

Jean Monnet Colloquium on the Future of the EU (Lisbon, 17. 3. 2017)

Panel: The Blueprint for a Political Union

Contribution of Maria Grazia Melchionni

Good morning, dear Students, Jean Monnet Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen.

I wish to thank and to congratulate Professors Dusan Sidjanski and Fausto de Quadros for having organized this Colloquium, and to say how I do appreciate the opportunity to be there and to share my views with all of you on the perspectives for deepening the European integration at the difficult moment we are now living.

The presentation by Professor Sidjanski we have listened to is stimulating and I fully support his vision of a Political Union - federation or confederation, be that as it may – between the willing few.

Many papers have been produced during the last weeks by several think tanks, more or less closed to the institutions, and in his White Book, the President of the Commission Jean-Claude Juncker seems to have taken account also of that.

I preferred to draft my paper independently, on the basis of what I have learned in so many years of European studies and personal observation and reflection, and afterwards I looked at this literature to check my considerations.

You will not be surprised to hear that my approach will be different, as it aims to a real change of things, which alone could put them under way: “The change - according to Jean Monnet - can only come from outside the institutions, at due time”.

Let me, now, come straight to my topic:

New Perspectives and Challenges for Deepening the EU after Brexit and American Elections

UK Prime Minister Theresa May, a pretty self-confident personality, is strongly Atlanticist and, endeavouring to pursue “a smooth, orderly Brexit” (speaking at Lancaster House, on January 17th, 2017), she is determined to succeed in doing a hard Brexit: no EU, no Single Market and no Customs Union.

Dealing in such an epochal change, UK politics will be concentrated on trade and economics, and negotiations to implement Brexit will have number of difficulties. There will be political contrast, economic clash across the English

Channel. This very complex, tough negotiation could distract EU attention and energies from internal and external major problems or interfere in them.

In foreign policy, UK will be less keen on overstretching its power than it has been under Blair and Cameron, and its engagement will be especially for its interests, no more for wars.

However, directly or not, through NATO or its bilateral agreements with France, London will try to have a say in the future European arrangements for defence.

The world is defined by globalization and I don't believe President Trump will be able, even if he really thought so, to be isolationist; but I'm quite positive on the fact that he will support nationalism, as in USA nationalism is in the mainstream.

With the "America first" doctrine he wants to move away from the uncertain Obama foreign policy, but "to make America great again" doesn't necessarily mean that he wants to engage in wars. It is also possible that the confrontational approach he has shown, for example, to Iran could be a negotiator's tactic.

Important trends in its foreign policy seem to be:

- Security is prominent over economy, hence militarization to deepen;
- Multilateralism is over in security (not in trade), hence back to bilateralism, but US commitment to NATO will continue after Trump's upcoming, improving NATO's mission on counter terrorism;
- Democracy promotion abroad is over;
- End of American hegemony on the Middle East and growing attention towards East Asia, where China is a rising power increasingly assertive and inspiring fear.

The relationship between USA and China is uncertain. Both pretend to defend the *status quo*, but for China the *status quo* is its position as the Middle of Asia, for USA the *status quo* is other.

All around Asia, China is recognized as a regional power and also as a global power. China has the money and spends the money, so South-East Asia countries look at China. China wants to end up the Taiwan issue and is building military capability to impede USA to intervene in favour of Taiwan. Trump has gone back, recognizing the "One country" doctrine of China.

There is a shifting balance of power in the Korean Peninsula and there is no more patience with North Korea in East Asia. According to specialists in the area, conflicts could be local and controlled, but could not be avoided; they could be neighbour wars, trade wars, trying not to do nuclear conflicts.

Russia is very active in Asia, and the 'Russian factor' is paramount in Trump's Asian policy to be.

USA, China, Russia, they are global players in a world that is in transition towards a multipolar order, perhaps a post-Western global order. And this transition is not going on in a peaceful way, but through trade wars, neighbour wars, terrorism and migration wars, which already affect the EU.

Nowadays a significant global political actor because of its soft power, after the return of hard power politics to the global affairs, the EU cannot be any more only a civil power, but needs to qualify itself also for hard power to be recognized as one of the world's power poles, as USA, China, Russia and probably someone else.

The EU needs to complete its political and security identity and look forward to becoming a member of UN Security Council, of NATO, a nuclear power with a chief commander, and to having if not a European army, at least a strong cooperation between the Member Countries' military.

Deprived of the stature of a global player in high politics, as it is now, EU is the common neighbourhood of two real world's power poles, where they discharge their contrasts exploiting local interests.

To be quite clear on that, this political and security *status* which is urgently needed is impossible to achieve at 27/28 because a sharp reduction in the sovereignty of the Member Countries should be agreed by all of them, while many are constitutionally impeded. Among the 27/28 there are also other differences in geopolitical conditions and views, historical experiences and cultural sensibilities, by which it is apparently difficult to focus common interests in high politics.

In my report of 2016 to Professors Sidjanski and de Quadros I already underlined the necessity not only of supranational economic governance, but also of supranational foreign affairs and defence policies, the two being not separable. What makes the difference between diplomacy and any other kind of

negotiating activity is the fact that, behind the diplomat, there is the military force and the right of the sovereign power to use it to defend national interest. Paraphrasing Henry Kissinger (Roberto Ducci, *I Capintesta*, Milano, Rusconi, 1982, p. 88) and Stalin before him, I could ask: how many brigades does H.R. Federica Mogherini have to do the EU foreign policy?

One year later these needs have become more pressing and the Eurozone, a stabilized Eurozone, seems to be the framework where to see how to go forward towards “an ever closer union” in foreign and security and defence policies, the 19 Member Countries having already accepted to do that in the monetary field.

It as has been stated at the very beginning of the Treaty on the EEC: “Determined to lay the foundations of an ever closer union between the European peoples...”, and repeated thereafter in the main European treaties.

What does it mean “an ever closer union”?

Firstly I wish to observe that it is not the opposite of “united in diversity”, if the subsidiarity principle is properly applied in the top-down fashion, and to do so should be granted as in low politics also when deepening the integration in high politics.

National diversities are a wealth: the peculiarities of cultural, social and economic needs should be taken into consideration and not sacrificed to the homologation suitable to the single, now the global market. However, as to national interests in foreign policy and defence, they need to be composed with consultations between all Member Countries, instead of unilaterally taking the initiative and leaving the others in front of a *fait accompli* and of its unwanted consequences.

“An ever closer union” now means to push the integration into the areas of high politics, where for functional reasons sovereignty needs to speak with a single voice, not a plural, intergovernmentalism in the decision making being tempered by the majority vote.

Focusing on the Eurozone to build “an ever closer union” implies to make it clearly irreversible. To introduce an exit procedure from the EU was a big error, and a conceptual contradiction too. How is it possible to get deeply engaged with an ambitious, transforming, demanding process, if it is not perceived as

existential and if it is not for ever? The simple existence of an exit door, changing the approach to building Europe, is the sign of a mutation in the process developing.

The upgrading of the Eurozone (on the way of becoming Europatria, as Dr. Peter Hartz has named Europatriates the young Europeans involved in his mobility plan) has to be negotiated between all the 19 Member Countries speaking frankly, avoiding the ambiguities which, seeking for accessions, have characterized the enlargement negotiations.

Between the two models of differentiated integration, “variable geometry” or “hard core”, embodied the first into the “reinforced cooperation” and the second into the “Eurozone”, only the last one has shown the capability to deepen the integration level of the Member Countries and to develop political impulses (see Paolo Ponzano, *L'intégration différenciée dans l'UE et la 'constitutionalisation' de l'Eurozone*, dans <<Revue du Droit de l'Union européenne>>, 2015,2).

For more integration in foreign policy and security and in defence, it is better to build on the Eurozone than to create reinforced cooperations, which are subject to several limitations, moreover deepening the competences of the Eurozone in foreign affairs and defence would mean to complete the set of the sovereign prerogatives: money, foreign affairs, military forces.

This completion of the Eurozone is also needed to restore the balance between the German and the Latin components of it, as the France-Germany couple has not performed properly after the reunification of Germany and the establishment of the Eurozone; however, the exclusive nuclear capability of France, giving her a leading role in defence, could match Germany's overwhelming economic presence.

As how to do the upgrading of the Eurozone, leaving the technicalities to the skills of lawyers, I will limit myself to some considerations:

- A new reform treaty of the EU could be an act of suicide, for it would not be understood by the European population;
- A protocol in addition to the EMU treaty, aiming to reinforce and to complete the treaty in the world being, or three different protocols concerning EMU, FSPU, SDPU look better;

- The text/s, short and clear, should be finally formulated by few respected specialists, as it happened in the case of the Rome treaties;
- The engagements need to be made permanent and irreversible;
- As in the case of the Eurozone the institutional structure for the decision making should be the existing one in different composition of the meetings, and only a few special organs and mechanisms connected with the new activities should be created;
- The H.R. for CFSP and CSDP and the External Action Service could continue to play a crucial role entertaining the dialogue and helping to bridge the differences that may develop between the Member Countries of the Eurozone, having supranational foreign, security and defence policies, and the others EU Member Countries belonging to the Single Market and acting in high politics on unanimity.

I remember a time when “enlarging” was perceived as the opposite of “deepening”: to enlarge would have made the link less strong, so the question was “enlarging or deepening?” After the first accession round, “enlarging” and “deepening” became a couple, the first being supposed to drive the second: “enlarging and deepening” was a *mantra*. But it didn’t succeed.

I like to recall here that Romain Rolland (the French political thinker was a biologist) invented a word *Gigantanasie* to describe the fact that in nature an unlimited growth brings to a sudden disappearance in major catastrophes, and in the human domain it leads to wars and revolutions.

And now...*hic sunt leones!*

For the future of Europe it is essential to define its borders. The sentence written in the Rome treaties and, afterwards, automatically confirmed in the EU revision treaties, “Every European Country may ask to become a member of the Community”, needs to be considered in the historical context of its origin.

It was an “open door” policy connected to the cold war and intended to state no acceptance of the iron curtain (particularly with regard to the partition of Germany). It cannot mean, today, that enlarging to all European Countries is mandatory; or that each European Country meeting the criteria established at Copenhagen in the Nineties can come in, even if its accession could get the EU in trouble (as in case of Turkey, Ukraine, Georgia...).

The “responsibility to promote democracy” or “to protect human rights” in foreign communities has proved to be irresponsible.