Florina-Laura NECULAI

What Would A
Federal Europe Look Like?

*An Envisioning Exercise for the
Young Generation*

*"Layers in a European Federal Union
should be like the layers in a cake;
and if one is missing,
the cake loses its full taste."*

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Acknowledgements

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Preface

The literature on federalism has now a short, simple and explicit text. A young author is trying to give an answer to the question: "What Would a Federal Europe Look Like?" to the young audience.

Conducting three fictional interviews with characters that are more or less taken from the European political reality, the author gives a note of originality and dynamism to the literature on European federalism.

The author explains what federalism is all about with a very practical approach: the fictional interviews, conducted by a young team of a reporter and a cameraman working for the European Television for Youth, reveal that European federalism has deep roots in history and describe its evolution in time. The book gives precise examples of European policies such as education, employment, health and consumer protection, and tries to explain what would change if Europe were a federal

state; and it also shows the strengths a federal European Union would have on the international scene. Furthermore, it gives good arguments for the many advantages of a federal European Union and still leaves it up to the young public whether or not they personally approve of this model or not.

Such initiatives coming from the young generation are more than welcome! Young people should be encouraged to get involved more actively in explaining the complex European issues and particularly the benefits of a federal European Union to the citizens. The federalist vision of a European Union needs to be explained in such a manner that the "man on the street" understands it. This is the main aim of this book and it fulfils this aim. But such an initiative should definitely go hand in hand with more political action.

The European Union is currently in a crisis as quite a number of European citizens have lost faith in the capability of the EU to solve the most pressing problems they face today,

such as unemployment for example. European citizens need to be better informed about European politics and they should be involved to a greater extent. The constitutional debate should continue and actively involve all citizens. All pro-Europeans and all that have voted in favour of a European Constitution – and the majority of the member states and of the EU's population have done so – should jointly fight for a European Constitution. The "reflection period" does not require silence, but more action.

For the European project to go on, a synergy of action is necessary. The initiative of the European Commission to improve its communication with the citizens, the so-called "Plan D" (D for democracy, dialogue and debate) can only be a success if the citizens of Europe support it. On the other hand, it is difficult to involve citizens in such a complex process as European affairs. However, through a greater transfer of power to regions and local authorities,

citizens might get a better grasp of Europe and participate more actively in articulating the federal vision for Europe.

The process towards a federal future of the European Union must involve the young generation. We have to make sure that they understand the many advantages a united Europe offers. As mentioned in its subtitle, the book "What Would a Federal Europe Look Like?" is a visionary exercise for the young generation, but it can be a very useful source of information and inspiration for all that would like to read a short and dynamic and yet informative document on how a federal Europe could look like.

Dr. Friedhelm FRISCHENSCHLAGER
Secretary-General
Union of European Federalists

Introduction

This volume is the outcome of my long-term conviction that books written in a high academic manner reach only a specialized audience and decrease the real interest of youth in that particular field, which in our case is politics.

Most good political arguments are discussed at length in a complicated manner over hundreds of pages, making them accessible mainly to those who study politics and to those who have the time and interest. So I wonder: what about young people in this labyrinth of political information in which it is so easy to lose one's sense of direction?

This book-project - part of the YOUTH Programme of the European Commission - aims to explain mainly to youth aged between 15–30 years old what federalism is, in general, and the concept of European federalism, in particular. In order to facilitate the understanding, the text is presented under the form of a dialogue.

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The book is composed of three fictional dialogues. The first part is a dialogue with the President of the European Union that will give an overview on what federalism is. The second is also an imaginary dialogue, with the Head of Government of Europe. This dialogue will show how a federal system in Europe can affect citizens' daily life. The third part presents an imaginary interview with the Foreign Affairs Minister of Europe. This underlines the potential strength of a united Europe in international politics. In order to make this volume more appealing to youth, the interviews are conducted by a young reporter and cameraman who work for a TV station aimed at young people, that I called, European Television for Youth (ETVY).

This book-project was an exercise for me and among other things, I learned that it is more difficult to develop arguments in simple words than in a scholarly language and style.

The most difficult aspect was developing the project in such a way that as

many young people as possible could both take part and benefit from the process and outcome. In order to disseminate the book to the widest young audience possible, who may not have perfectly mastered a foreign language, it needed to be translated from English into different languages. This provided a good exercise-opportunity for young students, mainly from foreign-languages faculties, to try translating this volume into their mother tongues. I would like to thank to the youngsters who volunteered to translate this book.

I hope that this book will help young people to better visualize the way a federal Europe would look and the benefits it can bring.

Enjoy it!
Florina-Laura NECULAI

PART ONE
Imaginary Interview with the
President of the European Union

The reporter and cameraman from European Television for Youth (ETVY) are leaving the studio to meet the President of the European Union for an interview…

- Would you please make up your mind on what we need! We need to go now if we are going to be on time for the interview.

- You always rush me!

- We have been working together for a while now and I admit there have been times when I have rushed you when it was not entirely necessary, but this time is very important.

- OK, OK, whom are we interviewing today?

- The President of the European Union!!!

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- Hmm, I see. I think I would do better if I brought in somebody to be in charge of the lights… .

- You'll do fine, but please hurry up.

- You have prepared your questions?

- What do you think?

- Hmm, I can also say that we have worked together for quite a long time and… at times your questions have seemed very spontaneous.

- I'll get the car! And I did carefully prepare the questions…this time around.

- I knew it! It's for the President of Europe. Can I have a look at the questions?

- I would prefer to maintain the element of surprise.

- 'Element of surprise'… can you at least describe them to me a bit? What are you going to ask about?

- Actually, I have prepared three sets of questions for three interviews that we will

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conduct this week. The material should be ready for the documentary we are preparing next month. The first round will be addressed to the President and focus on his views on federalism and European federalism in particular. We will discuss the second set of questions with the Head of the European Government and will concern the way a federal Europe affects the lives of European citizens and those of youth. The third part is about Europe's present strength in international politics. We will interview the Foreign Affairs Minister of Europe for those answers.

And the interview with the President of the European Union begins…

- Mr. President, thank you very much for accepting our invitation to this dialogue, which is part of a documentary that European Television for Youth (ETVY) wants to make on the European Union and

federalism. I would start by first asking you to try to define 'federalism'.

- I would like to thank you for the invitation and to express my pleasure at being invited to talk about European federalism.

The process of European integration is a long one, especially when compared to the process of the creation of the United States of America. Defining federalism was the first challenge with which specialists were confronted but there is still no definition of federalism able to satisfy all of them. Elements that define federalism are spread all over the political and philosophical writings, which complicate the task of having one simple and comprehensive definition of the term. Therefore, 'federalism' can be found defined as a new ideology, or as a political theory, or as a model of governance or – more neutrally – as an idea or a concept. No matter how dispersed the views on federalism might be, there are few central points that I would like to stress.

The first of these points concerns the etymological root of the term, as coming from the Latin 'foederis' ('treaty'). The second point of agreement on federalism concerns the principle of war avoidance: as the liberal, the democratic and the social ideologies proved unable to ensure the necessary means to prevent the war among states, federalism was regarded as one of the 'ideological hopes' in the eternal peace direction. The third tangential point concerns defining federalism as referring to the organization of a multi-cultural entity in which each component entity has its own government with its own attributes that co-exists with a central government to whom they have delegated some of their powers, thus giving legitimacy to actions by the supra-national government in those fields.

- If there is no widely-accepted definition of federalism, how would you describe some of its principles?

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- Federalism aims to provide an efficient equilibrium between autonomy and participation. Its principles include: democracy and respect for human rights; diversity and tolerance; pluralism and autonomy; efficiency and participation.

- Could you please develop this statement?

- I would focus on just four of the principles of federalism: diversity and tolerance, efficiency and participation.

In more detail, I would say that federalism is a concept that outlines the organization of a territory inhabited by communities of different cultures living together within an institutional framework that ensures the unity of the territory and at the same time guarantees the preservation of its citizens living within that territory. The proper functioning of such an entity implies a division of powers between the supra national and the regional, national and local institutional levels. This means more efficiency and a guarantee that the decisions

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taken respect local specificities. The existence of several levels of political power may stimulate political participation by the citizens at the different levels of jurisdiction.

- …???

- For example, if the EU were a federal union, it would be a multi-cultural entity that hosts within its boundaries French, Germans, Finns, Italians, etc, each having a more or less different culture, but all democratic states. Living together within the same boundaries gives greater chances for people to get to know each other and to better understand and tolerate different cultures. All these different cultural groups are constituted within democratic states that have their own governments (the French their own government, the Germans their government, etc) that will regulate and take decisions for their own people. These national governments that represent the French, the Germans, the Fins, etc would delegate some of their powers

to another government (the European Government) that would regulate and take decisions for the general (European) interest.

This second government is called 'supra-national' because it comes above the national one. It is not hierarchically superior, it would simply has a European mandate rather than a national one. The supra-national character actually refers to its decision-taking independence at the European level and the primacy of its decisions over national legislation. This implies limiting Member States' sovereignty or rather, sharing sovereignty in those matters best handled at the supra-national European level.

- I assume that the division of areas of authority – or competencies – at different levels of the society gives other advantages: firstly, the European citizen will address him or herself to the closest authority to get his or her case understood and solved faster. Secondly, the existence of the different levels of competencies presupposes that there are many people

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involved in working at these levels, which means a broader understanding of political issues and a higher level of citizens' participation in the political decision-making.

- This assumption can also imply more bureaucracy, so things are not that simple. In general, though, your assumption is quite correct.

- Has federalism been practiced only in modern times or are there other examples of it in the history of the humankind?

- In practice, it seems that a federal-type organization existed also in Greco-Roman Antiquity. The Greek city-states (called 'polis') were organized in confederations that they joined consensually and which had common institutions in order to protect their common interests by defending each other and also prevent any possible conflicts might occur among them.

These city-states kept their autonomy within the empire that was

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promoting the formation of these confederations. It is said that there were many such organizational arrangements in the 3rd century before Christ. In the same time period and under Greek influence, one of the leagues from Asia Minor seems to have developed a Federal Constitution with a federal assembly in which each city held a number of seats proportional to the size of its population.

Under the Romans the so-called Latin League was created. It was also based on a covenant among people(s) called 'foedus', today's etymological root of the word 'federalism'. The Romans made treaties with those they conquered that were in the form of a contract between Rome and the defeated peoples and were a way of legitimizing the power of Rome.

In theory…

…a light broke and the team needed some time to fix it. After a short while they

resumed the interview. The President continues...

In theory, echoes of this type of organization continued to live on even after the fall of Rome, but the first important step was made in the 17th century, after the Treaty of Westphalia (1648) that ended the Thirty Years War. Federalism started to be formally defined for the first time because of a debate on the best ways of organizing society, either as a federal state or as a centralized one.

The German Johannes Althusius developed a theory of Federalism, which tried to envisage a system of political organization in which people participated by their consent. At the same time, Jean Bodin was creating a theory of Centralism, which included the idea that sovereignty is indivisible and can be situated either at the central level or at the level of the Member States, but could not be shared as in the case of federalism. His theory inspired Western political thinking in

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most European states until the middle of the 20th century.

- Nevertheless, the theory of federalism survived in few Western European states such as Germany and Switzerland, but also in the United States where it started to inspire new formulations. One century later, the American example of federalism instated after the American Revolution provided a strong influence on other nations around the world and is considered by the majority of the specialists to be a cornerstone in the creation and the evolution of federal-type organization. How did federalism evolve on the American Continent?

- The American Revolution was an independence war with different phases but all these separate phases constituted a continuous process.

In a first phase after declaring their independence, the United States of America (USA) drew up their first written

Constitution in 1777, called 'The Articles of Confederation and Perpetual Union'. This first Constitution guaranteed that its members should keep their full sovereignty, therefore jeopardizing the evolution of the USA as a single state. The articles of the Constitution required some reform for the better functioning of the confederation, but ten years later, in 1787, the new Convention convened at Philadelphia decided to abandon the reform idea and to devise a new Constitution. The Constitution of 1787 is also considered as a second founding of the United States of America.

The novelty with the Constitution of 1787 is that it separates the three branches of the government creating also a system of checks and balances between them. It clearly specifies the competencies of the federal government and those of the states.

The American Revolution was a political rather than an intellectual success. While not initially perfect the achievement became in practice a working system that

externally confers considerable power on the federal state, while internally retaining the local powers of the citizens of the Member States.

- How did the practice of federalism evolve in European countries?

- The evolution of federalism in European countries has been an interesting process; federalism being for some countries an associative process, as is the case of Germany and Switzerland, or on the other hand used as a solution to prevent the break-ups of the country, as in the case of Belgium.

- Would you, please, give us more details on the cases of Germany and Switzerland?

- Germany, unlike France, Spain, the United Kingdom or other European national states, had a centralist system for only a short time; in fact, it was a latecomer in the formation of a unitary national state. Throughout the Middle Age, Germany was a loose association of independent princedoms that fell under the authority of the 'Holy Roman Empire of

the German Nation', the successor of the Roman Empire. The first German national state, the German Reich (Empire) was formally established in 1871 and already embodied a federalist system although it was dominated by Prussia. The competences of the German states exceeded greatly the competences of the German Reich. The primary aim of the German states was not to establish a centralized national state but to create a domestic market without tariffs and a common currency that could favour economic development.

Therefore, from a political point of view, the German Reich resembled a confederation of highly independent states under the lead of Prussia rather than a true federal nation. The first democratic federal system was established in 1918 under the so-called Weimar Republic that was composed of 'Länder' (the former federal states), which again differed greatly in their territory and economic strength. However, under the Weimar Republic the power of the 'Länder'

was restricted, compared to the influence of the federal states of the German Reich. In 1933, when Hitler came into power, the German federal system was dissolved and replaced by the centralized Nazi dictatorship that lasted in effect until 1945 when, after the Second World War, two Germanys were created, the western part becoming a true federation.

- Could German federalism be a model for the European Union?

- Some may argue so but I think that despite the fact that Germany is one of the first European states to experience federalism in practice, it is actually the Swiss federalism that is a possible model to be taken and implemented at the European level because of its multiculturality and multilingualism; the Swiss Federal Government (elected by the Parliament) being a reflection of the different Swiss regions and of the political parties.

The Swiss nation-building process passed first through a confederal organization. Pushed towards some sort of union against the powerful neighbours, in the late 13 century, the Swiss cantons established a weak confederation. It was in the 19th century (1848) when Switzerland adopted a Federal Constitution.

The heterogeneity of the country from all points of view, especially in terms of language and religions, is well reflected in its federal structure that has three levels: the federal level, the cantonal level and the municipalities; these last two levels enjoying great political and financial powers, while the rights of minorities are protected.

At the federal level, the Swiss two-chamber National Assembly plays the role of the Swiss parliament. One chamber – the National Council – represents the Swiss people, while the other chamber – the Council of States – gathers the representatives of the cantons. Although both chambers share equal powers, the Council of States has a veto

power. However, it seems that the secret of the success of the Swiss federalism is the combination of federalism and direct democracy that presupposes both the consultation of the population by referendum on different issues and allowing it to initiate legislation.

Currently, of all the members of the European Union, Germany, Belgium and Austria are federal states; Italy and Spain are in the process of decentralization; France – known for its centralism – gave more competencies with the regions, and the United Kingdom is in a deep process of so-called 'devolution'.

- It was mentioned that Switzerland has passed from a confederation to a federation. What is the difference between a federation and a confederation?

- In order to make a distinction between a federation and a confederation, I must first say that there is not one single type of federalism, but as many federalisms as there

are federal states, even if the principles are the same. A confederation is just one example of this. The difference between the two terms is apparent mainly in the relationship of the state to the individual.

In a federation, the policies and the decisions taken by the supra-national government apply directly to the citizens who have to respect them. If they disagree with the policies or the decisions taken, they have the right to appeal to a Court of Justice, or else they can campaign democratically to have the law changed. In a confederation, the policies and the decisions taken by the supra-national government apply to the national governments that keep their sovereignty and they meet together only to decide a common position on certain issues.

- *Which are the other differences?*

- Other differences between a federation and a confederation are: a federation is based on a Constitution, while a confederation is based on a treaty; a federation can revise

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its Constitution by accepting propositions (called 'amendments') by a majority vote, while a confederation can amend its treaty only if all the component entities agree in unanimity; a federation is a state in itself because the national governments delegate some of their powers to the supra-national government, which is responsible for the common concern, while a confederation is not a state in itself.

Most of the countries that are today known as federations experienced at some point a confederal arrangement. This is the case of the United States, Germany and of Switzerland. The European Union is a full confederation with a rising number of federal elements.

- How did the theory of federalism evolve at the European level?

- In the 17th century, federalism was theorized for the first time in the context of a debate on the best way to organize society, either as a federal or centralized system. In

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Europe, the majority of the states adopted the centralist system of societal organization for more than three centuries until the end of the Second World War.

In the 18th century, Kant published "Pax Eterna" ("Perpetual Peace"), in which he maintains that federalism makes it impossible for federal states to go to war with each other; thus federalism was seen as the only way towards 'perpetual peace'. Although Kant did not have a concrete example of a federal government, the argument he develops on the relation between federalism and peace constitutes a big step forward for the theorizing of federalism in Europe.

In the 19th century one can already see political thinkers who were critical of the centralist system which they perceived incapable of ensuring peaceful relations between states and who opposed the concept of the nation-state. Some examples of such thinkers are: Pierre-Joseph Proudhon who opposed the creation of the Italian nation-state; Constantin Frantz, who was against the

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creation of a German nation-state; and Carlo Cattaneo, who envisioned the Habsburg Empire as a democratic federal state.

In the first half of the 20th century Europeans developed a different concept of federalism from that of the Americans. This was known as the "personalist" movement. It had a global vision of federalism and was inspired by Proudhon, Frantz and Cattaneo. The initiators of this movement were a group of intellectuals including Alexandre Marc, Denis de Rougemont and Henri Brugmans. The movement was shaped and developed in the 1930s by those thinkers who also founded the magazines "L'Ordre Nouveau" and "Esprit". In the context of the global economic crisis, the movement initiated a new trend of thought that rejected the idea that the global crisis was unsolvable. The crisis faced by the nation-state encouraged the federalist activists to point out that federalism could provide a solution to the political, economic and social depression of the times. The damage of the First World War and the

weakness of the League of Nations showed that the nation-states could not confront the new situation alone. In this context, the critique to the 19th century nation-state found other followers in the first half of the 20th century.

- The fundamentals of the European Union fundaments were put in place during the aftermath of the Second World War. How did federalism develop at the European level after the Second World War?

- The Founding Fathers of what is called nowadays 'European Union' envisaged a political and economic mechanism that would bring those coal and steel industries with a commercial interest in producing war materiel under the control of a High Authority: essentially those of France, Belgium, Italy, the Netherlands, Luxembourg and Germany. The Treaty establishing a European Coal and Steel Community was signed in Paris (1951) and quickly ratified.

It is often stated that European Union started as an economic project. Although this assertion is correct, it is often forgotten that it was a political project, too. The seeds were sown before in the interwar period when the issue of federalism ceased to be simply an intellectual debate and became an important point on the political agenda. With the Second World War over, the need for a system capable of preventing wars between states was imperative. Intellectuals and politicians alike advanced different opinions on the peace-seeking process. Federalism was one of the theories they pushed forward.

- The political dimension was fundamental in the creation of the European Union from the beginning, as both Jean Monnet and Robert Schumann planned a federal European Union with supra-national institutions to which powers would be delegated by its Member States.

- Unfortunately, historical circumstances meant that national sovereignty was highly

valued in Europe and the probability of the European states being willing to share their sovereign powers was very small. By the Treaty of Rome (1957) the economic part of European project made continual progress, while on the political side, the idea of a European Federal Union and of a common defence system were left for the future. However, the federal ambitions of the Founding Fathers are now gradually coming to fruition.

- Although the political federal project was initially postponed, federalist movements across Europe tried to keep it alive in the minds and the actions of European politicians.

- Yes, indeed. Numerous federalist movements across Western Europe were formed starting in the inter and after-war period: the Paneuropean Union (1923); Federal Union (1938); the Movimento Federalista Europeo (1943); the New Europe Circle (mid-1940s); the European

Parliamentary Union (EPU) that was incorporated into the International European Movement at the beginning of the ´50s; and the Union of European Federalists (1947).

In the aftermath of the Second World War, in September 1946, the militants for a federal Europe met in Switzerland and in October, the European federalists together with the American federalists established a world federal organization that is known today as the World Federalist Movement. In 1947 the first congress of the European federalists is held; in the same year a so-called "crusade" for a World Government was launched. It mandated the creation of a world constitution to guarantee the preservation of the world peace. Then in the early 1950s, the Union of European Federalists launched the European campaign for a European Assembly elected directly by its citizens. Behind the campaign were important federalist names: Altiero Spinelli (Secretary General of the Movimento Federalista Europeo), Paul-Henri Spaak

(President of the European Movement), Alcide De Gasperi, etc. Two decades later (in 1979), the European Parliament became a directly elected body.

- Other two important contributions by federalist activists regarding the amendment of the Rome Treaty were the Single Act (1986) and the Maastricht Treaty (1992), better known since it was subject to a referendum in a number of European Member States, in Denmark even twice.

- The Maastricht Treaty brought other changes to the functioning of the European supra-national institutions. At the British insistence, the principle of subsidiarity was included in the Treaty. The principle of subsidiarity is, as usual in European terminology, a difficult word for a simple and useful principle. It actually denominates that decisions directly concerning the citizens should be taken at the level closest to them. This presupposes a clear stratification of

powers and competencies so, for example, those problems that can be solved at the level of a commune should not be taken at the regional level; and problems that can be solved regionally should not be taken at the national or European level. The principle of subsidiarity is one of the major principles of European federalist thinking. It was also included in the draft European Constitution.

- What was the draft European Constitutional Treaty and what did it mean for the activists for a federal Europe?

- The European Constitutional Treaty was prepared by the European Convention for the Future of Europe and was seen by the activists for a federal European Union as a chance to re-energize the campaign for a political Europe started at the beginning of the creation of the European Union.

In 2001, the Heads of States and Governments of the European Member States decided that a European Convention should be convened to draft a new 'rule book' for the

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better functioning of an enlarging European Union. They took this decision because the enlargement from fifteen to twenty-five Member States meant that some of the existing rules needed to be adjusted in order to ensure that the Union could function efficiently and also because of the need to make it easier for the citizens to understand how the Union works.

Following this decision, known as the Laeken Declaration (2001), the European Convention was born. It had 105 members drawn from national parliaments, the European Parliament and Member States' governments. All major parties were represented, including many who were committed to federalism and others wishing to maintain the status quo.

The European federalists seem to have welcomed this process, which involved a high degree of citizen involvement and representation. Following the model of the Philadelphia Convention on the creation of the United States of America, the European

federalists initiated a series of 'Federalist Letters' to the European Constitutional Convention in which they called for vision and courage to put in practice ambitious reforms that were necessary for the future of the European Union. They proposed 'A Federalist Plan for the Convention' calling on the Convention to draft a European Federal Constitution. This was reminiscent of the 'Virginia Plan' that shifted the United States of America from a confederation to a federation.

- What else did the European federalists propose to the Convention with the 'Federalist Plan'?

- The 'Federalist Plan for the Convention' tackled all the areas in which the European Union is not democratic, transparent or efficient enough. It also addressed the institutions that proved to be too closed and unaccountable to the citizens or to their representatives in the European Parliament. The 'Federalist Plan' proposed that the

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European Convention adopt the following: that the final text should consist of one single document that would incorporate all the previous treaties and would include the European Charter of Fundamental Rights; that the European Commission should be transformed into a European Government nominated by the European Parliament (and not by the Member States as is the case now) and that will have the political colour of the European Parliament; that codecision between the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers should be the rule in all the policy fields; and that all decisions in the Council of Ministers should be taken by some form of majority vote and its debates be held public.

As it turned out, because the opposition to federalism was so strong, the name 'federation' itself was left out of the final document.

- Although the European Convention on the Future of Europe had members who held federalist views, among them were also some with different visions of federalism.

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For example, some members discussed the EU's need for dynamic 'federal core' of states willing to move towards a fully federal position without waiting for the more reluctant countries to join in. Others thought this would be divisive. What is the European 'avangard' idea?

- The continuous enlargement of the European Union has led to it becoming a continent-wide confederation able to act effectively in economic and world trade questions but which lacks real *political* power. To correct this weakness, the former President of the European Commission, Jacques Delors, suggested that a small 'avant-garde of European states' could, on their own, take the first important steps towards closer integration. The idea had a fast echo and it was adopted by the German Foreign Affairs Minister, Joschka Fischer, who in a discourse at the University of Humboldt spoke about a 'vanguard' of states that would allow some European countries, the advanced ones, to go further in some fields, while step by step the

other countries could follow them, thus eventually transforming the present confederation into a continental-wide European federation.

- How far is the European Union from becoming an established European Federation?

- Opponents would say that the EU is already too close to becoming a federal union. On the other hand, many federalists would regard the EU as still essentially an inter-governmental organization and that the initial federalist plan of the Founding Fathers of the European Union was postponed because of historical circumstances that produced unwillingness among European nation-states to establish a political European Union. Yet, since then, every step in the evolution of the European Union has been a gradual move towards a more democratic, more efficient and more transparent entity closer to the federal vision.

To accuse European politicians of a lack of federalist vision may be somewhat unfounded. It is impossible to work efficiently without an articulated goal (the goal of 'federalism' being misunderstood among many European politicians and citizens). However important it may be to link the word 'federalist' with the European Union, it is far more important to ensure that the practical application of its principles is seen as positively beneficial by European citizens.

Within the framework of the Convention the federalist campaign had some success in that the European Charter of Fundamental Rights was included in the Constitutional text; the policy areas subject to co-decision between the citizens' elected representatives in the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers were to be increased; citizens would be able to bring a complaint directly to the European Court of Justice and would also be given the right to initiate laws by collecting at least one million signatures in support of what they propose.

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Looking at the long-term picture, there are definitely many other issues to be solved in order to ensure a fully democratic decision-making process in the European Union, and to make its institutions more transparent and efficient. The road to a full European federation is still long; but small steps in the federal direction constitute progress, however slow. This draft Constitutional document is the most important and tangible result of the federalist campaign and a sign that it will continue. Whatever the present difficulties some Member States are experiencing over ratifying this Constitutional Treaty, its proposals for EU reform are now firmly part of the European debate.

- Mr. President, I would like to thank you for this interesting overview of the evolution of federalism in America and especially in Europe. As part of our documentary, the next interview will be with the Head of the European Government and will address the impact a federal

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Europe would have on the daily life of citizens.

On the way back to the studio where the ETVY reporter and the cameraman still have work to do:

- Are you sure you took all the cables and lights from the President's office?

- It is a round office!

- Ha, ha, ha!!! Yes, that is funny: the President of the United States of America has an 'oval' office; the European one is round. Still, the symbol of a united Europe in diversity stands very visibly on his desk.

- Leaving this aside, I think you agree with me that our young viewers will learn a lot from this first interview. I learned a lot myself, but more importantly I have a much clearer picture of federalism in general: federal arrangements has existed in practice since Greek-Roman Antiquity, but it only started to be theorized in the 17th century, when the

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majority of the European states preferred the unitary state with a strong ruling power. The damage caused by the First World War was incentive for some European leaders to turn their hopes towards a common organization, the League of Nations, and some already imagined a European Federation. The even greater damage caused by the Second World War definitely shifted the debates on a federal Europe from the academic agenda on the political one. At the beginning of the 1950s, the initiative of an economic Europe was taken at the initiative of the French and Germans, but the political plan was postponed for the future generations. The present difficulties of an European Union working with almost 30 governments, but using the rules established for only 6 countries, brought a push for the treaties to be revised and for a European Convention on the Future of Europe to be launched in 2002 and would work for over 15 months on a European Constitution, a document that is not perfect but it ensures that the European institutions

will in future function more efficiently, more democratically, and more transparently. It will also bring them closer to the citizens they represent.

PART TWO
Imaginary Interview with the Head of the European Government

The reporter and the cameraman, on the way to their second interview for the documentary they are preparing for young Europeans on European federalism:

- What are you thinking about?

- Oh, nothing! Just wondering about the position of Head of the European Government. What does it mean? Who is this person? How is he or she elected?

- Well, as you know, so far we don't have a European Government, but we do have the title of President of the European Union. The heads of government in the Member States take it in turns to act as the EU President for six months. But for our television viewers we propose to give a view of what might happen in the future. So imagine then that we do

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have a federal Europe equipped with a two chamber Parliament, a Government, a Court of Justice and a Central Bank.

- Hold on! We already have some of those things: a Court of Justice, a Central Bank and, above all, a common currency that is an important element of European federalism. And you haven't answered my question. How is this Head of Government to be elected? And what has all this to do with me? How does this influence my life? I hope your next interview will give me a better idea of how European federalism relates to me.

And so here is the interview with our imaginery Head of the European Government…

- Madam President, does European Union really have a government now?

- I would like to think so. Of all the European institutions, the Commission is certainly the only one whose day-to-day activity is closest

to that of a 'regular' government. It administers its budget, ensures that EU laws are respected, and draws up proposals for new laws when necessary. But there are some governmental duties, which it cannot undertake. For example, in policy areas such as common security, justice and home affairs decisions are taken by unanimous vote in the Council of Ministers — that is, intergovernmental. The details and any exceptions to this rule are laid down in the Treaties. The citizens' representatives in the European Parliament freely debate the issues concerned, and in some policy areas specified in the Treaties the Council *must* 'consult' the Parliament.

But most EU legislation is agreed by the 'community method'. Let us say, for example, that the Commission has in mind some legislation concerning the reimbursement of plane tickets to passengers if the flight was delayed or cancelled. This falls under 'transport policy', and is processed using the 'community method'. So, the

Commission first consults widely with Member States' governments and the industries, the unions and citizen's organisations concerned, before drawing up a draft proposal. This is then sent to both the Council of Ministers and the European Parliament who work on it, and may possibly amend it. The European Parliament analyses it in committee, while the Council of Ministers calls a meeting of Ministers of Transport from all the Member Countries. After their discussions, a decision is taken by majority vote. Of course some countries are larger than others and those with larger populations are given a few more votes in the Council than the smaller ones.

In case of a disagreement between Parliament and the Council there are internal rules to help them to reach a consensus. The final stage is that the new EU law is then incorporated into the national law of the Member States. This method of 'codecision' between Parliament and the Council has proved very effective in producing successful European policies.

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- But if European Union were to become a federal union, would it then have a true government?

- Yes, of course. If the EU became a federal union, the Commission certainly would fulfill that role, although it would not necessarily be called the 'European Government'. The Head of the Commission — whether known as its President, 'Prime-Minister', or Chancellor — would be appointed by the European Parliament. Politically, the Commission would be a reflection of the Parliament's political color.

At the moment, the Commission President is nominated by the Member States' governments, subject to the European Parliament's approval. Furthermore, the other Commissioners are also proposed by the Member States, although it is the President who shares out the jobs between them. The European Parliament then has to approve them en bloc.

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- Why would a European Union with a proper government function better?

- If the European Union had a government, it would automatically mean that it would function better. The 'better functioning' of the Union depends on many other improvements to the system. However, it would represent a large step forward.

In an EU organized as a federal union, the burden of decision-making lies implicitly with the citizen and not with the Member States' governments. In the present situation, in which the Member States nominate a Commission and the European Parliament gives its consent, it is claimed that the Commission is therefore double-legitimized by both the governments of the Member States and the European Parliament. This procedure corresponds to the federative approach: governments in the European Council and the representatives elected by the citizens in the European Parliament. But this double-legitimization is not truly democratic because the Parliament can only

say no. The choices made by the European citizens are reflected only in the European Parliament itself. The European political parties should have the capacity to make counter proposals.

If the EU were a federal union, the choices made by its citizens would also be reflected in the Commission whose President and members would be elected from within the Parliament or on the proposal of the European political parties, if the candidates are not members of the European Parliament.

- *What would be the exact consequences of a federal Europe for European citizens?*

- The general consequences of a federal European Union for its citizens cannot be foreseen by referring only to changes at the level of the Commission. Still, the changes mentioned above would be very positive. They would ensure that more power was delegated to the Commission in the areas that have direct consequences for the daily life of the citizens, and that the national governments

cannot be responsible for alone, such as unemployment, climate change, public health, or any other field.

- For a better understanding, could you give us a few examples, starting with the policy that makes Europe very visible: the regional policy.

- The regional policy probably affords the most visibility to the European Union as a community, and as a whole. It contains several programs that differ in terms of purpose, budget and the countries where they apply.

This policy is meant to create an equilibrium between the centre and the periphery. It supports the disadvantaged regions and helps them build the same level of infrastructure and technology as the more developed areas. Every time a bridge or a road is built as a part of the regional policy program, the EU funds a proportion of the project and the rest is provided by the region or state from its own budget. It is one of the fields in which the EU gets a lot of visibility.

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In a federal European Union, this would not change. The term 'regional policy' already implies the existence of regions able to identify their own needs, calculate the cost and present a convincing proposal to the European Commission. For example, there could be two small towns located in an area between European Union countries that need to make improvements to the bridge that connects them but do not have all the necessary funds. Such a local need would be very difficult to be brought to the attention of the national government. However in a society structured on several levels, the local community can easily identify the needs of its citizens, would have the power to mobilize and to solve the problem using federal resources in the best interest of its inhabitants.

- ***Would a federal Europe solve the problem of unemployment?***

- It is difficult to give a straight 'yes or no' answer in this case. European federalism is a movement, not a political party with an

electoral platform dealing with the problem of how to, create new jobs. This is the role of political parties.

But an important part of the European Commission's work is concerned with employment and social affairs. Its aim is to promote social dialogue at a European level, increase equality between men and women, and provide more and better jobs. To this end it has already proposed a 'European Employment Strategy' (EES) that became a component of the so-called 'Lisbon Strategy' whose aim is to make the EU a more competitive economy capable of economic growth with more and better jobs. The EES promotes some coordination at the European level, because, so far, the intergovernmental method proved that it is not effective enough. In a federal European Union, this kind of strategy would be encouraged and it would be the role of the European Government to take such legislative initiatives.

- Shall we take the example of education within a federal Europe?

- Within any regular federal state, issues like education and culture are often the responsibility of the regions aided by funds from the national governments.

In the case of the European Union, at the supra-national level there is already a department (called the 'directorate general') in charge of education though it does not interfere with or negatively influences the education policy of the Member States. Its main task at the supra-national level is to promote programs to help communities to learn about each other, in terms of languages, traditions, cultures, and in this way to develop a European cultural area.

If the European Union were organized as a federal union, this would not change. Such programs would continue to be promoted. One possible change might be that every region of Europe would be encouraged to promote an education system that addresses the specificities of its cultural diversity. But we must not forget that at present only the national governments have

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power to raise taxes. In a federal Europe, the supra-national, federal government would be financed by its own system of taxation.

- But if the EU were a federal union, would that mean that the European citizen would have to pay twice as much in taxes?

- No! The EU's budget today mainly comes from the Member States' contributions, and that means, in fact, from national taxes paid by their own citizens. The amount of each Member State's contribution is worked out according to a rather complicated formula.

If the European Union itself had the power to raise taxes, it would mean that all Member States' citizens would know exactly how much they had to pay to the European Government and how much would go to their national governments. For the man or woman in the street this would make everything very much clearer.

The power of taxation is therefore one of the most important elements that define the power of a state. If EU had

taxation power, then it could truly be considered a state, a federal one most probably.

- *What about health and consumer protection? Would that be changed in a federal European Union?*

- Even if the EU were a federal union, the chances are that legislation on health and consumer protection would be implemented in the same way as it is now. Once agreed by Parliament and the Council, laws in this field must be implemented by the national, regional and local governments. The role of the European Commission is to check that the laws are properly put into practice and respected. This is what happens now, so why would a federal Europe wish to change it?

- *And what about environment policy?*

- Basically the situation is the same as in the case of health and consumer protection. The European Commission initiates the environmental legislation and then checks if it

is implemented properly by the Member States.

- We have shortly discussed the issues of regional policy, employment, education, consumer protection and environment in order to better visualize the impact a federal European Union would have on its citizens. It seems to me that there would not be much impact at all. How would you comment on this?

- The fields that you have asked about are among those that most preoccupy European citizens. There would be no great changes in these and similar policy areas if European Union were to become federally organized because federalism is more concerned with identifying at which democratic level of government such decisions should be taken. Health policy is one example. Building a large new hospital would normally be a national or regional matter, but controlling the quality of medicines used in every EU country must be a European issue.

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The areas we discussed would not change much in procedure because they are already functioning quite close to the federalist principles of efficiency, democracy and transparency. Besides, these are fields in which the European Parliament has the power of co-decision.

As we saw, if the European Commission were to propose a draft law in the field of environmental policy, it would be subject to the joint decision of the European Parliament and the Council of (environmental) Ministers, both deciding by majority vote. However, while the European Parliament holds its debates in public and is therefore transparent, the Council of Ministers usually meets behind closed doors and lacks transparency.

- Yes, but how would the draft European Constitution have changed this current situation?

- Firstly, there would have been more policy areas in which co-decision between Parliament

and the Council would have been mandatory. Secondly, representatives of the civil society would have been more largely consulted in this decision-making process. Thirdly, the European Constitution would have improved transparency by obliging both the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers (when acting as co-legislator) to meet in public and it would have insisted on greater access to the documents of these two institutions.

- Which is the area in which the European Parliament has no power now, but would have if the EU were a federal union?

- Definitely foreign policy, security and home affairs. These are fields in which authority is in the hands of the Member States.

If the EU were a federal union, the European Parliament would have two chambers: the current Parliament as the Chamber of Representatives and the Council of Ministers would be the states' chamber or Senate. Decisions on EU external relations of

the European Union would need the support of both chambers.

- *Would have the draft European Constitution brought improvements in the area of foreign policy?*

- Very few, but they are significant changes given what a delicate issue it is. The European Constitution asserts that in some areas of freedom, security and justice, the European Parliament would have co-decision power.

Progressive steps in this field are difficult to predict because asking European states to give up their sovereignty over 'external relations' is a sensitive issue. Moreover, until the draft Constitutional Treaty is either ratified or replaced by something similar, developments in EU foreign policy will remain predominantly intergovernmental. However, a small step forward was already made with the creation of a department in the European Commission to deal with subjects of immigration and related issues. This newly created and small

department has the role of initiating legislation in coordination with the Member States. This constitutes a progression in the sense that the Member States have allowed themselves to share at least the legislation initiative with the European Commission.

But we must not forget one EU policy area where federalism already exists and has been particularly successful — namely, international trade. For example, in setting up the World Trade Organisation negociations were conducted by the Commission in consultation with a special committee of the Council of Ministers. On this matter, and on all related trade questions, the Council votes by qualified majority. This is a success story that points the way forward to a federal future.

-That's a very good not on which to end our interview for today. I would like to thank you for taking the time to explain to our young viewers the impact a federal European Union would have on the daily life of its citizens.

In the studio of ETVY after finishing work on the material:

- What do you think now about the impact of a federal organization of the European Union on citizens' daily life?

- I fully agree that what the honorific 'Head of Government' said today was interesting, but the description of the possible impact on the European policies changed my view a bit.

- What do you mean?

- A federal European Union will not bring a change in the policies themselves! It seems that the policies are good as an idea; the whole problem is in the complicated way of adopting them using a process that is not democratic and transparent enough. This is what a federal Europe would change!

- It amazes me that to change the way decisions are made, all it might need is just few small steps on some minor issues.

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- Minor issues? What do you mean 'minor'?

- Well, for example, I understand that it is very difficult for the Member States to share their sovereignty, but why not make the Council of Ministers, which represents the states anyway, into a second chamber of the European Parliament where it will also represent the states? It could take a different name and vote differently but more efficiently!

- Any other 'minor' things that you think about?

- Not exactly, but I wonder if with the foreign affairs issue, the impact of a European federal Union is even greater... .

- When did you schedule the next interview?

- It is in two days' time!

PART THREE
Imaginary Interview with the Foreign Affairs Minister of the European Union

The reporter and the cameraman from ETVY are now leaving the studio to meet the Foreign Affairs Minister of the European Union for an interview…

- This is the last interview in our documentary series on general and European federalism…. Did the first two interviews change your vision of the future of Europe?

- I have always thought of myself as pro-European; but now I realize that this is not enough. If I really want to give more shape to Europe I should be more engaged with the process of creating it!

- What exactly would you demand first?

- It's difficult to classify the needs of the European Union. But since we will have the interview with the Foreign Affairs Minister today, I would say that I would advocate for a European Union that has more influence on the world stage, that has the capacity to act in international crisis and that is an effective partner to the United States.

The imaginary interview with the Foreign Affairs Minister of the European Union …

- Your Excellency, thank you very much for allowing yourself to be interviewed for the 'Federal Europe Documentary' that ETVY is preparing for its young public. The first question I would like you to discuss concerns the reasons why European Union needed to have a High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy?

- Before the 1990s, the European Union used to have a Commissioner in charge of European external relations. Having a Foreign Affairs Minister for the European Union became

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imperative in the 1990s when the European Union's Member States showed themselves to be too divided to deal effectively with the conflicts in the Balkans.

- However, the European states have tried to work together for a defence and security policy since the creation of the European Union. The first attempt – the European Defence Community – ended up a failure in 1954 because the French National Assembly failed to ratify it, even though all the other national governments had done so. Later in the same year, an organization for security policy and defence cooperation, called the Western European Union, was created. It was a weak organization in regard to security and defense and it ceased activity in 2000.

- The collapse of communism in Eastern Europe in the late 1980s and the bloody conflict in ex-Yugoslavia that followed after, in the early 1990s, made the European Union Member States consider more seriously the

need for a stronger European foreign policy. This was one of the most important aspects of the Treaty of Amsterdam (1997), which contained provisions to create a position for someone at the European level to be in charge of European Foreign Affairs. This person was called the 'High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy'. It was clear that for the European Union to play a bigger role in international affairs, it needed a spokesperson authorized by the Member States to speak in the name of Europe. Slowly citizens would come to see this person as having a mandate in European foreign affairs. The position of High Representative was to exist in parallel with that of Commissioner for European External Relations.

The High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy was created to represent the European Union in different crisis situations (such as in Macedonia). The positive results proved that Europe can and should play a stronger role in foreign affairs. As a result, with every

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Treaty after Amsterdam (1997) the position of the High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy became more concrete, a process which culminated in the draft Constitutional Treaty (2004) that proposed to replace the High Representative with the Minister for Foreign Affairs who would also be one of the Vice-Presidents of the European Commission.

- What is the difference between the roles of a High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy and a European Foreign Affairs Minister?

- The difference in tasks is not very significant, but in terms of implication, the position of European Foreign Affairs Minister also as a vice-president of the European Commission underlines the future involvement of this institution in the European foreign affairs issue.

Both the High Representative and the European Foreign Affairs Minister were subject to the decisions of the Member

States. For the Foreign Affairs Minister to have a mandate, all the Member States have to agree by unanimity. In practice this means that the Foreign Affairs Ministers of the European Member States (France, Great Britain, Italy, etc) reunite monthly, and sometimes more often, to decide on a particular issue to be pursued by the High Representative on behalf of the European Union. But these decisions need for unanimity, and that presupposes that one role of the High Representative is to push for a consensus. In other words: no consensus, no decision, no action!

- Unfortunately, Member States' views can vary considerably and often no consensus can be reached. Yet, the draft Constitution proposed no change to the voting system in the Council of Foreign Ministers. It retained the unanimity vote, which meant that the Foreign Affairs Minister would not only continue to be dependent on the will of the Member

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States but that no effective decision might be possible at all.

- The question is delicate. On the one hand, the unanimity vote is sometimes justified by historical reasons. Some voices argue that it is not fair to ignore or over-rule the opinion of any of the Member States just for the sake of having a decision.

On the other hand, from a practical point of view, the size of the present Council might be the main obstacle. At the time of the Amsterdam Treaty, when the idea of a European foreign policy representative took shape, there were only 15 Member States in the European Union. To reach a consensus among 15 foreign affairs ministers was still plausible. But since then the EU has enlarged first to 25 Member States, and soon to 27 and possibly even more. Although not impossible, to reach a concensus among so many would require an enormous investment of time in negotiations among the Member States which could delay the European reaction to any urgent international crisis and

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could render EU foreign policy both inefficient and ineffective.

Furthermore, a consensus among so many national governments will be more difficult to acquire because almost every Member States traditionally has its own regional external policy.

- *What exctally do you mean?*

- For example, a conflict in Belarus would be of major concern for the Baltic States governments. If at the same time another conflict happens in East Timor that preoccupies the Portuguese government, but not the Baltic governments, EU action in both areas would still require a unanimous vote in the Council. This would eat up lots of time and energy in negotiations among the national governments and delay their response to the problems in Belarus and in East Timor. In practical terms, it would mean that people in the conflict countries would pay a high price while waiting for Europe to reach a decision.

The proposed title of Foreign Affairs Minster, to replace the 'High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy', would more accurately identify the person with his or her mandate. However, even with this innovation, the need for unanimity among the national governments remains problematic. Decisions taken by majority vote would be far more efficient and would increase Europe's effectiveness in dealing with international conflict areas.

- Would having a Foreign Affairs Minister bring Europe closer to being a federal state?

- The European Union is already an accomplished confederation. Having a Foreign Affairs Minister is like a metaphor or a symbol, but it does not mean that European Union is closer to the idea of being a state. Not even a federal one. It implies that there is a person at European level charged by the national governments with carrying out the general foreign policy of Europe. It

presupposes that when the United States or Russia, or China wants to discuss an issue of international politics, they have one person to whom they could address their concerns. Paraphrasing Kissinger's famous statement "if I want to speak to Europe whom shall I call?", now with an EU Foreign Minister there would be somebody to pick up the phone.

In order for the position of European Foreign Affairs Minister to be considered as a first step towards a federal European Union, other provisions would need practical implementation. For example, the Foreign Affairs Minister would also be one of the vice-presidents of the European Commission. But the European Commission is not a proper European Government. A minister without a government does not in itself make the European Union a federal state.

- If the EU were already a proper federal union, what would be the role of the foreign ministers of the European Member States?

- If the EU were a federal union, the Member States would still have their own foreign ministers. They would be the ministers of the federal units that make up the European federation. The difference would be that their mandate would be limited since their country deliberatively would have delegated some of its powers in foreign affairs to the European Foreign Affairs Minister. This assumes that another document be created at the European level that would clearly mention the division of tasks between the foreign affairs ministers of the Member States and the European Foreign Affairs Minister.

- Will the European Foreign Affairs Minister sit in the United Nations Security Council as a representative of Europe?

- If European Union wants the world to hear one clear voice from Europe in matters of international affairs, the European Foreign Affairs Minister should have a permanent seat on the Security Council of the United Nations.

The situation is somewhat complex. The United Nations Security Council has fifteen members of whom five are permanent members and have a veto power and ten have a rotating membership. The voting system within the Security Council is by majority vote (nine votes out of fifteen). The problem that rises at this point is that there are European states both among the five permanent members and among the non-permanent, rotating ones.

- The five permanent members in the Security Council of the United Nations are: China, France, Great Britain, the Russian Federation (as the official successor of the USSR) and the United States of America; Germany is also trying to become a permanent member. Two of the present permanent members of the United Nations Security Council – France and Great Britain – are also EU Member States.

- With the confederation as it is today, the European Union is not a federation. So, the

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European Foreign Affairs Minister cannot have a seat at the United Nations Security Council as the representative of Europe.

As a federal union, the EU would have legal personality. So, it would be nonsensical that in an international organization like the United Nations that represents the world states, Europe would be represented by the states ministers and not by the European Foreign Affairs Minister. In these circumstances, the European national governments will be compelled to adopt one single viewpoint on international issues.

- Here again the issue of the unanimity vote among the national governments becomes a problem.

- On the issue of Iraq, for example, a unanimous vote from all the five permanent members of the Security Council would have been necessary for military intervention to be legal. In our imaginary exercise in which European Union is a federal state, the EU representative at the United Nations

Security Council would first have to agree the European position with the EU national governments. Before going to New York where the Security Council meets, the European Foreign Affairs Minister would have to meet with the representatives of around 30 European governments to reach a common position on whether or not intervention in Iraq is necessary. Imagine the time that would take! But if majority voting were used the situation would be different. It would take far less time and would also enable the foreign affairs ministers of the European Union Member States to form a cohesive, timely opinion on whether or not to support intervention in Iraq.

- It seems that the success of European foreign policy would depend on the willingness of European Member States to meet the challenges facing the European Union and to confront them by means of common action. Individual states may act alone, too, but the challenges can be

better tackled by all the states acting together.

- Yes, indeed. Challenges like immigration, ethnic conflicts, climate change, consequences of globalization or the rising influence of terrorist networks are fought more effectively by states working together. Nowadays there are less and less cases in which people die because of traditional wars among states. Most of today's conflicts are due either to the collapse of the political regime within a country or to threats from non-state actors, such as terrorist groups and organized crime.

A European Union organized under a system of precise horizontal layers with a clear division of tasks among each layer, and all acting within a solidly constructed network could play a major role in tackling these issues.

- For a better understanding, I would suggest that you take the case of the ex-Yugoslavia. How would Europe have acted if

it had had a Foreign Affairs Minister at that time?

- This is a question that obliges me to speculate, but since we are doing an imaginary exercise… . I think that the situation would have been handled differently.

Although the European states were very divided on the conflict in Yugoslavia, the High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, once appointed, played an important role in decreasing the tensions. He was able to find a peaceful solution, or at least an arrangement that suited all the parts. This proved that even if the European Union lacked of an army, its influence in a conflict area could still be very high. However, one should admit that having the right person for the right position but without the necessary back up is not a very good solution either. That is the reason why a limited contingent of people serving as a kind of 'European army' is needed in order to facilitate interventions in crisis areas.

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- Staying in the same framework of the ex-Yugoslavia, how would the conflict have evolved if the EU were a federal union?

- Such a conflict would have less chance to take place within the European Union even as it is at present organized. In fact, preventing war between the Member States was the reason why the European Union was created!

There are several reasons why conflicts are less likely to occur within the boundaries of the Union and I will focus on just few of them: first, the European Union has started with a mechanism to control the industries of war by creating a High Authority over steel and coal production. Today, the Union is evolving into being a cultural community, or better said, a multicultural community. In this respect lots of programs are promoted for the individuals from different cultures to get to know each other and discover the beauty and richness of European cultural diversity. Furthermore, all the states that are members of the European Union are well-established democracies,

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which presuppose that they already share certain values that would help them avoid war between themselves. The European institutions were created both for states to work together for their own best interest, and also to solve the inconveniences among each other. For this purpose, the European Court of Justice was created; its function is very similar to the role of United States Federal Court in limiting states' sovereignty.

- As a parenthesis to our discussion, how does the European Court of Justice limit the sovereignty of Member States?

- As a concrete example of the way the European Court of Justice can limit the sovereignty of the European Member States: if the European Commission initiates draft legislation on waste as part of the environment policy, and it is adopted by both the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers, then it becomes a EU law (called a 'directive'). All the European Member States are required to implement it in within an

agreed period of time. If any state fails to do so, the European Commission (after some administrative steps to remind the states of their obligations) has the right to bring that state before the European Court of Justice.

- What would a federal European Union look like?

- As an overview, if the EU were a federal union, it would definitely have a government. This role would be undertaken by the European Commission, which would have the power to initiate legislation in all the fields specified in its Constitution; it would have a two-chamber Parliament formed by the actual Parliament and the Council of Ministers in which the decisions would be taken by majority vote, thus ensuring both the efficiency of the decision-making and the transparency of the discussions which would be open to the European citizens. The European Court of Justice, which already functions like a court of a federal state,

would also judge cases brought by the European citizens themselves.

The threat of European citizens fighting and killing one another in wars in this century is now a small, even non-existent possibility. The threats nowadays are greater than war itself and this is the area in which federalism could play an important role: by limiting the sovereignty of the states to act alone and by delegating their power to a supra-national level, the European Union strengthens its capacity to deal with today's challenging threats.

- What exactly are the internal and the external challenges that the European Union is subject to and against which it can fight better if it were organized as a federal union?

- The European Union is a complex machine. Even trying to identify and enumerate the internal and the external challenges is a challenge in itself!

Some of the internal challenges that European Union faces nowadays are: financial instability, unemployment, immigration, intolerance… . Some of the external challenges that the national states of the Member States of the European Union cannot fight alone are: the rising of threatening non-state actors such as terrorist networks, arms proliferation, climate change… .

The European Union has the capacity to make a difference and bring about positive change, but it lacks the power to do so. An EU organized as a federal union would have far more strength in this regard and be able to exercise it democratically.

- Your Excellency, thank you very much for this interesting insight into European foreign affairs! Thank you for your envisioning exercise!

On the way back to the studio of the European Television for Youth:

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- I cannot quite believe that we are at the end of our documentary series.

- When shall the material be ready for the young viewers?

- In one month. So we have exactly one month to work on it and then put it on ETVY.

- Why did you want to make this documentary on European federalism? It was interesting, but why not a documentary on the European Union of Nation States?

- Well, first because the European Union is a complex entity, but even if you subtract one of the elements composing that complexity, you still cannot ignore the rest; you are simply taking a different angle of analysis. Second, why not focus on the political project of the European Union that has been evolving more slowly than the economic project?

- So you took the initiative of doing this material yourself?

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- Indeed, the initiative I took myself, but then I discussed it with some others in our department at the ETVY; they thought that it was a good idea and here we are nearing the end of it.

- What made you think that the European youth might be interested in this topic?

- Although most of the European youth have many other activities besides school and although politics may not be a real part of these activities, I strongly believe that if the world of politics was presented to them in its usual elegant clothing and complicated discourse, it would make some people ignore the topic entirely and go on with the other activities that seem more friendly.

- How much did you learn from these interviews?

- More than I could imagine! You know what? I wish we could start this over again.

- Me, too. Still you must admit that it was quite a lot of work.

- What about you? How much do you think you learned from these interviews?

- A lot! The part I enjoyed the most was the envisioning exercise. To take a moment and try to imagine… . What does your Europe look like in your imagination?

- The Europe I envision? I dream of a strong Europe grounded on toleration of cultural diversity, that acts with respect towards the older generation and with concern for the future one; that loves its youth!

Postscript

Florina-Laura Neculai has chosen a very original way to present to a younger generation the sense and the importance of European federalism. Her interviews give an added dynamism to a subject, which can be didactic, even dull: past, current and future processes in the European Union. A simple, accurate and lively description of the growing federative process within the EU has long been needed. In this respect, it is useful to recall the fundamental values, principles and experiences of the federative communities. The ignorance of the real nature of federation is astonishing especially in the countries with a centralized tradition. This was shown by the recent debates over the ratification of the European Constitution in the Netherlands: one of the arguments was that the constitutional treaty threatens the existence of the Dutch nation. On the contrary, a Federal Union not only preserves and guarantees but also favours the identity

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and autonomy of its members. The best evidence of this is the experience of the Swiss federal state, which has preserved the autonomy of its Cantons over the centuries. As the interviews show, one of the main federative principles is the balance between autonomy and participation in the decision-making as well as between the Union and its various members.

There are two things I would like to add to Florina-Laura Neculai's presentation. This first concerns the relationship between culture and federalism on the one hand and basic principles and values in Europe. The second is to anticipate future developments in relation to high technology. Contrary to nation building, or community building in the past, which were based on domination, European Federation is founded on the free and voluntary association of sovereign states. It is the recognition of all human beings as well as values such as liberty, democracy and human rights. Another important element of the foundation of the

European Federation is the European common and diversified culture. Diversity, which implies a common ground and common values, corresponds to the spirit and nature of federalism. It is not surprising that the European Constitution expressed this need by adopting as its motto "united in its diversity". This reflects the Swiss motto "union dans la diversité". Without mentioning federalism or the federal way in which the Union shall exercise its competences, the Constitution adopted the general motto of federalism, in Article IV-1 on symbols of the Union.

It is significant to remember that Denis de Rougemont added two important dimensions to the definition of the principles and virtues of federalism: the principle of subsidiarity and the idea of regions within the framework of the European federation. For the future of the European Union, it is important to stress that the federative approach corresponds, thanks to its flexible and creative formulae, to the extraordinary

technological revolution and to the massive use of computers and different means of communication. As a result of this technological revolution, it is possible to manage the complex reality of differently organised but advanced societies. Based on different strata, Europe embraces integration from the smallest units, such as municipalities, to bigger and more complex units such as regions and states and culminates in an interactive federal framework. As early as the 1980s, Denis de Rougemont had the foresight to state that federalism is based on complexity and involves regions and computers.

Today, we know that the internet and other means of communication have influenced and will continue to influence our democratic and federal systems. Indeed, it seems that younger people are more inclined to consult the internet than to read newspapers. Internet and television will probably have a growing impact on our society and the way in which it will function

in the future.

For different reasons, one of the most important needs now, and in the future, is education. For example, history, geography and environment should be taught in a broader European spirit. Civic education should be taught from elementary schools to universities. In fact, it is obvious that, today, one of the main preoccupations of the European Union is to develop contacts and dialogues with citizens and their associations. At the same time, a new method, introducing science and scientific reasoning, is being applied in primary schools. Two Nobel Physics Laureats, Leo Lederman and Georges Charpak have created a new approach to science through experiments. In this way, children learn how to formulate hypotheses and to deliver proofs. As a result children develop a sense of working in teams, of collective discussion and dialogues based on arguments and facts. As has been frequently observed, this is probably not only a real revolution in

traditional education but it also teaches democracy based on the principle of mutual recognition and respect. It is hoped that this approach will help to diminish violence and conflicts in schools and consequently in society. It is especially important for the multiple ethnic, religious and linguistic elements, which characterise European societies.

To me, it is obvious that education, together with values and principles, is the foundation of the quest for new federalism in Europe. I am convinced that Florina-Laura Neculai's next book will focus on these questions, which are fundamental to the federal future of Europe.

Prof. Dusan Sidjanski

FEEDBACK FORM

Now that you have read the book and you know its content, you may have positive and/or negative comments to make, questions to ask and above all you may want to add to it! In view of a future and improved second edition of this text that will not be subject to project constraints please feel free to send your comments to
bookonfederalism@yahoo.com

This book is also available on the internet from where it can be downloaded free of charge. It can also be found in several different languages on the website of the Union of European Federalists at
www.federaleurope.org

I am looking very forward to your feedback!

Florina-Laura NECULAI