

EPFMA BULLETIN



European Parliament Former Members Association

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WELLBEING AND COMPETITIVENESS IN THE EU



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The 2019 theme for the International Day of Democracy will be the participation, as an opportunity to recall that democracy is about people. Democracy is built on inclusion, equal treatment and participation — and it is a fundamental building block for peace, sustainable development and human rights.



International Day of Democracy
15 September

Cover: ©Shutterstock

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 Due to the long time lag between the call for contribution and the publication, some articles may be outdated.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 Member,

I am pleased to present you with the third bulletin of 2019. In this issue, former MEPs will provide their analyses on the impact of the outcome of the European elections on the EU's institutional set-up and political dynamics.

The Former Members' Association (FMA) has an exciting autumnal agenda lined up for its members. From the 29 September to 4 October, a delegation of twenty-five FMA members will go on a study visit to Georgia. Following the European Unions' efforts to forge closer ties with the Caucasus region, the delegation will meet Georgian parliament and government officials in order to discuss EU-Georgia relations. They will visit the Administrative Boundary Line (ABL) between Georgia and South Ossetia. They will discuss the current situation, democratic values and rights with local authorities, Think Tanks and NGOs.

From 3 to 5 November, we will visit Finland in the context of the country's Presidency of the Council of the EU. The programme includes interesting meetings with the Parliament and Ministries, in addition to and high-level political experts and university students to discuss the Finish Presidency's priorities, which are competitiveness and inclusiveness, Europe's climate action and EU citizens' security.

In December, our annual events will be organised in close cooperation with the House of European History. We are

expecting two days of intensive political debate and discussion and we hope to meet many new members. Thanks to the efforts of the 2019 recruitment campaign, 217 new members joined the Association. We would like to take this opportunity to encourage our members to invite their former colleagues to join the Association.

This issue will focus on the topic of competitiveness and wellbeing in the European Union. Never before has Europe been under such pressure to perform and compete on the global market. How do we keep a balance between work performance and physical and mental wellbeing? We have asked for contributions from our colleagues and experts in the field to offer insight and reflection on this pressing issue.

You will also find reports on the activities of the FMA. The EP to Campus programme remains successful as ever in connecting former parliamentarians with the academic world and students from every corner of Europe. Members travelled to Italy, Turkey and Romania before the European elections to give lectures and participate in panel discussions. They were relenting in their efforts to inform and educate students on the role of European Parliament in the EU. We also furthered our cooperation with national parliaments and other former members associations. Our delegation successfully visited Bucharest in the context of the Romanian Presidency of the Council. You will find detailed

reports of their efforts and discussions written by the delegates in this issue. We would like to thank all our colleagues who took part in these visits and events. We are now looking forward to our study visit to Georgia at the end of September and to Finland in November.

You will also be able to read about the continuously expanding network of former members. FMA representatives attended annual events organised by the Canadian Association of Former Parliamentarians and a meeting of the European platform of former parliamentarians hosted by the Swedish FMA in Lund.

Lastly, please allow me thank all those who contributed to this issue with their insights and opinions. I hope to meet as many of you as possible at our December events.

Kind regards,

Hans-Gert Pöttering
FMA President

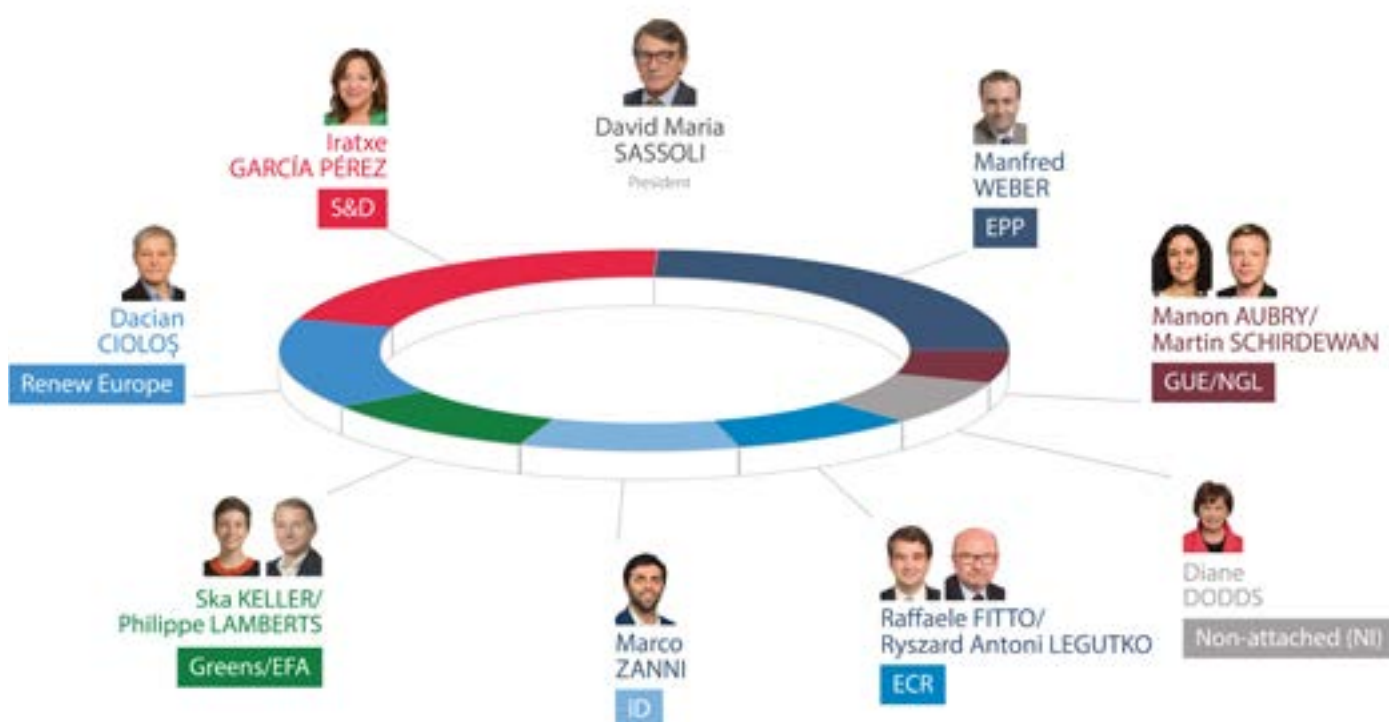
EP NEWS



THE PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

On 2nd July, David Sassoli (S&D, IT) won Parliament's presidential election with 345 votes out of 667 valid votes in the second round. During his first speech, he said: 'We must have the strength to relaunch our integration process, changing our Union so to be able to respond more strongly to the needs of our citizens and give real answers to their concerns, to their increasingly widespread sense of loss'.

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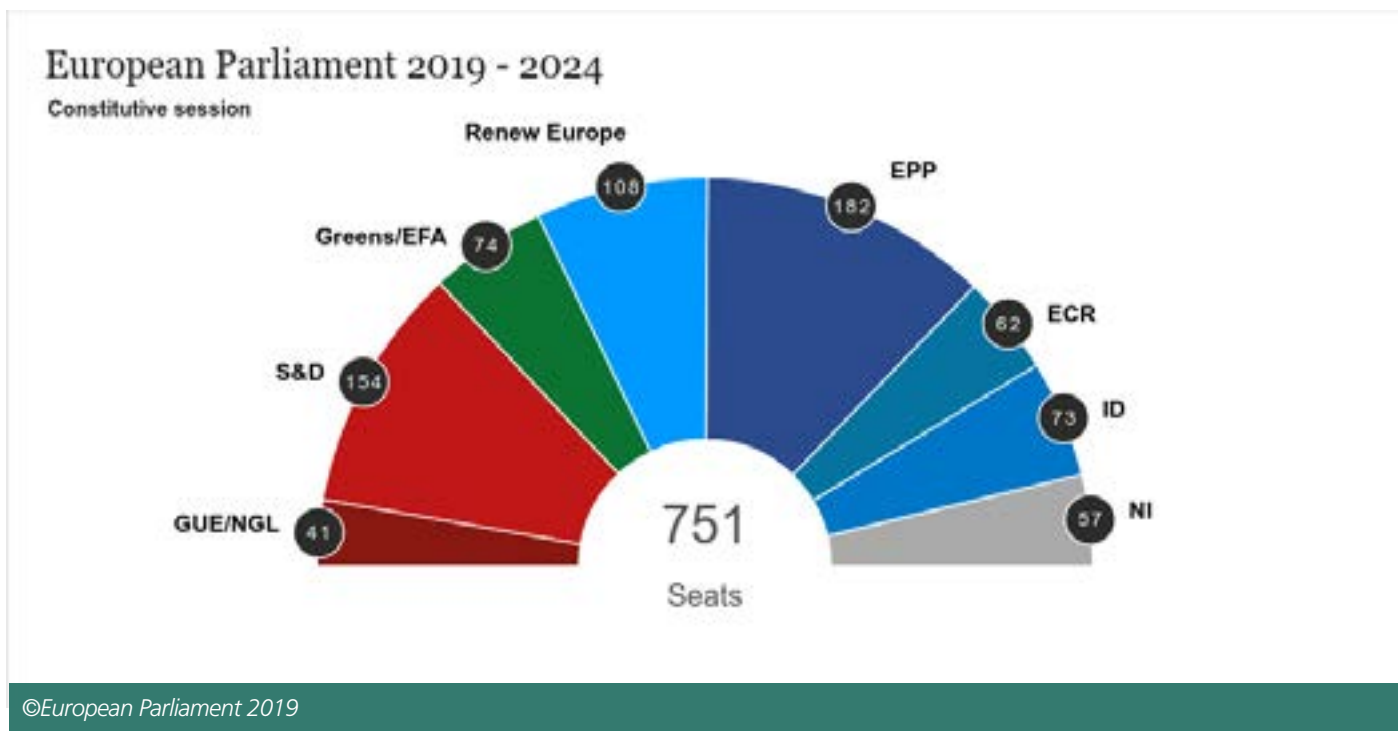


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CURRENT AFFAIRS

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: A FRESH START?



40 years on from the first direct elections, is the European Parliament ready for a fresh start?

Possibly it is, for two reasons.

Firstly, because the parliamentary term which has just come to an end – amid crises, remedies and self-analysis – has opened up a pathway to change, which may be covert, with regard to the new role of the institution. It would be difficult to ignore that pathway and not to continue along it.

Secondly, because the political tensions which have built up throughout a very long election campaign – conducted for the first time on thorny ‘European’ issues which have intertwined with national public affairs – will necessarily be reflected in the new Parliament. This combination of a present in which time is running out and a near past which, nevertheless, has had its importance, could mean that

an innovative process is required. If necessary, that process could take place without any constitutional changes, along the lines suggested by the parliamentary resolutions of 16 February 2017 in the recently concluded parliamentary term.

“The ‘birth’ of the opposition would thus mean a European Parliament which, in any case, is different and more visible to the public in terms of democracy.”

The first aspect to consider is that of the birth of an opposition. Since Brexit and the disastrous lesson it has taught us, there should be predominantly a twin-track form of opposition:

– constitutional opposition: with a view to achieving the purpose of Article 48(2) TEU, namely to ‘reduce the competences conferred on the Union in the Treaties;’

– political opposition: with a view to challenging executive policies, supported by a parliamentary majority. The ‘birth’ of the opposition would thus mean a European Parliament which, in any case, is different and more visible to the public in terms of democracy.

The second aspect of this innovative process, in many ways connected to the first, should concern the involvement of the national parliaments as leading players, i.e. the full implementation of Article 12 TEU, which stipulates that national parliaments ‘contribute actively to the good functioning of the Union’.

This development could take the

form of organic interparliamentary cooperation, i.e. a system of interparliamentary 'conferences' by subject, with sequences and timing form of organic interparliamentary cooperation, i.e. a system of interparliamentary 'conferences' by subject, with sequences and timing which reflect the methods and formations of the Council of the EU. This would be a 'conference' model, along the lines of the 'convention' model (see Article 48 TEU).

“The recent procedures against Hungary and Poland have prompted the idea that the European Parliament could be given the role of monitoring constitutionality with regard to the Union’s ‘values’ criterion (Article 2 TEU)”

The third aspect of this innovative process could concern the budgetary procedure, if indeed there is a special



Plenary session. General view of the Plenary Chamber from the tribune ©European Parliament 2019

budget for the euro area. Whether it be an independent budget, as was widely thought initially, or a special section of the general budget of the Union, the regulatory changes in the procedure – the ‘mother’ of all parliamentary procedures – would be highly significant.

The fourth aspect relates to the EP’s ability to defend its constitutional dimension within the EU. The recent procedures against Hungary and Poland have prompted the idea that the European Parliament could be given the role of monitoring constitutionality with regard to the Union’s ‘values’ criterion (Article 2 TEU), along the

lines of the monitoring of compliance with accession requirements for new Member States, which is Parliament’s responsibility under Article 49 TEU. The fifth aspect, lastly, concerns Parliament’s ability to build a social dimension for the Union.

The genuine breakdown of consensus which has been widely felt in this regard means that the issue no longer concerns policies alone, but also the functional structure of the EP as a ‘machine’ that is capable of promoting the integration of markets and societies.

Given the difficulties the governments of Member States are having when it comes to implementing social and investment policies, it is through Parliament that compromises should be found in order to overcome the intergovernmental approach that has hitherto been crippled and is crippling.

In other words, a ‘new’ Parliament, as a pillar with which to prop up, once again, the entire institutional life of the Union.



David Sassoli, President of the European Parliament meets with Ursula von der Leyen, elected President of the European Commission ©European Parliament 2019

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A NEW TEAM AT THE TOP

It may or may not be a good thing if when the jobs change at the helm of the European Union they tend all change at the same time.

Few people I know would have expected Ursula von der Leyen to emerge as the candidate for the new President of the Commission, indeed my own hunch was always that Michel Barnier would emerge into that role.

Many in the European Parliament are of course upset and annoyed because the principle that they laid down of the Spitzenkandidats being broadly acceptable. However last time, which we should remember was also the first time, with his vast experience of Europe and many different political roles Jean-Claude Juncker fitted very easily into this mould, the same could not be said of Manfred Weber who was seen as a rather weak candidate with only parliamentary experience and at that it has to be said he did not reach out very far to other groups

within the Parliament. His attitude to the EP Pension Fund with almost a thousand members at best was "studied indifference".

"All of them believe in the core European values and none of them will put up with any nonsense."

The remainder of the team are very well versed in European affairs, no one could say that Charles Michel, a survivor of five years as Prime Minister of Belgium and an old hand in the European Council, also still relatively young, he is an obvious person to be a very good President of the Council. Looking at the foreign policy role, Josep Borrell is also extraordinarily well qualified having been President of the European Parliament and Spanish Foreign Minister. Finally, of course, Christine Lagarde with eight years at the IMF and

previously a very successful French Minister will undoubtedly be an extraordinarily good candidate for the European Central Bank.

The big surprise of course is the exclusion of any one from what many still think of as the new Member States, however in some ways this is not surprising, not only are many of them under investigation by various parts of the European Commission but it is also the case that the one successful nominee they have had, Donald Tusk, was disowned by his own government who campaigned to get him out of the job he currently holds. Overall our friends from the former Communist countries have shown a remarkable inability to get together behind each other's candidates.

So we have what is essentially a safe team, all of them believe in the core European values and none of them will put up with any nonsense, whether it be from Britain or other countries, however they are also clever enough to avoid confrontation and get their own way through a combination of negotiation and working together.

If one adds into the mix David Maria Sassoli, the Italian Socialist MEP and new President of the European Parliament, we indeed have a very formidable team, let us hope that they can turn back the rise of populism and promote the European ideals for which the community was founded in the first place.



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REFLECTIONS ON HOW TO STABILISE EUROPE

In the last European elections, Eurosceptic and populist parties significantly increased their share of the vote. Although an ample majority of voters still take a positive view of the European Union, the sceptical minority is sufficiently large to make it impossible to ignore. People feel ill at ease for various reasons, one of the main ones being a certain dissatisfaction with the current status of the nation state. Of course nationalism is a serious danger. History proves that it is. Idolising national identity can lead to violence. But those who oppose nationalism must at the same time acknowledge that the languages, histories and traditions of the Member States, in all their diversity, not only have a legitimate right to exist but are of positive value. The EU should not be an embryonic superstate but rather an organisation to which powers are delegated only in fields where the Member States cannot solve problems by themselves, such as climate change, migration, terrorism and security. Here, Member States cannot do without collective action and the solidarity that the EU affords. But people still regard the nation state as being the community with the strongest claim on the allegiance of its citizens. In the context of the worldwide problems of globalisation, the nation is increasingly seen as the focal point of a given community, a fatherland that provides a sense of security. Changes decided by the EU which erode this feeling are readily perceived as being imposed from outside, leading to resistance. Meanwhile, the existence of a European identity is no less important for the stability of the EU. The ongoing integration has not been

accompanied by any increased sense of moral commitment. As a result, there has been impressive economic progress, but accompanied by much discontent as a by-product. A society has developed in which everybody pursues their own individual interest, a society which lacks a moral foundation and in which there is no sense of community or shared values. When Jacques Delors was President of the European Commission, he once said that Europe needed a soul.

“Of course nationalism is a serious danger. [...] But those who oppose nationalism must at the same time acknowledge that the languages, histories and traditions of the Member States, in all their diversity, not only have a legitimate right to exist but are of positive value.”

And the former President of the Czech Republic, Vaclav Havel, said that, while the EU appealed to him intellectually, he felt no emotional bond with it, because of the lack of a European ethos. The Christian Democrat founding fathers had the vision of a Europe of peace and justice, which are central to Christian civilisation. Precious little of this vision survives today. Now a liberal humanist vision prevails, which sees no need for God. In the Western world, a process of secularisation is taking place which turns its back on the Christian

values that people once espoused, and as a result of which the social cohesion derived from traditional institutions has been eliminated in favour of individual liberty. It is true that most people's standard of living has improved in an unprecedented fashion. Healthcare, education, housing and prosperity have never before attained such levels. At the same time, social disparities are increasing and manifestations of social discontent are becoming widespread in the form of crime, drugs, terrorism and anti-Semitism. Therefore, let us bear in mind that, despite the cultural differences between them, the Member States have a common civilisation which to a large extent is drawn from the history of Christianity. That religion is still of positive significance today. It would certainly be wrong to claim that it produced a society free of all social ills. But it did provide an external authority as a point of reference for good and evil in the form of the universal law enshrined in the Ten Commandments. And it gave society its conscience. It was a society in which people took care of one another, guided by an ethical code which helped to give their lives meaning. Whether the Union can thrive without such a common vision of human life and society is very much an open question.

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WHY BREXIT IS STRENGTHENING THE EU

I am among those deeply saddened at the UK's decision to leave the EU. Without the UK and the role it plays, the EU will not be the same. At the same time, I am convinced that the tortured process of Brexit is exerting a beneficial effect on EU unity. The EU institutions and Member States have adopted a resolute and cohesive stance in the negotiations led by Michel Barnier. We have not witnessed such unity for some time. And we have even more striking proof of that solidarity in the results of the European Parliament elections. The people of Europe have had their say. And they have said two things. Firstly, the unprecedentedly high turnout was a response to Brexit and the rise of nationalist parties. The people of Europe came out to defend the EU and prevent it falling into the hands of the nationalists. Secondly, voters said they want serious changes to be made to the Union. They voted in droves for pro-European parties and candidates, but broke the status quo that has enabled the EPP and S&D to form grand coalitions. It was at the expense of that status quo that Europeans supported Liberals and Greens and imbued the European Parliament with fresh dynamism and new ideas. That second message is a very important one, because if the parties fail to grasp it, the next time voters turn out it will be to support opponents of the current system. In point of fact, this air of post-Brexit solidarity is no mere coincidence. Looked at in the long term, the EU is an outstanding success. Its achievements include the longest-ever period of peace in Europe, the development of economy that is among the strongest in the

world, the creation of a society that is a world leader in social and environmental standards, the reunification of the countries of Europe which the Cold War bitterly divided, and the setting of the highest standards in the protection of civil rights and freedoms.

“I am convinced that the tortured process of Brexit is exerting a beneficial effect on EU unity.”

The arguments used by those who want to take powers away from Europe and assign them to national governments fail to stand up to even the most basic rational analysis. The EU is already a union of nation states which adheres strictly to the principle of subsidiarity. What more power could each country have than a right of veto on many issues? Decision-making mechanisms have actually changed comparatively little since the Union's foundation. It is just that in the Europe of six Member States decisions could be taken much more easily. Having 28 Member States means that more discussions and more compromises are needed in order to reach a single position satisfactory to all. At the same time, EU critics accuse it of sluggishness, excessive bureaucracy and a lack of decisiveness. The fact is that decisions can be taken more quickly in a nation state. However, this apparent sluggishness and compromise are due precisely to the very fact that these nation states act independently and can exercise their powers when seeking a common solution. And what exactly are the issues which

could be tackled more effectively at a national level? The migration crisis? The financial crisis? Developing a powerful and competitive economy? Leading the world in scientific research? Greater freedoms and opportunities for citizens? History shows that the synergies generated by the EU bring much more added value than do national decisions. We must recognise that the EU is a strong and adaptable entity, but one which may also experience difficulties. The public clearly expects greater efficiency and more transparency and wants to see decisions taken closer to the electorate. But the changes required in the euro area make it impossible to avoid an increase in supranational powers. The EU has already coped with bigger challenges. As an optimist, I hope that it will not be long before Great Britain makes a return to the Union – with a public that is confirmedly European and without derogations, rebates and other special arrangements – as a full and fully-valued partner.



Michel Barnier, EC Chief Negotiator for Article 50 ©European Parliament 2019

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SWEXIT OR A RED-GREEN EU?

Europe's Greens enjoyed much success at the EU elections. In Sweden, their proportion of the vote did slip compared to the 2014 EU elections, but they were still very successful, particularly by comparison with the 2018 general election.

Opinion in Sweden has shifted from being one of the most negative towards the EU to one of the most positive. Why the about-turn? In these turbulent post-Brexit times, why not pursue Swexit (withdrawal from the EU) instead?

If the EU were taken over by Le Pen, Salvini, Orban, Åkesson and the like, there is no doubt that most democrats would seriously question continued membership. But we have not reached that point yet. So there is good reason for Red-Green forces to invest all their energy in fighting for the future of the EU. This does not mean that Greens think the EU is perfect. After the EU elections, one Green politician told *Le Monde*: 'Les Verts sont à la fois critiques des institutions européennes et de leur fonctionnement, et profondément européens'. (28 May).

One argument for a constructive strategy was put forward earlier this year by former Greek Finance Minister Yanis Varoufakis (*Vers un printemps électoral*, *Le Monde Diplomatique*, March 2019), who maintains that, even without changes to the EU Treaties, much more could be done by adopting a Red-Green approach. Among other things, the European Central Bank could issue bonds to generate the EUR 2000 billion that should be invested in green technology between 2019 and 2023.

But wouldn't such a policy significantly increase the EU's

central position of power? True, but not with a view to making the EU a military superpower, rather to make it a major Red-Green power. But renewed efforts are needed in this respect.

“Opinion in Sweden has shifted from being one of the most negative towards the EU to one of the most positive.”

Åsa Gunnarsson, a professor of taxation law at Umeå University in Sweden, supports common levels of capital taxation across the EU in order to prevent a race to the bottom. In the weekly red-green magazine *ETC*, Liberal MEP Cecilia Wikström rejects harmonised capital tax rates and asserts that 'a race to the bottom to set the lowest capital taxes would be favourable to our European companies' – a point of view to be expected from a Liberal. Somewhat surprising, however, is the fact that Left Party MEP Malin Björk takes the same view, 'otherwise we risk more power being transferred from national parliaments to the bureaucrats in Brussels' (*ETC* 25/2 -19). But, in reality, national parliaments have no real power in an area that is controlled by market forces and financial capital. Similarly problematic is the 'social pillar' that was launched at a social summit in Gothenburg in November 2017. The Red-Greens support this but only in the form of recommendations, not legislation, because that would be contrary to the famed 'Swedish model', which is built on agreements, not laws. But if



Visit of Greta Thunberg - Swedish climate activist ©European Parliament 2019

we want to avoid 'social dumping', recommendations are unlikely to be sufficient; binding rules are required. The EU had neither red nor green objectives when it started. During the 1970s and 1980s, the Red and Green movements were therefore right to pursue a Red-Green alternative, perhaps with EFTA or the Council of Europe as the starting point. But Sweden's referendum in 1994 said 'yes' to the EU. It transpired that the 'liberated' Central and Eastern European states were not interested in any alternative and only wanted to join the EU, causing it to expand to 25 Member States in 2004 (and then 28). Today all European non-members except Norway and Switzerland are queuing up to join, and there is no alternative to the EU. Post-Brexit there will be NO Swexit. On the contrary: a principal task of the Red-Greens will be to utilise the EU as a tool for the green transition.

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PESTICIDES

Towards effective protection for the environment and public health

On Wednesday, 16 January 2019, the Special Committee on the European Union's authorisation procedure for pesticides adopted its final report.

The special committee had been set up following the Monsanto Papers scandal which broke in the US. Its task was to identify and expose the 'failings of the European system for assessing pesticides'.

These failings included the actions of the German Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR), which had incorporated hundreds of pages of studies taken from documents provided by industry representatives – including representatives of Monsanto – into its report on glyphosate.

Responding to questions put by the special committee, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) claimed that this did not constitute plagiarism.

There has, however, been a worrying decline in public confidence in the EFSA – which is in many ways understandable, given the revelations by a number of observers, analysts and NGOs about the conflict of interest involving a number of EFSA scientists and companies in the industry.

The European Chemicals Agency (ECHA), meanwhile, had dismissed a number of studies that pointed to an increased prevalence of certain cancers in lab animals exposed to glyphosate, citing a lack of sufficient evidence.

The International Agency for

Research on Cancer (IARC), however, has recognised seven studies which highlight an increased occurrence of certain cancers in animals.

“We cannot be satisfied with a short-termist model that encourages the use of chemicals to temporarily boost yields, at the same time destroying the environment and increasing the prevalence of cancer among local people.”

During the nine months that the special committee carried out its work, certain interest groups tried to influence its decision-making, with the aim of ridding themselves of the burden represented by the requirement to protect the environment, public health and food safety and thereby safeguarding private interests.

As regards the protection of vulnerable groups, I tabled an amendment calling on the Commission to 'incorporate, without delay or derogation, this effective protection for vulnerable groups into the [2009] regulation with a view to putting an immediate end to the application of pesticides across long distances in the vicinity of all types of nurseries or schools, residential areas, parks or playgrounds, multidisciplinary health centres, maternity units or hospitals'. Happily, the amendment was adopted by a significant majority

(with 563 Members in favour), sending a strong message to the Commission. Later in the plenary session, Commissioner Vytenis Andriukaitis announced that he would take the recommendations of the final adopted report into account.

Looking beyond the specific pesticide authorisation procedure, a thoroughgoing overhaul of the European agricultural model which involves a redefinition of the objectives of the Common Agricultural Policy itself so that the primary aim is no longer unlimited productivity growth across the board. We cannot be satisfied with a short-termist model that encourages the use of chemicals to temporarily boost yields, at the same time destroying the environment and increasing the prevalence of cancer among local people.

We will very soon need to add another objective – one of quality of produce, of concern for the environment and above all of protecting human – and animal – health.

When matched with carefully thought-out agricultural policies, new farming methods have the potential to yield remarkable results – in particular the procedures using robotisation which are being developed to assist farmers. All these forward-looking methods – which combine farming and progress for the sake both of people and the environment – need to be explored and encouraged.

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PUBLIC TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT

In a recent interview, Vladimir Putin stated that liberal theory had to make way for the new 'sovereignist' and populist tendencies, as people needed to regain their identities. There are two ways of formulating the theory: the first is that of imagining the evolutionary pathway of the cultural process of peoples; the second is that of implementing a political pathway and, downstream of that, theorising the need for it in order to justify – ideally or ideologically – one's own choices and those of the governing class; Putin is part of the latter category.

I do not think that the liberalism of Smith, followed by that of Keynes, Galbraith and their contemporaries, is obsolete, as Putin says; I think, rather, that globalisation, as implemented through the establishment of the WTO, without any rules to help the market avoid maximising the accumulation of profit and cutting of costs – first and foremost labour costs – has not worked either within individual states or within commercial areas, let alone in inter-state relationships; evidence of this can currently be found in the reintroduction of customs duties at borders – a legacy of two centuries ago.

Globalisation requires rules which support trade between macro-areas; rules which can guarantee free competition and thus lead to market shares which are insuperable, unlike current ones, whereby five or six macro-industries are allowed to split up the world's trading areas between them.

Russia is not immune from the scourge of oligarchies, which came into being after the end of the Soviet

Union, when corporate raiders in the internal market were given free rein to plunder everything they could, even illegally at times, leading to the impoverishment of the Russian people to the advantage of a chosen few.

If it is ascertained that an increasing amount of wealth is concentrated in the hands of a few, and that 1% of the population holds 47.2% of worldwide aggregate wealth (Oxfam Report 2019), then rules must be put in place to remedy existing dysfunctions and inequalities, without calling for unnatural and unachievable egalitarianism, let alone 'sovereignist' policies that clash with the globalisation that is unavoidable in all fields while theorising about an autarky that is simply unfeasible. Since the 1950s, large companies have been basing their company philosophy on TQM (Total Quality Management); I do not see why states, and in particular, global organisations of states should not consider drawing up a protocol, to be signed by all, in which to establish that principle publicly and set out some general benchmarks to be complied with, such as:

- a minimum public welfare threshold, consisting of civil, urban, health, cultural and professional services;
- guarantees regarding housing quality, environmental protection, the promotion of excellence and the defence of cultural identities;
- checks on the quality of consumer products, both food and non-food, in accordance with quality standards such as those established by the EU;
- a reduction of structural debt to an appropriate level in order to allow

for a 10-year amortisation and the granting of a functional debt to be extinguished within a short, well-defined period of time.

These are some of the things that should be done, without neglecting the financial aspect of taxation and without overtaxing anyone, whilst ensuring the necessary financial speculation which drives growth, but justifying fiscal levies targeting specific areas (the Oxfam report estimates that if the world's richest 1% were taxed just 0.5% more, the lives of 100 million people could be saved and children could be educated for the next ten years).

Sovereignism and populism, political practices that are typical of uncivilised governing classes lacking a sense of culture and society, can be defeated by ensuring that people have prospects of ongoing development and growth, despite the inevitable economic cycles.

The Italian and European People's Parties used to call this policy a 'SOCIAL MARKET ECONOMY'; and then Total Quality Management took hold. We should work in that direction by involving the International Socialist movement, together with the Liberals and Environmentalists; we would then have ethically achieved the policy we are seeking to implement, to heal the great injustices we witness every day, by implementing a Public Total Quality Management.

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FOCUS

WELLBEING & COMPETITIVENESS IN THE EU



A PILLAR OF THE PILLAR

With the overwhelming support of the outgoing European Parliament, the Commission has taken the wise decision to strengthen the European social dimension. We are grateful to Mr Claude Juncker and, above all, to Ms Marianne Thyssen for her excellent work during her term of office as the Commissioner for Employment and Social Affairs, as well as to many other MEPs.

“The Commission responded by proposing a set of practical directives that Parliament and the Council adopted. Among these directives, there is one, which is universally recognised as important: the directive on transparent and predictable working conditions in Europe.”

The summit of EU leaders in Göteborg, at which the 20 principles



of the European Social Pillar were proclaimed and the political will to redouble the efforts to put a Social Europe on firmer foundations was affirmed, was the turning point. Parliament, the institution representing European society, then called for rhetoric to give way to action. The Commission responded by proposing a set of practical directives that Parliament and the Council adopted.

Among these directives (establishing the European Labour Authority, on

the work-life balance for parents and carers, on protection against toxic substances at work), there is one, the fruit of considerable effort, which is universally recognised as important: the directive on transparent and predictable working conditions in Europe.

The directive sidesteps potential legal disputes stemming from the differences in the definitions used by the Member States and lays down minimum rights for all European citizens who are economically and organisationally dependent on and who receive instructions from another person or an enterprise. In case of doubt, reference is made to the case-law of the European Court of Justice, whose decision is final if legal action is brought. Self-employed workers, however, are expressly excluded. The directive thus establishes a basic set of rights to be enjoyed by European citizens who are employed for an average of at least 12 hours a month.

First and foremost, and in keeping

The Pillar enshrines **principles and rights** in the field of:



Equal opportunities and access to the labour market

- ▶ Education, training and lifelong learning
- ▶ Gender equality
- ▶ Equal opportunities
- ▶ Active support to employment



Fair working conditions

- ▶ Secure and adaptable employment
- ▶ Wages
- ▶ Information about employment conditions and protection in case of dismissals
- ▶ Social dialogue and involvement of workers
- ▶ Work-life balance
- ▶ Healthy, safe and well-adapted work environment and data protection



Social protection and inclusion

- ▶ Childcare and support to children
- ▶ Social protection
- ▶ Unemployment benefits
- ▶ Minimum income
- ▶ Old age income and pensions
- ▶ Healthcare
- ▶ Inclusion of people with disabilities
- ▶ Long-term care
- ▶ Housing and assistance for the homeless
- ▶ Access to essential services

with the nature of today's labour market, the directive asserts the right of workers to be given certain information as soon as their contract starts, including details of their salary, place of work, standard or likely working hours, start date and duties. In exceptional cases, however, employers can wait for up to seven days before complying with this requirement. In order to ease the administrative burden on SMEs, they have slightly longer to provide certain mandatory information, such as on social security.

One of the directive's clear goals is to protect workers in 'new forms of work' (digital platforms, clickers, on-demand work, and so forth), in part by anticipating how technology will go on changing the labour market. The directive also seeks to put a stop to abuses and requires employers to offer workers reasonable working hours and reasonable notice when assigning them extra duties. It gives workers the right to work for multiple companies, to be compensated if an agreed assignment is cancelled without sufficient notice and to refuse jobs they are asked to do outside working hours without being penalised. Moreover, it also recognises or strengthens other rights, in particular regarding training, which must take place during working hours and at the employer's expense. It also prevents employers from misusing and unnecessarily renewing probationary periods.

In conclusion, we would like to stress that although the directive seeks to modernise Member States' labour markets in one fell swoop, it is only the beginning. All Member States must now bring their labour markets into line with the modern economy and the directive's new



provisions on contracts, in order to continue improving social cohesion and equality of opportunity with the backing of the European institutions. A citizen's Europe is coming closer to fruition!

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ELA'S ROLE FOR EU COMPETITIVENESS AND WELLBEING

The new European Labor Authority is expected to become operational by the end of 2019 with Bratislava as its seat. President Junckers' call in September 2017 was followed by a Commission proposal in March 2018 and intensive work by the 8th European Parliament and by Council, resulting in a draft ELA Regulation in record time by mid-February 2019, endorsed by Parliament already on April 16th. This demonstrates the recognition of the pressing need to put the freedom of movement of citizens throughout the EU on an equal footing of protection and promotion along with the other three freedoms regarding goods, services and capital. Thus, the Authority's core mission shall be to assist Member States and the Commission in their effective implementation of Union law on labor mobility and the coordination of social security systems within the Union.

To this end ELA shall a) facilitate access to information on rights and obligations regarding labor

ROLE AND ADDED VALUE OF THE EUROPEAN LABOUR AUTHORITY

- Support Member States in providing access for individuals and employers to information on their rights and obligations as well as to relevant services;
- Support cooperation between Member States in the cross-border enforcement of relevant Union law, including facilitating concerted and joint inspections and tackling undeclared work;
- Mediate solutions in cases of cross-border disputes between national authorities.

More information here: <https://ela.europa.eu/index.html>

mobility and relevant services; b) facilitate and enhance cooperation between Member States in the enforcement of relevant Union law, including facilitating concerted and joint inspections; c) mediate and facilitate a solution in cases of cross-border disputes. ELA is also mandated to enhance cooperation between Member States in tackling undeclared work and other situations that put at risk the proper

functioning of the internal market, such as letter box entities and bogus self-employment, without prejudice to the competence of Member States to decide on national measures.

“This demonstrates the recognition of the pressing need to put the freedom of movement of citizens throughout the EU on an equal footing of protection and promotion along with the other three freedoms regarding goods, services and capital.”

Hence ELA is called upon to play a vital role for making the European Pillar of Social Rights everyday reality for each and every European citizen, no matter from which Member State, together with achieving superior competitiveness of European businesses on the basis of full-



fledged social partnership, collective bargaining and environmental sustainability. The lure for businesses to succumb to short-termism and a wages' race to the bottom not only entails spreading practices of severe exploitation and abuse of mobile labor, but also undermines the very foundations on which citizens base their allegiance to the Union and, furthermore, their willingness to engage in productive and efficient work.

“The Authority’s’ core mission shall be to assist Member States and the Commission in their effective implementation of Union law on labor mobility and the coordination of social security systems within the Union.”

The key challenge before ELA now is to prove it can deliver decisive added value towards a properly



©European Union

functioning single labor market with wage convergence and social security. The agreed legal framework includes important provisions in favor of such a role:

- rather than being overloaded with multiple tasks, ELA is to focus on social dumping, letterbox companies, undeclared work, bogus self-employment and the implementation of social and labor legislation;
- ELA shall maintain a website as a single portal for accessing national information and services on labour

mobility in the Union;

- each Member State will send a liaison officer to ELA, ensuring direct cooperation between national authorities;
- four representatives of social partners and one independent expert from the European Parliament are included as members of the Management Board, with social partners being able to bring individual cases to the attention of ELA.

It is now of utmost importance to provide vigorous tripartite support for the timely launching and proper functioning of ELA, guaranteeing free labor mobility and fair business competition.



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Georgi Pirinski at EP plenary session ©European Union

A NEW START FOR SOCIAL EUROPE?

The economic crisis which exploded some ten years ago has left deep scars on working people. Many people's wages are worth less than a decade ago and work is no longer a guarantee of escaping poverty. Hope for the future, for younger generations, has been extinguished. Cuts in public services, the growth of precarious work, widening inequality, unregulated globalisation are among the failures that have left people disillusioned with mainstream politicians, and led to a rise in populist, anti-European, nationalist and far-right forces.

The European Pillar of Social Rights, adopted by the European Union in 2017, offers a glimmer of hope. It shows that the EU can be a force for social progress. The initiatives that have followed the Pillar – the Directives on Work Life Balance and Transparent and Predictable Working Conditions, and other measures like the European Labour Authority create a momentum that needs to be maintained.

Both Directives – once implemented in national law – will bring real and



Young woman looking for a job in an employment agency ©European Union

tangible improvements in working people's lives.

The Work/Life Balance makes life slightly easier for working parents and carers. 10 days paternity leave around the birth of a child paid at sick-leave level, 5 days carers leave per year (although unfortunately without any obligation for the leave to be paid), the right of parents and carers to request flexible working arrangements to

which employers must respond and provide a justification (in the case of refusal), making two of the four months of existing parental leave non-transferable (meaning that instead of one parent – usually the mother – being able to take 8 months, the father must take at least 2 months or the parents lose them). It's not perfect but it is certainly a step forward.

“Cuts in public services, the growth of precarious work, widening inequality, unregulated globalisation are among the failures that have left people disillusioned with mainstream politicians, and led to a rise in populist, anti-European, nationalist and far-right forces.”



MEPs adopted rules to benefit children and family life and promote gender equality. © AP Images/European Union-EP

The Directive on Transparent and Predictable Working Conditions gives important rights such as reasonable notice about the work shift, the right to be paid if work assignments are cancelled at short notice, restricts highly exploitative practices such as charging workers for the training they need to do the job, limits probation periods to 6 months and stops employers from preventing workers from taking jobs with other companies outside the work schedule established with that employer. The Directive does not go as far as it should have done, fails to prohibit zero hours contracts and excludes some workers for example, but has some meaningful advances for people in precarious jobs. Similarly, the European Labour Authority will help enforce EU employment law and fight abuses in labour mobility, social security and the posting of workers. But the EU needs to go much further than those first positive initiatives from the Juncker Commission. The European Pillar of Social Rights must be fully implemented. The principles set out in the Pillar - such as gender equality, fair wages, secure and adaptable employment

and social dialogue and negotiating collective agreements - must be put into practice in each and every EU member state.

The new European Commission and Parliament must take up the work started by Jean-Claude Juncker and lead the way in delivering those Social Rights through a combination of legislation, the EU's economic and social policy-making semester, the EU budget and other initiatives. Implementation cannot be only at European level – it has to be done at national level too.

“The European Pillar of Social Rights, adopted by the European Union in 2017, offers a glimmer of hope. It shows that the EU can be a force for social progress.”

Highest priority for trade unions has to be action to strengthen collective bargaining – negotiations on pay and working conditions between unions and employers. This is not only because collective bargaining

is important for the standard of living of workers, but because it has been dismantled in many member states since the crisis, and is key to achieving many of key objectives of the pillar – not only fair wages but also gender equality, healthy and safe working environment and the right to training and life-long learning. Other areas where unions will look for progress in the new mandate of the EU institutions include increased public and private investment to create quality jobs, a socially fair and just transition to a carbon-neutral and digital economy, the extension of rights and protection to non-standard and self-employed workers, a target of zero workplace cancer, and initiatives to reduce pay inequality - the huge pay gap within and between EU member states, including the gender pay gap and the east-west pay gap. The willingness of the main democratic political parties to create a new pro-European alliance in the European Parliament and to exclude extreme nationalists and anti-Europeans – who let's face it bring no solutions to the challenges facing us today – is encouraging, but any new alliance has to be more than just democratic: it must put social and climate justice at the top of its agenda.



The EU wants to improve working conditions ©AP Images/European Union-EP

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FMA ACTIVITIES



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



FORMER MEMBERS NETWORK

'WE MAKE THE INVISIBLE VISIBLE'

This is the philosophy of MAXIV www.maxiv.se in Lund, Sweden, the world-leading synchrotron light source.

It occupies an extensive site. Inside the MAXIV laboratory technical considerations dominate. Jobs for 270 people, currently of 140 nationalities, are planned for the 20 buildings. The laboratory is open to more than 2 000 researchers working on 25 synchrotron beamlines. The aim is to reveal the smallest structures of any material. MAXIV is financed by Swedish, Danish, Norwegian, Finnish and Estonian companies, regions, universities, etc. European cooperation is a recipe for success! The leaflet continues:

At Max IV scientists use intense and well-focused X-rays to examine molecular structures and surfaces in a far more detailed way than before. Researchers in areas such as biology, physics, chemistry, environment, geology, engineering and medicine can utilise this technology. However, the greater part of the research conducted at the facility is basic research, which seeks answers to the question how atoms and molecules form different materials and living organisms.

Alongside MAXIV, the FP-AP also visited ESS, the European Spallation Source www.esss.se, on the same site, the IDEON Science Park.

This is – according to the mentioned Leaflet – one of the largest science infrastructure projects being built in Europe today. Designed to generate neutron beams for science, ESS will benefit a broad range of research, from the science to engineering materials, from heritage conservation to magnetism.

It comprises some 500 staff and 1000 companies engaged in research, both within and outside the EU.

ESS interacts with the international research community in order to ensure the scientific breakthroughs of tomorrow, built by the scientists for the scientists, serving as a driver for all of Europe.

The previous day was taken up with the FP-AP seminar entitled 'Climate Change – what can we do?', which featured an outstanding panel of experts including Markus Paulsson, Energy Strategist, City of Lund; Lars J Nilsson, Professor of Environmental and Energy System Studies; Fredrik NG Andersson, Associate Professor in the Department of Economics; and Roger Hildingsson, Researcher in the Department of Political Science. Kimberly Nicholas, PhD, Associate Professor in Sustainability Science, took charge of the proceedings. We were there as guests of Lund Kommun (city), represented by Frederik Ljunghill, Municipal Councillor, and of Lund University, whose Vice-Chancellor, Magnificus Torbjörn von Schantz, bade us welcome. The spirit of research in Europe was present throughout.

Visits to the astronomical clock in the Romanesque Lund Cathedral and the Museum of Sketches completed the stay, which was superbly organised in every respect by Rune Ryden, our FP-AP President at the time (see also his report), together with the Secretariat, the 3-member team of Krist Decannière, Lisette Hermans and Roland Roblain.

The current political situation was addressed in particular by Dr Walter Schwimmer, former Secretary-General of the Council of Europe. Our FMA member Jean-Pierre Audy successfully introduced a declaration on the future of the European Union in the light of the May 2019 European elections. He stressed the increased voter numbers and the fact that fears of a landslide victory by far-right parties proved unfounded. These are the closing words of the declaration:

'Yes, the European elections of May 2019 are good news for the European Union, for peace, fraternity and prosperity for the European people!'"

The next seminar will take place in Sardinia in October 2019 and will take as its theme the 'History of Sardinian Exchanges with the Continent and Mediterranean Countries'. Here too, 'We make the invisible visible!'

Brigitte Langenhagen

FMA Board Member

FP-AP Vice-President

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FP-AP delegates at the meetings in Lund on June 28th 2019

CLIMATE CHANGE-WHAT CAN DO ABOUT IT?

In 2016 FP-AP had a seminar about global warming in Stockholm. This June 2019 there was a follow up about climate change and what one can do about it in Lund in southern Sweden.

In the 19th Century, scientists realized that gases in the atmosphere could cause a "greenhouse effect" which affects the earth's temperature. At the turn of that century Svante Arrhenius in Sweden calculated that emissions from industries might someday increase temperature up to + 3C.

Ice cores and other proof of climate conditions in the distant past provide evidence that rising atmospheric carbon dioxide levels are associated with rising global temperatures.

Human activities, primarily the burning of fossil fuels and secondarily the clearing of land has increased the concentration of carbon dioxide, methane and other heat-trapping gases in the atmosphere. Since the start of the industrial revolution, the atmospheric carbon dioxide concentration has increased by 50% and is now for the first time in a million years over 400 ppm.

About 80% of the world's energy is currently derived from burning fossil

fuels, and carbon dioxide emissions from these sources are growing rapidly. Because excess carbon dioxide persist in the atmosphere for centuries, it will take several decades for concentrations to peak, and then begin to decline even if concerted efforts to reduce emissions are begun immediately. Altering the warming trend will be a long-term process.

The Arctic, a place where any warming trend would be amplified by changes in local absorption of heat as the ice melts, does indeed show signs of rapid warming. A report shows that the amount of sea ice has fallen 8% per decade during the past 30 years and temperatures have increased 3-4 C in some areas in northern Alaska and Siberia.

What can we do about that in a short perspective? Up to 2020 there is no problem for a country like Sweden to reach the goal of forty percentage point reduction of carbon dioxide compared to 1990 according to the scientists. But, in reality it is only about 18% lower than 1990. A further reduction down to 40% can be done within the current framework of climate politics. No fundamental changes in technology or energy systems are needed. The

reduction can be achieved through promoted efficiency and changes to other fuels. One can think of distant heating systems in the cities, use of bioenergy and renewable electricity as wind and sun.

It is important to supplement the current economic system with a more protracted and evolutionary system. Production of steel and cement are the big producers of dioxide.

Now research are trying to produce steel without using coal and if it succeeds it would make a big difference to regular steel production.

The same is true for cement production even if the reduction of dioxide probably will be smaller.

These types of reductions can be done and it is necessary to choose winners when it comes to new technical solutions for the transport sector. Scenarios and future plans are important tools to increase the knowledge about the adaptation to zero emission. During a period of 30-50 years norms and conducts will change in the society. The social motivation for these changes is important for a smooth change to a carbon free society.

How do you convince people in a small country like Denmark for instance if they only contribute 0.1% of the pollution and dioxide emission in the world? Technology makes it possible to make the reduction but how do you convince people. That is the big question!

Another big question is the population growth but that requires another seminar.



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VISITING CANADA - 2 AND 3 JUNE 2019

Attending the Annual General Meeting of the Canadian Association of Former Parliamentarians (CAFP) has reaffirmed my conviction that establishing collaborative relationships with other organisations whose objectives are broadly aligned with our own to exchange information, experiences, ideas and working methods conducive to innovation and to enhance the effectiveness of our actions, as one of the best investments we can make to ensure our association maintains its dynamism and moves forward with cohesion into the global reality of the world we live in.

It also reaffirmed my conviction concerning the important role that associations such as ours can play in advancing towards a better world: the knowledge, leadership, commitment and experience of the majority of former parliamentarians is an extremely valuable resource that should not be wasted.

The CAFP strives to improve democracy in the world. Some of its members, such as its former president, Léo Duguay, are true experts in this field.

The various scheduled events, were

an opportunity to meet and talk with former MPs and senators from various parties, and all of whom agreed that their active participation in the association enables them to continue serving their country. I was extremely warmly welcomed, and everyone I met was united by their interest in current affairs in the EU: I was mainly asked about the results of the recent European elections, the future of Brexit, the EU's relations with the Trump administration and the situation in Catalonia. The current CAFP President, Dorothy Dobbie, with whom I had dinner the night before, gave me the opportunity to address the meeting.

The CAFP enjoys strong institutional support from the House of Commons and the Senate. We discussed the most topical issues for Canada with both speakers: The problems with the USA concerning the ratification of NAFTA, the ongoing crisis with China following the arrest of Meng Wanzhou, the CFO of Huawei and daughter of its founder, on accusations of violating the sanctions against Iran, and the current situation in Quebec.

We also discussed the Arctic and indigenous communities, topics of particular interest for me. Canada is one of five countries with sovereignty over the Arctic, thus holding both the right to exploit its resources and the principal responsibility for maintaining its ecosystem. The Arctic represents 40% of Canada's territory, and an integral part of Canada's identity. It is home to 115000 people, most of whom are indigenous and have difficulty accessing housing, education and health care, and, owing to living conditions in the region, in producing fresh food locally. The consequences of climate change in the Arctic are currently a source of both challenges and opportunities. The indigenous population is growing four times more quickly than the rest of Canada's population and indigenous languages are showing a strong resurgence. The visit was extremely constructive and although some of their activities are very similar to ours – publishing the magazine *Beyond the Hill*, study visits, seminars, conferences, and regional meetings – I took a careful note of any elements that we could serve as a model for us too.

Lastly, a word of remembrance for a colleague and friend, Senator Pierre Nolin, with whom I worked for long hours in the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, who died in 2015 as Speaker of the Senate. He was greatly appreciated by all.



A moment of the AGA ©CAFP

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VISIT UNDER EU PRESIDENCY

VISIT TO ROMANIA - 3 AND 4 JUNE 2019

A visit in person is worth more than any number of newspaper articles, which is why the FMA paid a visit to Bucharest during the Romanian Council Presidency.

The Former Members Association's visit to Bucharest coincided with a number of significant political events. Romania's 51.07% participation rate in the European elections showed that its people really do care about the EU. The referendum called at the same time by Romanian President Klaus W Johannis, which attracted an 83% turnout, had significant domestic political consequences. A visit to the Dimitrie Gusti National Village Museum, an open-air ethnographic museum, gave us an impressive overview of traditional village life in various parts of Romania.

Stephan Meuser, the Friedrich Ebert Foundation's representative in Romania, gave us an insight into the country's unique cultural characteristics and talked about its current political situation, with an emphasis on infrastructure, the low-wage sector, corruption and the outcome of the European elections. Rémus Pricopie, Rector of the National University of Political Studies and Public Administration, welcomed us warmly to the prestigious

university. We had a lively exchange with highly qualified students. We had plenty of time to comment after an introduction by the delegate Erna Hennicot Schoepges. They asked us a great many questions on the future of Europe, including the dispute over Brexit.

Mugur Isarescu, Governor of the Central Bank of Romania, talked to us about the monetary situation in the country and the Bank's independent status. Accession to the euro was at the heart of our discussions, as was the country's internal economic development, given that there is a significant disparity between rural and urban areas. Mr Nicusor Ruiu, a member of the Bank Committee, organised a visit to the Bank's museum and a tour of the prestigious building.

Four outstanding musicians from the Paul Constantinescu Philharmonic Orchestra demonstrated their talents at a dinner hosted by the Romanian Parliament, creating an atmosphere conducive to a fruitful exchange of views.

The following day, a meeting with the delegation at the People's Palace was led by the Chairs of the European Affairs Committee and the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Romanian Chamber of Deputies,

Angel Tîlvăr and Rozália-Ibolya Biró, and by the Chairs of the European Affairs Committee and the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Romanian Senate, Gabriela Crețu, and Cristian Dumitrescu former MEPs.

Ovidiu Gant, former MEP and current member of the Romanian Chamber of Deputies representing the Transylvanian minority, joined us at the meeting. Discussions touched on access to the Schengen area and Romania's special arrangements in the area of common defence.

At the Mugurele Nuclear Physics Institute, researchers presented the ELI project, which is co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund and involves the most advanced research into photo-nuclear physics in the world. Work using the ELI laser and the hugely significant research being carried out into nuclear waste by 250 researchers take place in colossal and highly specialised premises. The technical director of the institute, Dr Calin Alexandru Ur, talked about the shortage of researchers in the area of nuclear physics and presented his international recruitment programme.

Our exposure to the country's culture and politics and our meetings with people there showed how important it is for the FMA to visit other countries.

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The FMA Delegation at the the National University of Political Studies and Public Administration

INSECURITY IN EUROPE

During the Association's trip to Romania from 2 to 4 June 2019 – which was most interesting and very well organised – we had a meeting with lecturers and students from the National University of Political Studies and Public Administration. At one point in the discussion, someone from the university asked about the causes of the division and political instability laid bare by the results of the European Parliament elections held a few days earlier.

Whilst listening to the question I noted down the word 'insecurity'. As the results of the European elections have shown, there has been an emergence and consolidation of far-left and far-right political ideas. I believe the reason for this is a sense of insecurity relating to the fact that, in many people's eyes, EU membership is unable to provide the guarantees of stability and individual and collective progress that such membership was supposed to bring. One of the EU's greatest achievements – if not the greatest

– is the welfare state: the largest and most significant level of social assistance of all in the large, developed regions across the world. Western Europe, rising from the ashes of the Second World War, built societies with social safeguards that provided extremely high levels of security for the lives of the people in the countries concerned. The welfare state was and still is our societies' greatest achievement, a guarantee embedded in membership of the European Union.

The economic crisis and its effects, however, have destroyed that sense of security. Social assistance levels have been forced downwards, and owing to their debts, many Member States cannot afford to raise them again. Policies designed to maintain or restore deficit levels in the eurozone countries meant that budget cuts needed to be taken – and are indeed still being taken. Those cuts are making it impossible for the countries concerned to meet the demand for improvements across

large swathes of society, and many people are extremely concerned about rising inequality. Insecurity surrounding pensions and jobs, and low wages, mean that young people are finding it extremely difficult to secure decent housing and make plans for the future with a view to settling down and having a family. The crisis is now behind us, of course: rates of economic growth are showing continuing signs of recovery, but they are not enough to bring down the excessive levels of debt. Nor are they enough to reassure the middle classes, who are crucial when it comes to ensuring the stability of society. And nor are they enough to improve the plight of young people, who in many Member States are hardest hit by unemployment. Basically, insecurity and very low expectations in terms of prospects have become widespread among many levels of society in Europe. All the opinion polls suggest that for the first time we have a generation that thinks life will be worse for the generation to come. In my view, this insecurity about the future, which was absent before the economic crisis, has undermined – and is still undermining – the foundations of the social consensus that centred around accepting membership of the European Union. It is pushing people to vote for the extreme left and the extreme right, and that is what we discussed in our visit to Romania, just after the European elections.



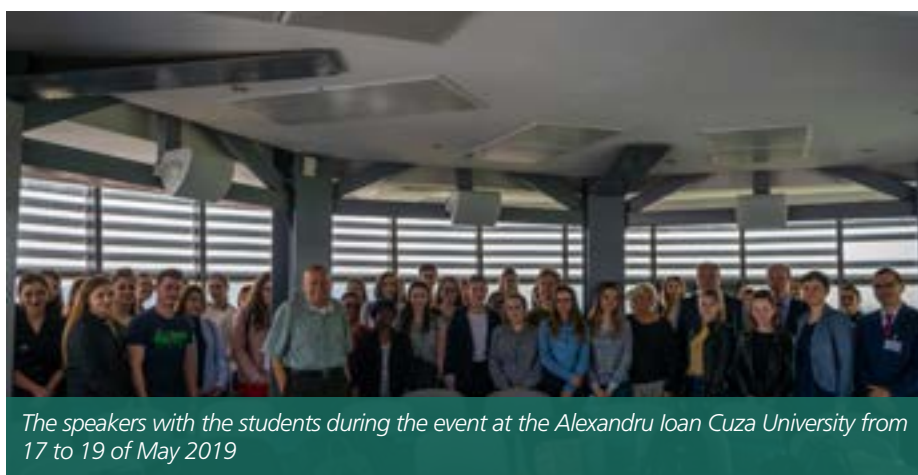
FMA Delegation during the Visit to Romania

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EP TO CAMPUS PROGRAMME

A VISIT TO THE EASTERNMOST UNIVERSITY IN THE EU

The Alexandru Ioan Cuza University in Iasi is not only the easternmost university in the EU, it is also the oldest in Romania. It was founded in 1860, and many of its buildings date from before the First World War, when Romania was rich and could afford to be ostentatious. The 26000 young people who study here do so in a very special atmosphere. The university has not only a large number of halls of residence, restaurants, parks, libraries, second-hand street bookstalls (people still read in the old-fashioned way beside the large IT faculty) and a beautiful botanical garden, but also its own hotel for academic colleagues who come to visit. The university maintains an active international exchange programme and encourages its students to join the Erasmus Programme. The teachers say that 8000 of its students have already taken part since its inception. The 2-day campus seminar was organised by the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration as part of the university's 'Europe week' and was coordinated by Professors Irina Bilan and Marius Apostoae. Nearly 100 students took part. The overall theme of the seminar was European



Monetary Union. My presentation was about the history of monetary union, which was established as the sole, highly-specific project in the triad of monetary, economic and political union under the Maastricht Treaty. Of particular interest to the students were the fiscal regulations introduced during and after the financial crisis in order to stabilise the single currency. There was harsh criticism of the fact that the regulations remain severely underpowered and that the international fiscal situation is still in a critical state, particularly as a result of the enormous growth in shadow banking. There was a great deal of well-informed interest shown

not only in monetary union but also in European democracy, with the European elections approaching. So what is special about European democracy? Is it the fact that the European Parliament now has considerable power which, however, is in the form of co-decision rights, so that the Council of Ministers still holds the reins? Or that decision-making – including in Parliament – is always constrained by the need to compromise? How far did this Parliament have to come before there were direct elections, and how many long and bitter debates were there before it became what it is now (and the debates are by no means finished)? The lively discussion wound up with a move to convince the students that the unfinished nature of the EU as a construct and the fact that this Europe always was and still is a work in progress is precisely the reason why they should devote time and attention to it in large measure.



Group picture with the students of the Alexandru Ioan Cuza University

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A VISIT TO IZMIR 6 - 8 MAY 2019

It would be near impossible not to be impressed with Izmir. Situated in western Turkey on the shores of the Aegean Sea, Izmir takes its name from the Amazon Queen Smyrna. Today it is Turkey's third largest city - after Istanbul and the capital Ankara. It is a young and dynamic place (almost half of its population of 4 million are under the age of 30) with a public transport system that works well including a fast-developing eighteen station metro. Historically, Izmir has been home to many different cultures and religions, from the Persians and Ancient Greeks, to the Romans and Ottomans. Today, it is also home to the Izmir University of Economics (Izmir Ekonomi Üniversitesi) which was my destination in May on behalf of the Former Members of the European Parliament. Professor Dr. Alexander Bürgin had invited me to speak with his students about issues ranging from EU foreign policy and Turkey to the future of Europe after Brexit. Izmir University has some 8000 students and is part-housed in a former luxury hotel building! Many of the university's courses are conducted in English and almost all the students I met spoke the language fluently. The university has Erasmus Plus agreements with



Robert Evans with the students of the Izmir University of Economics

some 168 universities spread across 26 countries in addition to academic cooperation protocol with another 41 universities.

My talk to Professor's Bürgin's PhD students was on EU governance and procedures. We discussed preparations for the 2019 elections and ways in which the EU might engage more closely with its citizens. It was noted however, that many surveys show the EU's policy making to be closer to the aspirations of its citizens than those of many national governments.

My stay in Turkey coincided with the Supreme Election Council's controversial decision to order a re-run of Istanbul's recent mayoral election over alleged irregularities. Despite this, in discussion with the MSc students, I expressed optimism for Turkey's future relations with the EU. Turkey, certainly Istanbul

and Izmir, seem economically as advanced and European in outlook, as many other cities in the EU. True, there are some serious issues to be addressed but it would be foolish for us to close the door on Turkey's membership application at this most sensitive time.

In my discussion with undergraduates on the European studies course, the debate inevitably concentrated on Brexit. Former prime minister David Cameron's naive decision to call a referendum in the hope of uniting his Conservative Party has spectacularly backfired. The British Conservatives are more divided than ever, the opposition Labour Party (my own party) confused to say the least and the country split from top to bottom. How the UK will successfully move forward in its relations with the EU are, at the time of writing unknown. Were the decisions to be left in the hands of the well-informed young people at Izmir University, who knows, we might make progress and reach more sensible agreements! And so, all too quickly, my visit to Izmir was over and I headed home, my mind full of positive images and memories.



Robert Evans with the students of the Izmir University of Economics

Robert Evans

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TOWARDS THE EP ELECTIONS OF MAY 2019

I was invited to attend a conference on May 6-7 in Rome at the University of Rome Tor Vergata. Here, about 120 PHD students from the university were gathered for a conference on the just-passed European Parliament elections.

There was a wide range of very exciting presentations on the European Parliament's evolution from an assembly of designated parliamentarians from the six original EC countries to a directly elected European Parliament of 751 members with a profound influence on the virtual all areas of EU legislative activity.

The conference was organized by the University of Rome at the Vergata and AUSE star of the Associazione Universitaria di Studi Europei. It was also supported by the Erasmus+ Program of the European Union, and the European Parliament Former Members Association.

The conference was led by the president of AUSE Daniela Felsini of the University of Rome Tor Vergata, and the Secretary-General of AUSE Francesco Velo, of the University of Pavia.

In my speech, I reviewed the special feature of the European Parliament as a supranational parliament.

- It is the world's most



Panel of speakers

far-reaching experiment in transnational democracy

- It is obligatory to operate in three different locations rather than have one single seat
 - It is multilingual to a degree unknown elsewhere
 - Like the US Congress, but unlike national parliaments, no government emerges directly from a majority in Parliament
 - Its members come from a fixed number of national political parties.
- In my presentation, I reviewed the development of the European Parliament's power and influence from the Assembly with 142 indirectly elected members in 1958 until the first direct elections in 1979 and up to the recent elections of 23-26 May 2019. In addition, we discussed how, over the years,

the European Parliament has succeeded in moving from being a Parliament with limited influence to today, where Europe has a decisive influence on most policy areas. The evolution from being a Parliament that just had to be heard and to a European Parliament where all the EU legislation requires approval from the European Parliament has only lasted 40 years.

In a year where it is both 40 years since we had the first direct election and 40 years ago that Jean Monnet died, it must be said to be quite impressive that the European Parliament today is really one of the two legislative chambers of the European union.

The debate was lively and it was very well organized.

Thanks to the University of Rome Tor Vergata and AUSE – Associazione Universitaria di Studi Europei for the invitation to represent the European Parliament Former Members Association.

John Iversen

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(1985-1994/ 1996-1999)

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Poster of the conference

LUISS SUMMER SCHOOL - JULY 2019

To wrap up the eighth edition of the LUISS Summer School 'Parliamentary Democracy in Europe', the topic for which was 'Parliamentary Elections and Democratic Accountability in the Era of Populism', on 19 July 2019, a conference was held at the University LUISS Guido Carli in Rome on 'Euroscepticism and the "new" European Parliament: what will happen after the 2019 elections?'. On account of its speakers, interest in the conference was high: former EP President Enrique Barón Crespo; Nicola Lupo, a lecturer at LUISS; and Jan Wouters, a lecturer at KU Leuven. Cristina Fasone, Director of the Jean Monnet Programme supported by the FMA, introduced subjects such as the challenges to be addressed in the next parliamentary term; the future role of Eurosceptic groups in Europe; the influence of Eurosceptic MEPs on the legislative procedure and interinstitutional relations after Brexit; potential opportunities for the Eurosceptics and nationalists. When presenting his positive vision for Europe, President Barón Crespo pointed out that, despite the wide range of electoral systems had been used, turnout at the European elections had been high (+10%) and it was not the euro but the strengthening of

borders that had been the focus of discussions: the values and principles of the Lisbon Treaty have been completely overridden by the 'Fiscal Compact'. 'The challenges ahead are: cooperation, immigration, the budget, foreign policy, defence and security, unemployment, climate change (to be tackled by means of a 'Green Deal'), and trade agreements such as the recent EU-Mercosur agreement; but the real revolution will be to achieve gender parity, as new Commission President Ursula von der Leyen has said. And the codecision procedure is fundamental in a European Parliament that is increasingly politicised, as reflected in inappropriate calls for voting by secret ballot, and which the British do not seem to want to leave, having continued to play a key role in the election of Parliament's President and in the Committees'.

All the speakers noted the Eurosceptics' desire to obstruct integration of any kind, by slowing the pace of reforms and decision-making, and considered how majorities would be formed, depending on the subjects under discussion in the European Parliament, during a term which would be anything but boring. After the conference, we took part

in the General Assembly of the Centre for Parliamentary Studies, chaired by Andrea Manzella, who in his address spoke of the unpredictable phenomenon of emotions-based populism and – as he stated in *Il Parlamento europeo, una introduzione* (The European Parliament: an Introduction), which he co-authored with Nicola Lupo – he believes that a sovereigntist presence in Parliament is 'useful, if not essential' because it provides 'internal opposition to the system'. It is a minority which can stimulate a response and is not a hostile force large enough to block European integration: it will, therefore, be necessary to step up joint action by the European Parliament and national parliaments to bring about parliamentary cooperation, as laid down in the Treaties establishing the European Union, where the sovereigntists are recognised as the official opposition in an internal European area. Marta Dassù, Director of Aspenia, shares these views. She believes that changing the rules is essential to prevent the emergence of entrenched policy positions that are not open to challenge, and that Parliament should be able to initiate legislation with a view to bolstering common foreign and defence policy, on the basis of the economy and security, and regaining trust in the Member States. Personally, I believe that the role of the High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy will also be decisive.



Round table at the LUISS University

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LATEST NEWS

ACTIVITIES

29 Sept - 4 Oct 2019

VISIT TO GEORGIA

An FMA delegation will visit Georgia.

3-5 November 2019

VISIT TO FINLAND

An FMA delegation will visit Finland, Member State holding the Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

10 December 2019

HOUSE OF EUROPEAN HISTORY GUIDED VISIT

From 4.00 p.m. to 5.00 p.m. in Brussels.

10 December 2019

POLITICAL CONFERENCE-DEBATE

on "*Evolution of coalition formation and new political majorities in the EP*"
From 5.00 p.m. to 6.30 p.m. in the Auditorium of the House of European History, Brussels.

10 December 2019

FMA ANNUAL COCKTAIL AND DINNER

From 6.30 p.m. in the House of European History, Brussels.

11 December 2019

FMA ANNUAL SEMINAR

From 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. European Parliament, Brussels.
It will be followed by the Get-Together lunch, at 1p.m. in the Members' Restaurant, European Parliament, Brussels.

ARCHIVES OF MEMBERS AND FORMER MEMBERS

The Historical Archives of the European Parliament are at your disposal to receive and process the papers of former and current Members of the European Parliament. These papers may relate both to Members' official parliamentary work or their political activities at national or European level. By this means, key information about the daily life and activities of the Parliament can be maintained for future generations.

Once deposited, papers will be processed in accordance with the EP Bureau decision of 10 March 2014. This may involve their indexation, digitisation and/or conversion to PDF/A documents, as well as making them available to the public, unless they are confidential, in accordance with relevant legal provisions.

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European Parliament
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IN MEMORIAM

† 6 July 2019
Francesco LAMANNA
 EPP-ED (1992-1994)

He served as an Italian member of the European Parliament from 1992 to 1994. During his time in Parliament, Mr Lamanna was member of the European People's Party.

At the national level, he represented Democrazia Cristiana.



† 12 July 2019
Georgios ANASTASSOPOULOS
 EPP (1984-1999)

He served as a Greek member of the European Parliament from 1984 to 1999. During his time in Parliament, Mr Anastassopoulos was member of the European People's Party.

At the national level, he represented Nea Dimokratia.



† 18 July 2019
André Jorge DIONÍSIO BRADFORD
 S&D (2019)

He served as a Portuguese member of the European Parliament in 2019. During his time in Parliament, Mr Dionísio Bradford was member of the Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats.

At the national level, he represented Partido Socialista.

