, neutral, non-political money. Our French colleagues accused us Germans of trying to establish a fourth power, the

monetary power, while they recognised only three: the legislative, the executive and the judiciary. I had to use all my powers of persuasion to convince them that this is exactly what made the deutschmark so strong and that Chancellor Kohl, who was not particularly interested in economic matters, was not in a position to set interest rates. Nor had his predecessors been; they could at most hint at what they wanted, or try to clinch re-election by adopting an inflationary monetary policy and generating a brief financial boom. Because the French regarded politicians as smarter than central bankers, however, it was decided that, at the very least, the Maastricht Treaty should contain provisions stipulating that ECOFIN should monitor the ECB.

Having written my doctoral and post-doctoral theses on the euro system, already at that time I published articles forecasting the problems that would later arise with the euro, because the monetary union did not meet Mundell's criteria for an optimum currency area, which require that all Member States have, aside from converging interest rates and levels of debt, similar inflation rate trends, i.e. that they are making similar decisions when it comes to striking a balance between consumption and saving.

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## THE EXPANSION OF WAR INTO SPACE

Human history is a long series of battles, on land and at sea. Now, the battlefield is being brought to outer space.

Since the launch of Sputnik in 1957, 'cyberspace' has been filling up quickly: another 8000 or so satellites have followed. Some 3000 are still in orbit, although little more than a thousand of those are still operational. Statistics on the number of active satellites are inexact, as a growing number are being used for military purposes: communication between military services, surveillance, espionage and, above all, as a possible launch pad for attacks.

In theory, a treaty signed in 1967 under the aegis of the United Nations prohibits the nuclearisation of extra-terrestrial space. The launching into space of missiles or beams, in particular laser rays, is not prohibited, however. The 'Star Wars' system launched in 1983 by President Ronald Reagan is still in orbit. Some fifteen countries have military satellites in space. In 2007, China destroyed one of

its own obsolete satellites using a ground-based missile.

Most satellites are used for the purpose of facilitating communication between people and regulating human infrastructures. It is also from space that the surveillance of networks takes place, however. The digital revolution has opened an infinite number of possibilities for improving the organisation of human societies, but it has also made it possible to keep them under constant surveillance and totally dependent on the technology.

**'Digitalisation has not only given rise to mobile phones; our economies and energy networks are now also dependent on it.'**

All communication can be intercepted. Hackers, often working for governments, infiltrate IT systems. Under President Bush, the Americans managed to install a virus in the Iranian nuclear facility in Natanz. The

same virus, 'Stuxnet', has also been found in other industrial complexes – hydroelectric power plants, for example.

Digitalisation has not only given rise to mobile phones; our economies and energy networks are now also dependent on it. The aviation and marine sectors – and soon the driverless motor sector – have made 'digital man' prisoner to a system conducted mostly via satellite.

Anyone who can get access to desired information, who can break into any process using a virus, can seize control of the system.

From that perspective, China's recent launch of its first quantum communication satellite makes a great deal of sense. The transmission technology apparently uses impenetrable encoding. If the Chinese find a way to fully protect their communications, they will have a clear advantage if there is a cyber-war.

If there was another world war, there would be no need to invade other countries: one could simply wage a lightning war in space, destroying most of the satellites out there.

Without the networks our economies and daily lives depend on, developed societies would collapse in a matter of weeks, if not days. Einstein's prediction remains valid: 'I know not with what weapons World War III will be fought, but World War IV will be fought with sticks and stones.'



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## OMAN, ZANZIBAR AND EU

In February I went to Oman for two weeks with a five day visit to Zanzibar.

I had a short visit to the Oman about 40 years ago but had never been to Zanzibar (now under Tanzania) once under the rule of the Sultan of Oman and from 1893 to 1963 under Britain originally to stop the slave trade.

Oman with a population of over 3 million (including 600,000 expatriates largely from Asia) has benefited from oil discoveries although it is conscious that the benefit may be diminishing. Oman's relationship with the EU and its Member States is excellent being widely regarded as well run and friendly. Oman, has had a long-standing defence agreement with the UK. This was underlined by UK support for the Sultan of Muscat in the Jebel civil war of the late 1950s (the issue was oil and is a rare occasion when the US backed the other - and losing- side!). The UK provided crucial military backing for the Sultan in the 1970s Dhofar insurrection against rebels supported by Yemen, the Soviet Union, China

and Cuba. Today Oman maintains an evenhanded approach to all countries not least as a negotiator and mediator between the larger states that surround it. Much of the success of the Oman today is attributed to the enlightened but absolute monarchy since 1970 of the Sultan Qaboos. He united the people of Oman forgiving rebels and encouraging people to think of themselves as Omanis rather than from sects or tribes. He has spent considerably on education particularly for women and encouraging Omanis to work rather than rely on immigrants. Planning has given considerable emphasis to the quality of design and need for affordable housing. Essentially Oman has pursued legal, social, and educational reform. There is now an elected but consultative body, the Majlis. Indeed the Sultan's considerable popularity means he has so far had little pressure on him for democratic institutions. Nevertheless it would be no surprise to see further steps in the country's development to democracy.

The EU is increasingly important to Oman. This is underlined by the part the EU naval force played in the considerable reduction in the activities of pirates off Oman and the horn of Africa.

As regards trade policy Oman operates through the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) which is the fourth largest market for EU goods.

The general assumption is that, the post Brexit, GCC will focus its attention on the bigger market and supplier of goods of the EU –despite the goodwill towards the UK. The situation may be easier for the UK in terms of services.

Zanzibar to many people is known as the birth place of Freddie Mercury. It is a major producer of spices. Today the main income earner is tourism- and it is a wonderful place to visit. Both Oman and Zanzibar need more training of staff in tourism needs. Also Zanzibar could do something to improve its airport. (EU International and Development Cooperation DG and national aid programmes note). There are clearly tensions that still exist between Zanzibar and the Tanzania. But it has been given considerable autonomy and democracy has moved forward. My visit to both Oman and Zanzibar was wonderful. They are places with considerable opportunity for the EU.



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## FOCUS



# FOCUS

## THE ROME DECLARATION

The Rome Declaration signed by the Leaders of 27 Member States and of EU institutions on the 25 March 2017, took pride in the achievements of the European Union and commit to pledge to work towards to a safe and secure Europe, a prosperous and sustainable Europe, a stronger Europe on the global scene and to a social Europe.

*'A social Europe: a Union which, based on sustainable growth, promotes economic and social progress as well as cohesion and convergence, while upholding the integrity of the internal market; a Union taking into account the diversity of national systems and the key role of social partners; a Union which promotes equality between women and men as well as rights and equal opportunities for all; a Union which fights unemployment, discrimination, social exclusion and poverty; a Union where young people receive the best education and training and can study and find jobs across the continent; a Union which preserves our cultural heritage and promotes cultural diversity.'*

The social dimension of the European project dates back to the Treaties of Rome of 1957.

Europe already has the world's most advanced systems of welfare State around the world. Social protection systems will nevertheless need to be significantly modernised to remain affordable and to keep pace with new demographic and work-life realities.

### Challenges

In the fight against youth unemployment, EU initiatives such as the Youth Guarantee have helped 9 million people find opportunities.

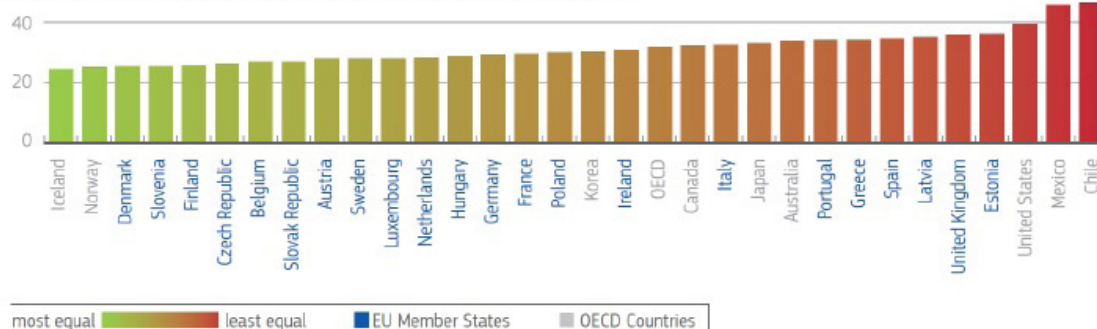
The European Social Fund is highly effective but only represents 0.3% of what Europeans spend on social services.

It is therefore now time to look at how Europe can deliver a Union which 'promotes economic and social progress as well as cohesion and convergence', as called for by leaders in the Rome Declaration of 25 March 2017.

### Key dates

- **26 April 2017:** European Commission presented proposals on European Pillar of Social Rights, accompanied by initiatives on access to social protection, the revision of the Written Statement Directive, the implementation of the Working Time Directive and the challenges of work-life balance faced by working families
- On **17 November 2017**, President Juncker will co-host a Social Summit together with Sweden's Prime Minister Stefan Löfven, focusing on promoting fair jobs and growth.

Europe is home to the most equal societies in the world



Note: This graph shows the distribution of income between individuals using the Gini coefficient where 0 represents perfect equality.  
Source: OECD, latest available data



## A STRONG EUROPEAN PILLAR OF SOCIAL RIGHTS

A big debate is taking place across Europe about a 'European Pillar of Social Rights' as a major new initiative to improve living and working conditions. The European Parliament has adopted by a large majority its report and the European Commission has now put forward its proposals.

**'Social Europe' is and must be for everyone, bringing tangible improvements for people's lives'**

This debate comes at a crucial time for the future of the European Union. The social dimension of European integration has suffered a heavy blow with the protracted Eurozone crisis since 2010. At the same time, many Member States were forced to implement harsh fiscal consolidation and internal devaluation measures. These policies resulted in severe social hardship which is still acute in many countries. The EU itself has come to be seen by many citizens



Maria João Rodrigues during the Plenary session Week 3 2017- A European Pillar of Social Rights ©European Union

as a machine for divergence, inequalities and social injustice. A project associated for decades with convergence, prosperity and progress is now being blamed for downgrading of welfare systems and seen a threat to people's well-being.

**'Europe is facing a number of well-known structural trends and challenges [...]. All these challenges and aspirations require a number of changes in the toolbox underpinning the European Social Model.'**

At the same time, Europe is facing a number of well-known structural trends and challenges such as globalisation, demographic changes (incl. ageing, feminisation, low birth rates, migration), climate change and natural resource constraints. It is also witnessing a new phase of the digital revolution, deeply affecting

labour markets' functioning. All these challenges and aspirations require a number of changes in the toolbox underpinning the European Social Model. With new challenges ahead in the labour market stemming from new types of employment, Europe needs to adapt its labour laws and social insurance schemes in order to ensure decent and fair working conditions and social protection for all workers. The European Social Model has, of course, many national variations and each country has its specific arrangements, in line with historical developments and the principle of subsidiarity. However, EU Member States are highly interdependent and they can only deliver broadly-shared prosperity to their citizens by working together. Without a common European framework, Member States are bound to be trapped in a destructive competition based on a race-to-the-bottom in social standards. The European Social Model is therefore a shared project, whose central objective is upward



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social convergence: a sustained improvement in well-being for all people in all EU countries, based on sustainable and inclusive economic growth and on measures ensuring that no individual and no country are left behind and everybody can participate in the society and the economy.

**‘Without a common European framework, Member States are bound to be trapped in a destructive competition based on a race-to-the-bottom in social standards.’**

The European Pillar of Social Rights is an important and urgent initiative, which the European Commission and European Parliament have rightly put on the top of their political priorities to reconcile the European Union with its own citizens. But this project and the idea of ‘Social Europe’ cannot be confined to a small group of EU specialists. ‘Social Europe’ is lived by every person through the rights they have at work, the social services they



can access, the social investments they receive, the policies which influence their economic prospects, and the social protection on which they can rely when something in life goes wrong.

‘Social Europe’ is and must be for everyone, bringing tangible improvements for people’s lives. The strength of the EPSR therefore needs to spread through the entire multi-level structure of the EU, including municipal, regional and national governments and their cooperation with companies, trade unions and civil society.

We are all members of the EU. We all have an interest in its balanced economic growth and in Europe’s cohesion against the rise of nationalistic strong men like Ms Le Pen, Mr Trump or Mr Putin, who seek to dismantle a cooperative international order and who are cracking down on civil and social rights.

No more warm words and false promises, we expect now the Commission to come forward with a concrete update of EU legislation. Existing loopholes, which have led to atypical employment resulting in poverty and uncertainty in the lives of many Europeans, must be closed once and for all. Then, if all Member States work together to build a solid European Pillar of Social Rights, people all over Europe will be better off and they will certainly regain their trust on the EU project.



EP President Antonio Tajani at the conference on the European pillar of social rights: going forward together ©European Union 2017

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## FOR A UNION AGAINST UNEMPLOYMENT

What is the role of employment in a monetary union?

If a monetary union has no shock-absorption or temporary unemployment benefit mechanisms, the burden of adjustment shifts mainly on to the labour market, affecting both wages and employment levels. At times it shifts rapidly, but with permanent consequences. Employment problems therefore have a bearing on a key aspect of monetary union: consent. European citizens are rightly concerned for their livelihoods and are asking themselves if the Euro is right for them. Their answer to that question is also shaped by their own employment prospects and those of their children. The issue of the real economy is a political and social one, therefore, before it even becomes an economic one.

As there is no scope for adjusting exchange rates, in most cases cyclical shocks force eurozone countries to adjust by taking measures which affect employment levels and/or wages. Where budgetary constraints apply, the rise in unemployment often makes it impossible to

allow the automatic stabilisers to work to their full extent or to take counter-cyclical measures to boost demand. Persistently high levels of unemployment lead to a deterioration in human capital, lower productivity levels and reduced growth prospects, and thus also have a knock-on effect on partner countries. The new European governance arrangements will need to be based on joint mechanisms which can alleviate the cost of labour reallocation and of crises which affect an industry or region; should asymmetric shocks occur, a common macroeconomic stabilisation mechanism will enable even those countries which are subject to strict budgetary constraints to adopt counter-cyclical policies to tackle the increase in unemployment.

**‘The new European governance arrangements will need to be based on joint mechanisms which can alleviate the cost of labour reallocation and of crises which affect an industry or region’**

A European unemployment benefit scheme could be introduced without amending the Treaties. This would reduce the burden of stabilising the area which is currently borne by monetary policy, even though that policy is ineffective in dealing with shocks affecting a specific country. It would be a clear sign of the irreversibility of the single currency, and would be invaluable in

rebuilding public confidence in the European project and strengthening the social dimension of the eurozone. It would magnify the impact of national structural reforms in terms of their effectiveness and their positive external spill-over effects. Even those countries which are not direct beneficiaries would gain from better, more stable overall macroeconomic conditions. With improved risk-sharing, a suitable incentive structure would rule out permanent one-way transfers of resources from some countries to others as a result of opportunistic behaviour, given that the mechanism would be activated in response to cyclical shocks (and not structural gaps) and that over the long term shocks tend to be spread out evenly between countries (so that over time countries will be neither significant net beneficiaries nor significant net contributors); the full amount received must ultimately be repaid. In countries with high structural unemployment, the incentives for carrying out labour market reforms would thus remain unchanged, given that the mechanism would be activated only in response to cyclical unemployment increases. Far from being a soft option for countries that fail to introduce reforms at national level, the risk-sharing inherent in the mechanism would provide new incentives for more resolute action, encouraging the implementation of coherent measures in a range of Member States.

**Pier Carlo Padoan**  
Italian Minister of Economy and Finance  
@PCPadoan



Pier Carlo Padoan ©European Union

## PENSIONS IN EUROPE

Europe is ageing fast - life expectancy is reaching unparalleled levels, fertility and mortality rates are declining. The most significant change in the coming decades will be the transition towards a much older population structure. By 2030 Europeans will be the 'oldest' in the world. As a result, the proportion of people of working age is shrinking and the number of retired expanding. Member States are nowadays facing these challenges in terms of their capacities to alleviate tensions over their pension systems. The EU institutions and their advisory bodies – such as the EESC – have a professional expertise beyond the normal political spectrum to advise them.

Even if pension systems differ from Member State to Member State, their adequacy and sustainability caused by this transformation of Europe's population pyramid shape is put in question. The current demographic change, will lead to a change in the old-age dependency ratio between the population aged 65+ and the working population



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putting a heavy strain on the pension systems. Another big challenge is that, due to the gender pay gap and women's interruptions in working life to look after dependent family members, the gender pension gap is currently at almost 40%.

**'The current demographic change, will lead to a change in the old-age dependency ratio between the population aged 65+ and the working population putting a heavy strain on the pension systems.'**

There are three different pension pillars: a public mandatory old-age pension where contributions and taxes of current workers are used to finance pensions of current pensioners; occupational pensions and private savings plans. Under the pressure created by the ageing population and high unemployment figures, public pensions under the

first pillar tend to be less generous than before. Pensions under the second pillar cover a growing number of employees, but tend to be more risky. Hopefully the new directive on occupational pensions will provide a more secure framework. Finally, private insurance plans are not accessible and affordable to everyone. Policies to ensure that people save enough for their old age are the responsibility of national governments. However, to help solve the tension between the increasing lack of resources for funding public pension systems and the fact that these systems are a major component of social security and a key source of income for retirees, the European Commission published in 2012 a White Paper on 'A Strategy for Adequate, Safe and Sustainable Pensions'. The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) welcomed this initiative, but regretted that the Commission had focused more on second and third pillar pension systems than



Luis Planas Puchades

on seeking solutions to strengthen public pensions (first pillar). It argued that pension systems do not function independently of national economies and that Member States should therefore design their retirement policies in close coordination with their labour market and social security policies, as well as tax and macroeconomic policies.

**‘To help solve the tension between the increasing lack of resources for funding public pension systems and the fact that these systems are a major component of social security and a key source of income for retirees, the European Commission published in 2012 a White Paper on ‘A Strategy for Adequate, Safe and Sustainable Pensions’**

The majority of Member States that have reformed their pension systems over the past decade have sought to

reduce costs by raising the statutory retirement age. Yet the differences between Member States are considerable: while the EU average retirement age is around 65, some countries, like France, resist going over 62, and others, such as the UK, are ready to consider setting it at 70. In the EESC’s view, however, raising the effective retirement age needs to be brought about by policies negotiated with the social partners to encourage a longer working life and not by means of automatic mechanisms increasing the statutory retirement age, as recommended by the Commission in 2012. In order to close the gap between the actual age of retirement and the statutory pension age, the EESC recommended adapting workplaces to the skills and state of health of older workers, taking into account the hard nature of certain jobs, improving access to training and life-long learning opportunities, preventing disabilities and making it easier to balance work and family life.

In order to increase the funding of pension systems, the EESC argued that Member States should increase the supply of employment, extend the pension system to all socio-

professional categories, improve the mechanisms for levying contributions, and combat undeclared work and tax evasion. Also, raising the labour market participation of women (who make up 52% of the EU population) is crucial to ensuring the future sustainability and adequacy of pension benefits. Together with the Commission, the EESC called on the Member States to seek solutions to bridge the gap in pension rights between men and women caused by rules and labour market practice. The extremely wide gender gap in pensions – which is more than twice the figure of the gender pay gap (16%) – is very worrying, and the lack of visibility of this problem particularly unsettling.

Closing the gender pay gap and adding ‘family time’ in the pension accumulation systems for both men and women are key measures to reduce the gender gap in pensions. In this regard, it is expected that the Commission will address both issues in its proposals for a European Pillar of Social Rights and on the challenges of work-life balance faced by working families.

Finally, as recently suggested by the EESC in its opinion on the European Pillar of Social Rights, a European comparative pension adequacy and sustainability index would be a helpful benchmark to underpin Member States’ efforts to reform their pension systems and reduce poverty among pensioners.



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**Luis Planas Puchades**

Secretary-General of the  
European Economic and Social  
Committee

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## CROSS BORDER HEALTHCARE

*'Science recognises no borders, because knowledge belongs to humanity, and is the torch which illuminates the world'*  
Louis Pasteur

In 1998, the ECJ gave its judgement in the Kohll and Dekker case, which confirmed that European citizens had the right to travel to another Member State and be reimbursed for medical treatment if the treatment was normally available in the home country and the reimbursable cost no more than would have been paid in their country.

We already had the E111, (now the European Health Card), covering citizens needing treatment while in another member state on holiday, studying or working. The E112 permitted people to go to another country specifically for treatment. It required prior authorisation, which was rarely given and so rarely sought. It is from this restricted base that lawyers began to move patients' entitlement forward.

In 2001 the Geraets-Smits and Peerbooms cases confirmed that



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in-hospital treatment was covered by the Treaties. In 2003 Mueller-Fauré and Van Riet cases ruled prior authorisation was unnecessary for non-hospital treatment. In 2006 Yvonne Watts went to France for a hip replacement to avoid a long wait. Following a refusal to reimburse her costs, the British courts referred the case to the ECJ. The judgement restricted prior authorisation for in-patient hospital treatment. Step by legal step the policy moved on – without any involvement by

politicians. Politicians are elected to make policy, not lawyers. The latter interpret and enforce laws agreed by legislatures. This policy needed legal certainty and procedural clarity. This led to the Commission's 2008 proposal on Cross Border Healthcare. This included provisions going beyond the ECJ judgements, in respect of e-health, e-prescriptions, Health Technology Assessment, and 'Reference Networks' for rarer diseases.

**'They have to establish national contact points to give patients information about their entitlements and procedures, including information about healthcare providers, quality, safety and complaints procedures, so that patients, GPs and specialists can make informed choices.'**



John Bowis

It left areas of uncertainty that Parliament's report sought to address. This made clear that the policy was about patients with needs, not patients with means. We did not wish to see patients having to travel, clutching cash or credit cards to pay upfront for expensive treatment. We proposed a system of reimbursement, whereby the treating hospital receives payment direct from the patient's home country. We recognised it would be difficult to plan and manage services if there were uncertainty about potential costs. Our solution was the carrot of a 'voucher' in return for prior notification, thus giving information about likely cost and numbers. If too many were 'notifying' for a particular treatment then the 'prior authorisation' process could be triggered. The patient would take the 'voucher' to the treating hospital. The patient would not have to pay and the hospital would be assured of payment. In the final compromise, this 'voucher' concept is permitted but not required.

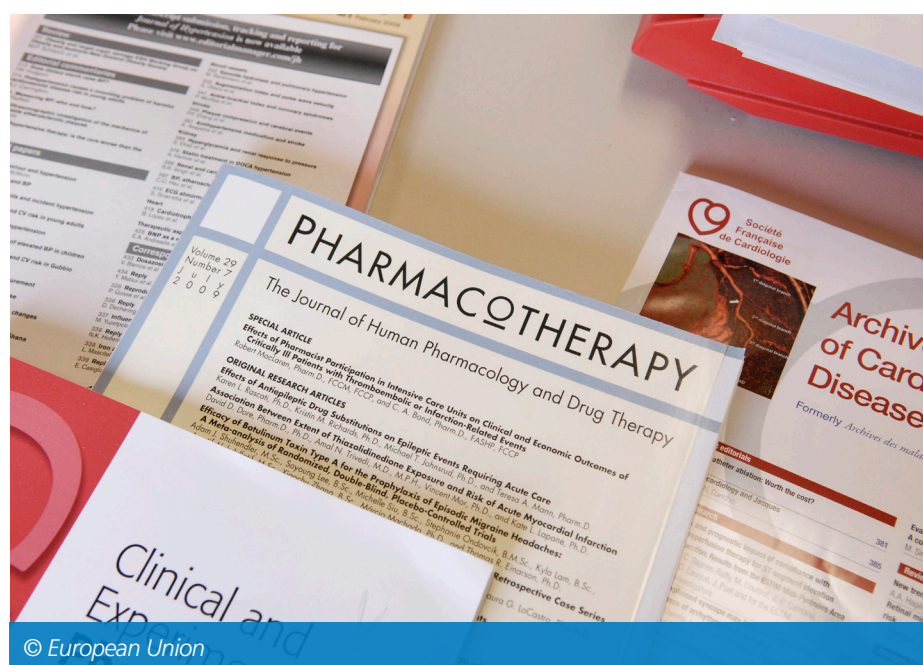
**'Europe has not always understood that spending on health is not just a cost; it is an investment. You cannot have a healthy economy without healthy people. Disease does not respect national borders; so why should health?'**

Most citizens prefer treatment locally. Language may be a deterrent. But a long wait or other factors may persuade us to look elsewhere. If countries are worried about money flowing out because their patients are dissatisfied with standards of local care, the answer is in their hands. In 2009 the measure received a large majority at first reading, while the Council took a rather more restrictive line. In the new Parliament, my colleague Françoise Grossetête achieved a compromise agreement. On 28 February 2011 the Council

gave its support for the proposal. Member states were given 30 months to transpose the Directive into national law. They have to establish national contact points to give patients information about their entitlements and procedures, including information about healthcare providers, quality, safety and complaints procedures, so that patients, GPs and specialists can make informed choices. Prior authorisation is limited to healthcare that requires overnight in-patient hospital care or treatment that involves highly specialised and costly medical equipment or where a treatment presents a particularly high risk for the patient or the population. We still have the concept of 'undue delay'. Deleted by Parliament as impossible to define, it means multiple complex formulae for acceptable waiting times. That will mean more ECJ appeals – referrals we were trying to avoid. We have, however, made a significant stride forward for patients. Europe has not always understood that spending on health is not just a cost; it is an investment. You cannot have a healthy economy without healthy people. Disease does not respect national borders; so why should health?

### John Bowis

Original rapporteur on the the Report on the proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the application of patients' rights in cross-border healthcare  
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# 30 YEARS - ERASMUS PROGRAMME

## THE RIGHT TIME FOR MORE EXCHANGES WITH POLAND

'Erasmus in Poland?', 'You're crazy.', 'What do you want to go there for?', 'And why didn't you go to Paris?'

Students who share their plans to go to Poland are familiar with these reactions. So is it brave to risk your law studies at a Bavarian university in the Far East in favour of Warsaw? No, it is more likely a conscious decision at an important time. The European Union is facing an identity crisis; European leaders are already concerned about the Trump administration and the Polish Government is becoming increasingly isolated at European level, as the spring summit of EU leaders in Brussels clearly showed. Exchanges with Polish neighbours, if only on a small scale, set the right example in order for us to grow closer, reflect on what we have in common and take advantage of the privileges that the European Union offers its citizens.

Current prejudices mainly stem from a combination of ignorance and a lack of education. That said, I think it is simply more exciting to go to places that are not perfect, which have their charms and are on the move and changing dramatically. In Warsaw there is this feeling of

dramatic change; this hunger for more is already in the air. Especially as a German in Poland, the hospitable welcome that I am experiencing now would have been unimaginable a few decades ago. The European Union and a number of exchange programmes have contributed considerably to this.

When I speak to young Poles, I get the impression that many of them are more conservative than their parents possibly were, that safety, job performance and security through their family network are very important to them and that at first they are sceptical of new people and strangers. In my opinion, this is predominantly a reaction to globalisation, which only arrived in Poland 20 years ago. The full force of globalisation has helped the country undergo significant economic development as an emerging market. The upheavals that globalisation has caused in other countries over the past few decades show that radical changes often cause people to seek familiar social structures, as they are perceived as offering more security. However, critical comments are not only directed towards the reading by the PiS (*Prawo i Sprawiedliwość*: Law and Justice Party) of Polish constitutional law. So far, during my time here, I have heard neither eurosceptic nor positive remarks about the current government from the locals. That may be because of the student bubble that exists in large cities like Warsaw. We must also bear in mind that only 19% of Poles who were eligible to vote helped the PiS party to win the overall majority. It would therefore be a fallacy to assume that the actions of the Polish Government

are supported by the actual majority of Polish people.

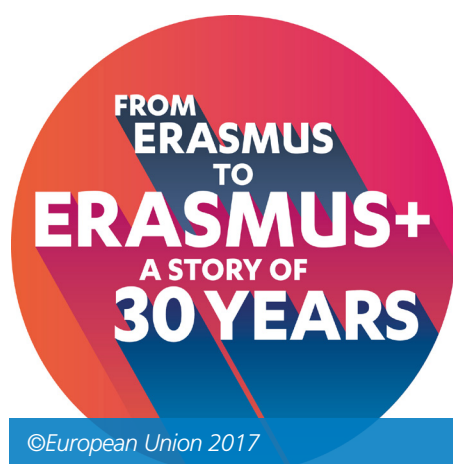
They certainly do not support isolation at European level (no other country has benefited from the EU as much as Poland has), clear constitutional breaches in connection to the swearing in of constitutional judges or the elimination of media that is critical of the government.

A eurosceptic policy does not only run counter to the mood of Polish citizens, 77% of whom supported the EU according to a Bertelsmann study carried out at the end of 2016, making Poland the most pro-EU country in Europe; it also runs counter to some fundamental considerations:

After the Second World War, Europeans constituted 22% of the total world population. Today 12% of the world's population lives in Europe. In 2050, it will be only 7%. At the same time, it is conceivable that the economic and political influence of emerging economies will increase significantly. So how will it be possible to maintain our values and remain politically and economically important if we do not do it together?

The European Union needed to be reformed well before Brexit. Is there an urgent need for democratic reforms and less bureaucracy at European level? Most definitely. Is standing by and watching the disintegration of the EU, which is a now a very real threat, the solution to the problem? Certainly not.

**Leonard Schmitz**  
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## ERASMUS IN POLAND

I am writing this piece at a difficult time for the Erasmus programme: not one year since the bus accident, another tragedy hits Valencia, this time an Italian girl found dead in her apartment. The Erasmus programme is scared for its future – all the more so under these circumstances.

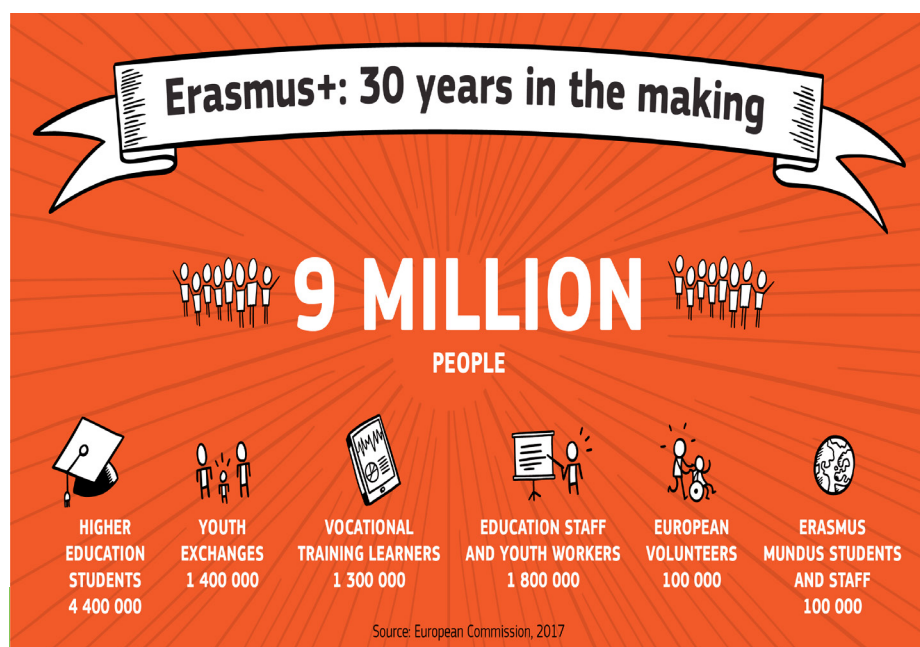
Travelling long distances, stepping out of your comfort zone, is by no means easy when you're young and insecure; many give up, many resist.

But the prospect of exploring an unknown country also has the potential to inspire great courage. I'm convinced that I become braver every time I say goodbye to my family, my university, my home, which was hit so hard by the earthquakes; and it's never easy to leave for something so far from home. I feel braver every time I take a plane or drive thousands of miles, passing through Austria and Germany and eagerly sampling all that their cities have to offer, on my way to Lodz, Poland, which has welcomed me

with surprising warmth despite its cold climate. I have lost count of the number of times I have experienced the joy, and apprehension, of the locals, when, for whatever reason, they find themselves having to deal with me, an Italian. I have seen the surprise and appreciation in the eyes of those who have listened to me try and speak a language as difficult as Polish. And that is what gives me the strength and enthusiasm to keep attempting to integrate into this country. Spending hours chatting with the fantastic people I meet by chance, enriching their lives with my culture, and mine with theirs. This adventure has made me feel like more than just another tourist. I have felt the bitter cold of winter on my skin, when I struggled even to breathe the outside air; I have seen jets of water freeze under bright blue skies. On 11 November, national independence day, I was lucky enough to be able to visit Warsaw. I saw the colours: white and

red, rising like smoke from crowded streets. I touched bullet holes in the old city streets and sampled the country's traditional dishes. The greatest advantage of the Erasmus programme is undoubtedly being able to immerse yourself in the quirks of another culture, made possible by volunteer student associations such as the Erasmus Student Network, which work tirelessly to provide support services and translation, and organise parties and trips, enabling Erasmus students to explore everything there is to see: historic places like the birth city of Nicolaus Copernicus, or natural wonders such as the mountains in the south and the Baltic sea.

While the debate on the geographical centre of Europe is still open, Lodz is surely in the running, and its fantastic position makes it possible to travel to a different capital city every weekend; so different and unique, but united under the European flag. The Erasmus programme is often referred to as a second life, where you have the chance to connect with people for the briefest of moments, but forge strong relationships which leave behind a void. These new relationships stimulate tolerance towards outsiders, a welcoming spirit, and I am convinced that opening up this opportunity to as many students as possible is one of the greatest possible steps in the right direction.



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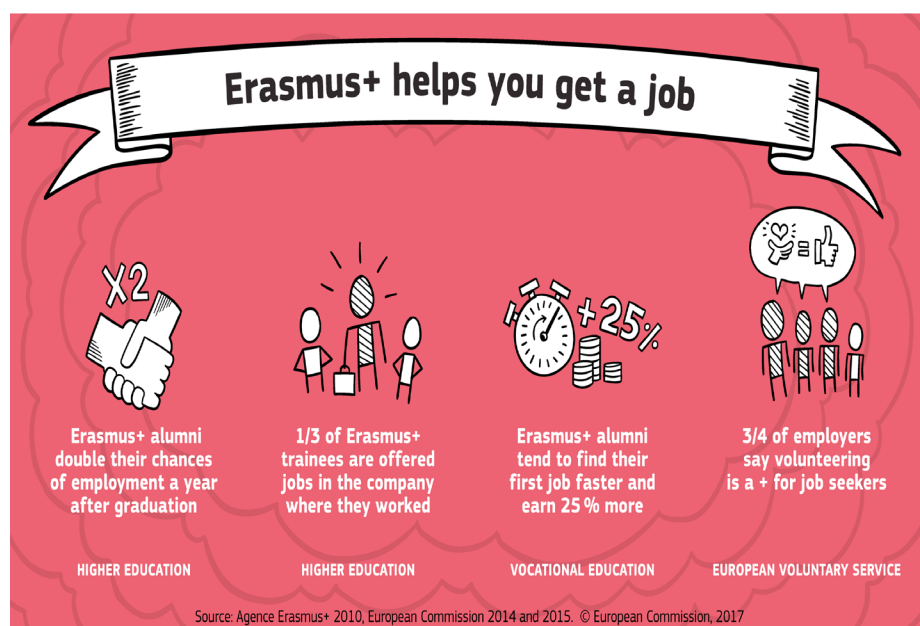
## A PORTUGUESE ERASMUS STUDENT IN POLAND

My name is José Alberto Abreu do Souto and I am studying Political Science and International Relations at the Human Social Sciences Faculty of the New University of Lisbon. I am currently an Erasmus student at the Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw and I can say that it has been one of the most interesting experiences that I have ever had. Why did you choose Poland? I've been asked that several times since I got here and my answer is simple. Its history. Every street you pass has a story to tell, either because it served as a strategic point for the Polish military during the German occupation or because it contains a building in which a family welcomed more than a hundred Jews. It is true that exchanging Portugal's hot weather and its proximity to the sea for never-ending streets with commercial buildings and infrastructures – and the incessant cold weather – is not easy. Packing only essentials into a suitcase and a

hold bag (as a result of the weight restrictions), and leaving behind friends and family to jump head first into a country you do not know, one that is culturally different from Portugal, with the knowledge of only a few words in the language, such as 'dzień dobry', 'dziękuję' and 'gdzie jestem', is no easy task ... I had barely landed when I felt the shock of the icy breeze hitting me in the face but, after five weeks here, I am now used to the cold. Public transport services in Warsaw are excellent. Multiple buses and trams run within a few minutes of each other, which is perfect for a university student. After you have visited some iconic sites like the 'Old Town', it is clear that Poland has risen from the ashes like a phoenix. Looking at the various buildings, churches and monuments that were destroyed and reduced to dust during World War II, they are now fully restored, and the look of pre-war Poland has been recreated.



That is phenomenal. And yet several parts of Poland's heritage still need to be restored, but it seems that the Polish Government is committed to taking action in that respect and has the support of the majority of Poles to do so. Coming from Portugal, I was pleasantly surprised to find that the cost of living in Poland is lower than in Portugal. Food and drinks, transport and accommodation are the sectors in which the difference is most noticeable – for just EUR 35 you can travel for three months around Warsaw using any method of transport. That is not the case in Lisbon. In a nutshell, those were my first impressions after a month of Erasmus. For all those who come to read this article, if you are a student interested in doing Erasmus and still do not know which destination to choose, I will give you a hint. Look at some pictures of Poland and I think your decision will be easier.



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# FMA ACTIVITIES



European Parliament Former Members Association  
Association des anciens députés au Parlement européen



*FMA activities*

# EP TO CAMPUS PROGRAMME

## MENDEL UNIVERSITY PROGRAMME

Running from 20 to 27 November 2016, the Mendel University-based International Week in Brno, Czech Republic, aimed to gather lecturers from different parts of the world and throw light on challenging issues. The Faculty of Business and Economics – the usual suspect for inspirational ideas and topics to be presented to the students – integrated the EP to Campus in its programme.

The international group of students – under the guide of Prof. Lacina – I was invited to meet comprised young people from the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Ghana, Nigeria, Turkey, Taiwan, Ethiopia, FYROM, Spain, Belarus, India... For our Monday session, I introduced the complex issue of Understanding Brexit. In my pursuit of bringing to light different aspects, I elaborated on the UK big picture of the post-referendum landscape. My notes were wide-ranging, from the value of Sterling, inflation, different sectors of the economy, British companies, international investment banks, decisions of the Bank of England, to the EU repeal bill, the reaction of British Parliament, the High Court ruling and the expected verdict of the Supreme Court. The view of the European Union was clearly expressed in my remarks, too. We also analysed the case study based on the town of Birkenhead, in northwest England. I could refer to the fact that although the UK economy recorded 2.2 percent growth in 2015 -higher than the EU and G7 average- that success was not translated into a better economic situation for many communities and poverty remained a major problem. The next session of lectures covered

the March package of measures introduced by the ECB. For the sake of enlarging students' knowledge about the institution, I could promote an ECB interactive educational tool. The effect of the exercise and the brilliant performance of the students provoked my sending a letter to the top management of the Bank containing score indication and quick grasp reference.

Migration was our last topic for discussion on Friday. I focused on the global perspective; then, I smoothly drove to the EU perspective, policy failures and emergency responses. Policy funding and innovative financial instruments also grabbed the attention of the students. We largely deliberated, too, over the study of the 'Cost of non-Schengen', embedded in the notion of the 'Cost of non-Europe.'

The Impact perspective of migration mobilized a good part of our time for discussion. We could fix some general assumptions in that respect:

- \* It is obviously at the local level where the integration of migrants is most direct, perceptible and visible. Migrants can indeed influence the structure and daily life of a city or region.

- \* In many countries, a negative impact is assumed. One possible explanation could be a lack of sufficient information. Another interpretation may be the individual perceptions. Sometimes, media attention, too, may be 'disproportionately focused on areas facing high immigrant concentration and unemployment.' Then, there is a biased picture of the overall country or regional situation.

- \* Since migrants tend to have

different characteristics from the native-born it results to a situation in which the costs and benefits of migration are unevenly assessed and distributed across levels of government. So, there is an urgent need for the funding and refunding schemes in place to be reconsidered so that they can reflect local costs better. Improvement of the coordination between levels of government is a must, too. A full assessment requires an in-depth study comprising also the revenue side, reflecting the benefits of the integration of migrants. (OECD study).

- \* Nevertheless, adaptations in the local infrastructure tend to take time. Large and sudden inflows of refugees arriving in Europe as a result of the refugee crisis may indeed exacerbate longstanding challenges. Some structural problems in local infrastructure, such as housing, teacher shortages, etc., and their adjustment can cause reactions (OECD study).

But, acknowledging the fact that migration is not the primary cause of such challenges is an important first step to harmonize and pacify public opinion and demand a broader consensus for policy development. For the sake of bringing the students to the idea that we share common values and world heritage regardless of where we come from, I finished my lecture with a clip supported by UNESCO and the European Commission: [The Value of Heritage](#).

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# CO-OPERATION WITH THE EUI

## PROGRAMME IN FLORENCE



Riccardo Ventre during the event



Poster of the event



From left: Cristiana Muscardini, Dieter Schlenker, Director of the HAEU and Monica Baldi

Co-operation with the European University Institute (EUI), and in particular with the Historical Archives of the European Union (HAEU), has continued with the much-appreciated participation of our members in educational programmes for students. Our members, with their experience and extensive knowledge, have helped to make this collaboration a success.

This year, the Historical Archives decided to develop a new project, to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome. The programme focused on the drafting of a new treaty geared to the formation of active European citizenship; the topic was well received by students from secondary and high schools who showed great interest and, as Europeans, outlined their vision for a better future. Numerous meetings were held in the prestigious Villa Salviati in Florence to discuss this highly topical issue. The meetings were attended by our Italian members Monica Baldi, Riccardo Garosci, Vitaliano Gemelli, Andrea Manzella, Cristiana Muscardini and Riccardo Ventre.



Villa Salviati ©EUI



From left: Vincenzo Grassi EUI secretary-General, Monica Baldi, Enrique Barón Crespo and Renaud Dehousse, EUI President during the State of the Union, on 4-5 May 2017.

# FORMER MEMBERS' NETWORK

## FORWARDS, BACKWARDS OR MARKING TIME?

**European Association of Former Members of Parliament of the Members States of the Council of Europe (FP-AP) spring meeting in Paris: plotting a course and paying tribute.**

To start with the decisions taken at the Paris Bureau meeting: In November 2017 Malta is to host a seminar on the topic of 'Statelessness'. And the theme of the FP-AP Colloquy in autumn 2018 will be 'The future of Europe' – including the future of the European Union, as the two things define one another.

It is planned that the Belgian delegation will host the event, and the venue will be in Brussels.

In Paris FP-AP General Assembly, on 10 March 2017, the future of Europe was the subject of lively debate. The point was made that, in European political terms, marking time meant losing ground, so it was not an option. Andrea Manzella, Elisabetta Fonck and I (as representatives of our respective Former Members' Associations) were in agreement on that, as were the other delegations of former members of the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly.

Should we look back in anger (to borrow John Osborne's famous title)? No!

Should we look forwards? Yes, of course! But how, and in precisely which direction?

Since the end of the Second World War, with all its atrocities, several generations of young people have set their course by the work in progress of our democratic society. The rule of law, respect for creation and for human rights, freedom of opinion, subsidiarity and the policy

of respecting traditions and what we have in common: these are the riches of the European Union. These values are priceless. They are the reason why the world looks to us. Like in the past, we have overcome crises.

For naked egotism, destructive nationalism and brutal terrorism are disrupting the hitherto successful efforts to build unity in Europe. Our hope is that things that have become of value to us will remain unshaken in the great unrest in the European Union and elsewhere.

Guest speakers Professor Giulio Cipollone and Rector Franco Imoda, of the Gregorian University in Rome, made timely reference in their speeches to the Italian politician and history lecturer Giuseppe Vedovato (1912-2012), of Democrazia Cristiana. Between 1972 and 1975 he chaired the Parliamentary Assembly and in 2003 he was made Honorary President of the Council of Europe. The FP-AP regularly presents an award in his name for photographs which are submitted to the management Committee in connection with important events. Vedovato was a humanist, a thinker rather than a dreamer, and he was unselfish. There is much to be learned from his ideas and he has set us an example of a kind that is all too rare. Vedovato liked to quote that philosopher and pioneer of the ideas of European integration and Europe of Regions Denis De Rougemont (1906-1983), who said: 'The decadence of a society begins when people ask 'What is going to happen?' instead of asking 'What can I do?'. John F. Kennedy expressed the same idea: 'Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you

can do for your country.'

President Lino De Bono welcomed as brothers-in-arms the leaders of the delegations from Norway and Finland and urged the formation of more new delegations. Another focus of joint effort in the future would be targeted profile-raising, involving students, teachers, academics and the press in disseminating the association's message.

The President used the occasion of the Paris meeting to honour 'one of our own', Karin Junker (PES, Germany (1989 – 2014)). I gave the encomium, describing how, over more than 50 years as a member of the SPD, Karin Junker had held many senior posts. After chairing the SPD Women's Organisation for many years, she had been one of the founders of the PES Women's Organisation. She was a tireless campaigner for women's rights and also for the integration of refugees. In 2010, in Kiev, the FP-AP had unanimously adopted her draft for its declaration on 'Migration and Integration in Europe'.

A journalist by training, she had served for many years as a board member at Westdeutscher Rundfunk, Germany's largest broadcasting company, and had also been a member of the German-French Advisory Council to the European Cultural Channel ARTE.

A former FP-AP and FMA Vice-President, she had led numerous FMA delegations and had contributed many articles to the FMA Bulletin.

**Brigitte Langenhagen**  
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## A NEW PERSPECTIVE ON EUROPE AS A WHOLE

My years with FP-AP (the European Association of Former Members of Parliament) were a hugely enriching experience for me, and yet it was quite by chance that I became involved. The European Parliament Former Members' Association (FMA) had just elected its new Managing Committee, the former members were not standing for re-election, the portfolios had not yet been distributed within the new committee, but there was an upcoming event at which the FMA had to be represented. I looked at my calendar and agreed to take on this one job. In those days, the FMA was not yet a member of FP-AP, only an observer. However, it had applied for membership and I was told I should give as reliable an impression as possible to ensure we were accepted. I was delighted to see some familiar faces there. Already in the corridor to the meeting room, the Honorary President Uwe Holtz, whom I knew well from the German Bundestag, tipped me off that a few committee members had spoken out against the FMA becoming a full member, so I knew I had to break down some prejudices. Not a great start, I thought, I wonder how this will go, most people don't know me and I don't know them. At a second

glance, though, I found that I was well accepted after all, because my presence broadened the spectrum of experience in FP-AP. Briefly, we didn't succeed at the first meeting, but the FMA confirmed me as a delegate, the sceptics withdrew their objections, and soon we were full members. That proved useful for both organisations. I learned a new perspective on Europe beyond the borders of the EU, and I think my opposite numbers had a similar feeling. I also got to know European regions where I had never been before, such as Kiev and Andorra, which broadened my knowledge not just in a geographical sense. Working on statements on matters of political principle was a new challenge for me each time. On the topic of 'Migration and Integration in Europe' I was even asked to draw up a statement. It was adopted unanimously in 2010 in Kiev and could have been a good template for subsequent migration policy. This opened my eyes to the situation in Italy and Malta in particular, which was desperate even then, and which under the Dublin rules was disregarded by non-Mediterranean countries (including Germany!). This motivated me to continue

pursuing this issue and to commit myself in a practical way to the integration of refugees, as I am still doing. At present I am sponsoring a Syrian family with four children aged between five and 15.

My departure from FP-AP coincided almost exactly with World Women's Day 2017. The growing demonstrations against the backlash in women's and equality policy, particularly in the USA, Poland and Turkey, were still dominating the headlines. In Germany a long overdue decision had been taken to launch the ratification of the Council of Europe's Istanbul Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence.

Nationalism and populism are spreading in many places, with varying degrees of success, in EU and Council of Europe member states. 'European values' are often no longer highly regarded, or are being completely undermined. I am not the only one to be concerned about the permanence of our unique peace project of European integration. This makes organisations like the FMA and FP-AP all the more important as champions of a democratic Europe which respects human rights and stands up for freedom of the press, an independent judiciary and the separation of powers. A new civil rights movement, #pulse of europe, has emerged, and is taking to the streets to defend precisely this Europe. Europe is not a lost cause yet!



Karin Junker being awarded by Lino DeBono – President of the FP-AP

**Karin Junker**

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# VISIT UNDER EU PRESIDENCY

## MALTA - A JEWEL OF AN ISLAND

On 3 and 4 April, our Association made a study trip to Malta - a two-day immersion in the long and rich history of a country that harbours great ambitions for Europe.

In broad brushstrokes, the history of Malta may be traced back from the Phoenicians and St Paul, through the Battle of Lepanto in 1571, which saw the defeat of the Ottomans and was the first awakening of a European identity rooted in Christianity, the reign of the Knights of St John until 1798, the rivalry between the major Catholic powers, and the brief period of Bonapartist reform resulting in French occupation until the Congress of Vienna, to British rule and eventual independence. Malta is a product of and key witness to centuries of conflict in the Mediterranean and Europe as a whole.

Owing to its strategic position in the heart of the Mediterranean, over the centuries Malta has played a role out of all proportion to its size and population.

It has been independent since 1964, became part of the EU in 2004, and joined the eurozone in 2008.

Malta takes great pride in itself. Its capital is an open-air museum of our civilisation, in which the palaces, known as 'auberges', built by Grand Masters from the leading Catholic powers, vie to outdo each other for splendour. These ancient buildings now provide official residences for the country's President, Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, the past rubbing shoulders with the present.

Renzo Piano has magnificently redesigned the entrance to the old town and built a new Parliament, the stone structure of which ties

it in with Malta's past, while the Chamber, which is very modern in design, looks forward to the future. The Parliament, which was previously housed in the President's Palace, wished to assert its independence of the executive by having its own building.

The Speaker of the Parliament and the chair of its Committee for Foreign and European Affairs welcomed us to the building for a guided tour and discussions on European issues.

Our Maltese friends' commitment to the European project was clearly apparent during our delegation's talks with the President of the Republic, the Labour Prime Minister and the Speaker of the Parliament. Our politically diverse group asked questions and offered suggestions at a time when Europe appears unsure of itself and needs at all costs to rediscover its energy and sense of direction.

Malta is comfortable on the European stage, supported by its rich history and its ability to act as a facilitator and host international conferences.

The Prime Minister supports the idea of a multi-speed Europe. The old taboo against some Member States moving forward faster than the others has finally been broken. He reiterated the priorities of the Maltese Presidency, based on those established by the Presidential Trio (the Netherlands, Slovenia, Malta) in 2016: migration policy, gender equality, development of the Digital Single Market, combatting terrorism, maritime governance and a specific approach for the Western Mediterranean.

The Maltese authorities repeated

their willingness to help find a solution to the chaos in Libya and reiterated their support for democracy in Turkey. Our delegation endorsed this approach.

We were also welcomed to the naval base by Maltese army officers. They spoke to us about the armed forces and their duties, including in the fight against terrorism. We were taken out on a launch to view Malta from the sea, giving us a taste of what the Knights must have felt on approaching this magnificent island.

Malta will be a European Capital of Culture in 2018. I see the island as an obvious choice, given its beauty, architectural splendour and artistic treasures of all kinds. St John's Cathedral, with its rich baroque interior, honed and perfected over the centuries by the Grand Masters and the Catholic Church, and Caravaggio's masterpiece, the Beheading of St. John the Baptist, with its exceptionally fine use of chiaroscuro, are particularly magnificent.

Our discussions with our hosts centred around the future, culture, politics and the importance of European solidarity.

The discussions were led with skill and authority by our friend Enrique Barón Crespo.

**Jean-Paul Benoit**

PES, France (1989-1994)

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## HIGH-LEVEL MEETINGS IN MALTA

We initiated our institutional visit at the highest level. The President of the Republic, Mrs. Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca, received us at the San Anton Palace in Attard, the official residence of the President since the office was created in 1974.

In her welcoming address, President Coleiro Preca was clearly speaking from her heart! Making many references to Malta's history especially to how positive the accession of Malta to the EU in 2004 has been. She expressed her conviction that in these difficult times, Europeans must spend the time needed to build a society which stands up against hatred, social injustice, greed, exploitation, and discrimination. She highlighted the great role that former MEPs can play in it.

She also referred to the aging of the European population as a source for concern that requires individuals and society to change their behaviour in response to changing conditions and policy to help adapt to demographic shifts.

The President of our Association, Enrique Barón, thanked her for her warm welcome and hospitality and briefly explained the role and programmes of our Association. In his speech he made many references to the history of Malta and its strong ties with Europe. He specially

mentioned the XV century when Malta became part of the powerful Spanish Empire and the Spanish King granted Malta to the knights of St John in 1530.

Enrique Barón Crespo underlined the important role played by Malta in relation to immigration.

Before departing we could make a brief visit into different rooms of the palace, among them the one that houses the portraits of the Great Masters of the Order of St. John. The palace, built in the early 17th century, was used as a residence by subsequent Grand Masters, being enlarged a number of times in the process. Later it was the headquarters of the rebel National Assembly during the uprising of 1798-1888 and then became a residence for the Civil Commissioners, Governors and Governors-General of Malta.

The next meeting was with the Prime Minister, Dr Joseph Muscat, a former colleague in the European Parliament, who was accompanied by the Minister for Finance, Prof. Edward Scicluna, also a Former MEP which we had the pleasure of having dinner with.

The meeting took place in the Auberge de Castille, one of the finest buildings of Malta that now houses the Office of the Prime Minister. It was originally an auberge in Valletta built, in the 1570s, to house knights of the Order of Saint John from the langue of Castile, Leon and Portugal. The present building dates back to the 1740s, when it was completely rebuilt in the Baroque style.

An informal dialogue was opened immediately among attendees as introductions were unnecessary.

It turned out to be a relaxed and extremely interesting meeting, like a gathering of old friends now holding a great responsibility. The delegation's members contributed to this informal dialogue by making comments and asking questions.

We talked long about the priorities of the Maltese Presidency of the Council such as migration, security, single market, social inclusion, neighbourhood policy and marine-time policy. Issues like unemployment and protection of workers, tourism and sustainability, ICTs and the recent EU commitment on HPC and Big Data as pioneering technologies and practices that are revolutionizing computational research in the entire public and private sector were discussed.

A fruitful meeting united again this great network of MEPs. Much is said about networking and in a positive sense, but sometimes we forget that the Former MEPs form an interesting and wide network that our association contributes to reinforce. We could see the crucial role that Malta is playing in the EU migration crisis when, next morning, we visited EASO, the European Asylum Support Office, which main mission is to support those states subject to pressure on their asylum and reception systems, to implement and develop the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) by fostering greater cooperation with and between Member States on the basis of the CEAS values of equity and fairness.

**Teresa Riera Madurell**  
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*Participants of the Malta visit with H.E. the President of Malta*



# PHOTO REPORT



EP President, Antonio Tajani meets with Enrique Barón Crespo on 31 May 2017 ©EP

We started our Annual Meeting with an outstanding visit to the House of European History, inaugurated on 4 May 2017. The visit was followed by an information seminar on “Looking ahead: From the Rome Declaration to the European Elections 2019” organised by the EPRS. Brexit and the European elections in 2019, among others, were the subject of a heated debate. Our traditional Memorial Service to commemorate deceased former MEPs was a dignified and solemn ceremony in the presence of VP Bogusław Liberadzki, Former EP and FMA President José María Gil Robles, current and former MEPs, 23 members of the families of deceased members and other guests. This year, H.E. Ambassador Reinhard Silberberg, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Permanent Representation of the Federal Republic of Germany to the European Union, was the keynote speaker at our dinner debate engaging in a lively and interactive dialogue with the audience. On 31 May the FMA President paid a courtesy visit to EP President Antonio Tajani to present the work done by the Association. These two intense days of work were concluded with our Annual General Assembly and the Annual Lunch.



From left to right: Joséphine Vanden Broucke, Etienne Bassot, Enrique Barón Crespo, Jesús Carmona, and Eva Poptcheva, EPRS representatives ©EP



A moment of the Memorial Service ©EP



H.E. Ambassador Reinhard Silberberg holding a speech on the internal and external challenges the EU is facing ©EP



José María Gil-Robles, during the touching closing oration of the FMA Memorial Service ©EP



Manuel Porto during the Annual General Assembly ©EP



# LATEST NEWS

## ACTIVITIES



### September 2017

#### STUDY VISIT TO WASHINGTON

Details will be communicated at a later stage. Please check your emails.

### November 2017

#### VISIT TO ESTONIA

Dates and details will be communicated at a later stage. Please check your emails.

### 29 November 2017

#### FMA ANNUAL COCKTAIL AND DINNER

From 6.30pm in the Member's Restaurant, European Parliament, Brussels

### 30 November 2017

#### FMA ANNUAL SEMINAR

From 10 am to 1 pm. It will be followed by the FMA Get-together lunch in the Members' Restaurant, European Parliament, Brussels.

## CONGRATULATIONS

Martine Buron (PES, 1988 - 1994), President of the Maison de l'Europe in Nantes, was elected President of the [French Federation of Houses of Europe](#) in April.

The Federation brings together 34 'Houses of Europe', associations whose objective is to contribute to the building of a Europe based on peace, democracy, sustainable development and solidarity, by promoting a citizenship European Union. Volunteers and employees of Maisons de l'Europe spread information about the European Union and its policies, organized debates and promoted European mobility to a wide range of audiences.



## NEW MEMBERS



**Giampaolo D'ANDREA**  
(Italy, 1994-1998, EPP)



**Antonio DE POLI**  
(Italy, 2004-2005, EPP)



**Joan CALABUIG RULL**  
(Spain, 2004-2008, PSE)



**Guido PODESTÀ**  
(Italy, 1994-2009, EPP)



**Nikolaos SIFUNAKIS**  
(Greece, 2004-2007, S&D)



31 May 2017

Dear Member,

**Re: RESULTS OF THE VOTES**

Please find below the detailed results of the votes which took place at the Annual General Assembly of the Association on 31 May 2017:

**2) The vote on the Annual Report and Accounts:**

	FOR	AGAINST	ABSTAIN
To approve the Annual Report and Accounts	183	0	5

There were 198 votes cast, of which none were ruled invalid and 10 were left blank, leaving a total valid poll of 188.

**3) The election for five members of the FMA Management Committee**

The following members were elected in the order below and will now serve on the Management Committee for a period of two years until the Annual General Assembly meeting of 2019:

1. Lord Richard BALFE
2. Monica BALDI
3. Teresa RIERA MADURELL
4. Jan-Willem BERTENS
5. Edvard KOŽUŠNIK

There were 198 votes cast, of which 4 were ruled invalid, leaving a total valid poll of 194.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who took part in these elections.

Yours sincerely,

Malcolm HARBOUR  
Scrutineer

Jolanta HIBNER  
Scrutineer



## NEW MEMBERS OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE



Enrique  
BARÓN CRESPO



Lord Richard BALFE



Brigitte  
LANGENHAGEN



Jan-Willem BERTENS



Monica BALDI



Edvard KOŽUŠNÍK



Andrea MANZELLA



Edward  
McMILLAN-SCOTT



Manuel PORTO



Teresa  
RIERA MADURELL

## NEW FMA BUREAU

President: Enrique BARÓN CRESPO

Vice-President: Lord BALFE

Secretary: Brigitte LANGENHAGEN

Treasurer: Jan-Willem BERTENS

## LIST OF MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES

- FMA Bulletin Editorial Board: **Ms Langenhagen, Mr Manzella, Mr McMillan-Scott, Mr Porto, Ms Riera Madurell**
- Speakers Bureau: **Ms Baldi**
- EP to Campus: **Lord Balfe**
- Relation with the European University Institute: **Ms Baldi**
- Relations with Budgets Committee, DG Finance: **Mr Kožušník**
- Dinner Debate: **Ms Baldi, Mr Bertens, Mr Porto**
- Delegates to the Bureau of the European Association of Former Members: **Ms Langenhagen and Mr Manzella**. If necessary, Ms Langenhagen will be substituted by Lord Balfe and Mr Manzella will be substituted by Mr Bertens
- Delegates to the Annual General Assembly, seminars and colloquies of the FP-AP: **Ms Langenhagen, Mr Manzella and Mr Bertens** (Mr Kožušník if Mr Bertens is not available). Besides the FMA delegates or their substitutes and in agreement with the FP-AP, other FMA Committee Members may participate in the annual seminars or colloquies at their own expense
- Relations with Former Members Associations outside Europe: **Lord Balfe**
- Delegates to Global Democracy Initiative: **Mr Barón Crespo, Lord Balfe, Ms Langenhagen and Mr Bertens**
- Relations with Think Tanks, Policy Institutes, Foundations: **Ms Langenhagen and Ms Riera Madurell**
- Activity on Democracy Support and EU Election Observation: **Mr Bertens, Mr Kožušník, Ms Langenhagen, Mr McMillan Scott**
- Archives: **Mr Porto**
- FMA Communication: **Ms Baldi**
- Working Group on Democracy Support and Election Observation: **Mr Bertens, Ms Langenhagen, Mr McMillan-Scott (Chair), Mr Kožušník, and Ms De Keyser** (FMA member with advisory role).

## IN MEMORIAM

† 9 March 2017

**Franco BORGIO**

EPP (1984-1994)

He served as an Italian member of the European Parliament from 1984 to 1994. During his time in Parliament, Mr Borgo was a member of the Group of the European People's Party (Christian-Democratic Group). At the national level he represented Democrazia Cristiana for 10 years.



† 23 March 2017

**Nikolaos VAKALIS**

EPP (2004-2009)

He served as a Greek member of the European Parliament from 2004 to 2009. During his time in Parliament, Mr Vakalis was a member of the Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats) and European Democrats. At the national level he represented Nea Dimokratia for 5 years.



† 29 March 2017

**Magdalene HOFF**

S&D (1979-2004)

She served as a German member of the European Parliament from 1979 to 2004. During her time in Parliament, Ms Hoff was a member of the Group of the Party of European Socialists European Democrats, being Vice-Chair of the party between 1994 and 1997. At the national level she represented Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands for 25 years.



† 16 May 2017

**Outi OJALA**

GUE/NGL, Finland (1996-1999)

She served as a Finish member of the European Parliament from 1996 to 1999. During her time in Parliament, Ms Ojala was a Member of the Confederal Group of the European United Left/Nordic Green Left.

At the national level she represented Vasemmistoliitto for 3 years.

