The History of Europe and its constituent Countries: considerations in favour of the new Europe

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Contents

Abstract

This article analyses the process of the development of Europe. The discussion is divided into three parts. First, the idea of a European identity with its humanizing, civilizing and Christian dimensions; we will consider how this served as the original foundation for a European identity. The second part looks into the diverse attempts to create a united Europe based on efforts to overcome models which in their turn sprang from nationalist perspectives. Finally, it examines the idea of a European interculturism whose foundation is a commitment to ethics and education.

1. The Meaning of "Europeanness"

If a quantitive analysis were made of the most frequently reiterated concepts of the last 100 years, undoubtedly one of the most used would be the term *Europe*; a geopolitical, cultural and economic grouping of 10.5 million square km, 46 countries and over 250 regions with a long and extensive historical protagonism highly relevant in the present day. The so-called Old Continent forms an essential and inherent part of the universal history of culture and to some extent has dictated its rhythm and tempo. It has been one of its great inspirations and driving forces. Without Europe, this cultural progression would be difficult to understand. This development, to a greater or lesser degree, is manifestly impregnated with Europeanness.

But … what exactly do we understand by "Europe"? It has been said, "There are few subjects so controversial as that of Europe. This is hardly surprising, since there are almost as many interpretations of what Europe was, is, and should be, as there are interests arising among those who debate such matters." (Neave 1987, 11). This text will demonstrate that defining Europe is not an easy task. Indeed, we have before us a polysemous concept, the fruit of a long, intense and multicultural history. A concept which, looking at its multiform, uneven past shows as its common denominator a civilized and open spirit. One could say that in Europe no outstanding phenomenon exists that has not been manifest to a greater or lesser degree in all its peoples and cultures. The Greek *Paideia*, the Roman *Humanitas,* the Christian ideal, the Renaissance, Rationalism, the Enlightenment and Secularism, Liberalism, Modernism etc are and have been supranational cultural categories born out of the old continent, which have spread openly and extensively, shaping a great part of the evolution of universal culture.

Although this of itself is already taking the form of a first approximation to defining what Europe is, still it is difficult to define the characteristics of that civilizing identity. To resort to nominal symbology, derived from its designated Greek name, is a poetical device which contributes very little. Initially, there exist several mythological figures that allude to the name. In *Teogonia*, Hesiod tells us that Europe (Ευροπη: beautiful woman with large eyes) is the daughter of Oceanus and Thetis; Homer - in the *Iliad* XIV – considers her to be the daughter of Phoenix; and Ovid – in his Metamorphosis II – gives what is perhaps the most widely accepted account. He states that Europa was the daughter of Agenor, king of Tyre, or of Phoenix, king of Phoenecia. Her peerless beauty attracted the attention of Zeus, who, disguised as a bull, abducted her and carried her off to Crete. From their union, Minos, Sarpedon and Radamanto were born. After her death, she was venerated as Europa-Astarte. This myth, of indisputable pre Indo-European origin, has come down to us via the Greek writers who saw in the human union with the bull the symbolic representation of strength

and fertility. Thus, Europe, through the Mycenean substratum, would signify fecundity, wealth and abundance (Pérez-Bustamante 1995, 11; Ruiz Pérez 1998, 26-27; Everett-Heath 2000, XIII).

We do not really know when our continent was first given the name Europe, although Herodotus, five centuries before Christ in *Histories VII,* speaks of an Asian origin for the term. Subsequent authors write that "Europe" referred to the non-Asian part of the Greek world. Eurypides states that Europe is the land of the Greeks as opposed to Asia, which he considered to be the land of the Trojans. For Alexander and his successors, it signified all the lands lying to the West of the Bosphorous. The same was understood by the Romans, and by Isidore of Seville. With Charlemagne, the term "father of Europe" was coined, symbolising the idea of empire. After his death and the division of his kingdom, the term Europe fell into disuse and was scarcely used. With the advent of universities in the XII and XIII centuries, it returned and became commonplace. Europe was the term which unified the nations of students attending the official centres of learning in search of science and academic qualifications.

Throughout all these developments, the idea of Europe has represented much more than a diffuse geographic entity; it has been above all a cultural entity substantiated by two concepts which markedly define the development of Western civilization: i.e. the concept of man – and more concretely the human person – and the idea of liberty in its highest sense, that is to say as a regulating ethical norm of life, of its rights and responsibilities, of good and justice, of order and authority. These are concepts which, in their continual reiteration, have made up the personality and this most genuine feature of the European identity. "One need only go out from Europe in any direction," it has been written, "to feel the reality of its cultural identity" (Aldevert 2000, 34; Durosselle 1990, 36).

2. Foundations of Europeanness

The construction of this humanist identity has not been an easy task. It has been gestated through a long and extensive historical process with the intervention of a rich and varied multiplicity of factors, rhythms and circumstances which, in a desire for synthesis, can be reduced to four foundations which have given form and sense to the concept of Europe: Greek culture, Roman jurisprudence, Christianity, and the political legacy of the Germanic peoples (Martín Ramirez 1969, 181-182). With the first, Europe succeeded in structuring the field of human rationality, especially with logic, metaphysics and Aristotlean natural philosophy; these are classifications which up to the enlightened modernity of the XVII and XVIII Centuries, greatly influenced the epistemological, aesthetic, scientific and political basis of European society. With Rome, the situation was different. Aside from what it had absorbed from Greece – a not inconsiderable amount – Rome bequeathed to Europe the virtue and strength of jurisprudence. Roman Law was the basis of a territorial, social and civil administration which would remain stable well into modern times. With Christianity, Europe found the missing link, which had eluded both Greeks and Romans, enabling them to complete the jigsaw of human nature: the ontological equality of man; something which granted mankind a unique dignity, a divine origin and a common fate: the reunion with an eternal Creator-God through which the human condition has become an absolute yet intangible value (Poupard 1992, 253). Finally, the gestation of the European personality was influenced by the political legacy of the Germanic peoples who contributed operational solutions to civic coexistence, creating an equilibrium between society and power.

All these factors gradually gave form to a progressive idea of Europeanness profoundly influenced by a humanistic, Christian, conciliating disposition which, throughout its history, has manifested one common denominator: its civilizing ideal. This is a *desideratum* which, up to the XV Century found its practical fulfilment in two currents of special transcendence: the idea of empire, and the intercultural stance of the early middle ages with the appearance on the scene of the Moslem and Jewish civilizations. In the first case, it was a matter of encouraging an authoritarian model which would fuse together what is particular and specific in the search for a superior and universal model of politics. The *Pax Augusta,* or *Pax Romana* was its first exponent. It was a model which, further explanations aside, for many centuries constituted the most important political and cultural expression of the ideals of Europeanness. After the fall of the Western Roman empire, in the year 476 A.D. Byzantium became the inheritor of Rome, but its influence was limited to the Eastern Mediterranean. In the West, the imperial institution and the Church (first in the year 800 with Charlemagne and later with the Holy Roman-German Empire from the X Century on) attempted to reconstitute a broad political unity, which it achieved only partially. In the East, the imperial structure disappeared with the conquest of Constantinople by Ottoman Turks in the year 1453 (Ruiz Pérez 1998, 34ff.).

Together with this political ideal, the idea of Europeanness was successfully channelled through the intercultural medium accentuated by the economic, social and intellectual renaissance of the XII and XIII Centuries. During this period, the rising number of commercial travellers, contact with other cultures – especially Asiatic – and the amazing discovery of Greco-Arabic science produced a more secular, humanistic, autonomous and existential world view which encouraged intercultural

exchange as a sign of the new era. One of the precedents for this idea had already appeared in the XII Century with Pedro Abelardo. The Parisian schoolmaster, in his *Dialogue between a Philosopher, a Jew and a Christian,* proposed a rational approach to the Jewish culture, sustaining that access to ultimate truths could be had via a process of reasoning. The most complete intercultural model of the late middle ages is represented in *The Gentile and the Three Wise Men* (1272) written by the Majorcan, Raimundo Lulio. This work is one of the most original productions of late medieval pedagogical thought and is one of the most fundamental precedents of intercultural civilization in the history of culture. Lulio, aware of the tremendous problems the crusades entailed for Europe, rejected the conqueror ethic, opting for the civilizing and pedagogic values of inter-religious dialogue. His work is, at the very least, formative and novel: it involves the portrayal of true religion to a gentile through the dialogue between a Jew, a Moslem and a Christian. His virtue lies above all in his method: dialogue supported by reason and respect. The text ends without indicating which religion the gentile considers to be the true one, concluding with three important suggestions: respect for the strength of diversity, the humility to develop from this foundation with an appreciation of a rational conscience, and the search for a universal ethical ideal in the faith that all men share a common nature.

3. Nationalism and Multiculturalism in Modern Times

With the advent of new philosophies such as Humanism, Rationalism, Empiricism …., the appearance of the modern state, the discovery of the Americas and the fratricidal wars among religions, Europe would develop along the lines of different civilizing models where the concept of an imperial, Christian civilization would begin to fall from favour in the face of a fragmented Europe where the idea of a secular and omnipresent nation-state begins to take form.

Several factors influenced the gestation of this new order. Foremost among these is the mark left by renaissance humanism which involved Man becoming aware of his being a protagonist in history. It involved the reaffirmation of his creative capacity and individuality; in short, his freedom and responsibility for the unfolding of his fate. This notion would take shape within the framework of two anthropological variants which by virtue of their transcendence and significance, would make an indelible mark upon a great part of the development of European culture: the first would sustain that human freedom could materialize exclusively in man; the second, which also affirms the autonomy of freedom and the sovereignty of the will, but firmly states that the human will grew and reached its maximum expression when inspired by the religious and transcendental dimension of man. Both positions – mixed with conflicting political models – brought about the excision of European religious unity on two extremely belligerent fronts: the Protestant with its anthropocentric view, and the catholic, Theo-centrically inspired. This breach would undermine precisely the aspect of Europe upon which the unity of the empire had been based: religion.

Parallel to this question arises another factor of considerable transcendence: the birth of the so-called modern State. With the new times, religious, moral and political unity, incarnated in the idea of empire, would disintegrate in a multiform panorama of nation states informed by mainly secular and economic criteria which would have as their principal razon d'être a differentiated and singular geopolitical affirmation. This process is not unquestionably uniform, for it has distinct profiles and variants, although the majority of these converge in a new political category considered to be an absolute: the State. Symbolically, this concept will acquire its theoretical nationalisation papers in 1513. At this time, Machiavelli published his famous work *The Prince*, where he clearly separated the political sphere from the religious, prescribing a new world order characterised by its autonomy and capacity to govern. He would name this new demiurge *Stato.* Machiavelli's idea would be strengthened in 1576 with Jean Bodin's publication of his *The Seven Books of the Republic.* In this work, the author not only sublimates the concept of absolute sovereignty in *The Prince*, but also states that it is not subordinate to any other power, be it spiritual or temporal. With this proposition, Bodin not only sanctioned the absolute power of the monarchy, but also took as now ended a millennium-old political tradition: the dependence of political power on spiritual power. This political power would from now on base its razon d'être on the market economy as a foundation for the new order.

The consequence of these propositions was the appearance of European political organization incarnate in the figure of a national, territorial and Unitarian State, rooted in absolutist or contractual models. The 30 years' war between 1618 and 1648, and the Westphalia Treaties which brought about its end, consecrated the territorial state and reduced the traditional figures of papacy and empire to symbolic entities lacking any real power. Thus, the geopolitical image of Europe ended up transformed. Portugal, France, Spain, England, Denmark, Sweden and Holland were constituted as territorial States between the XV and XVII Centuries. This form of territorial state even spread to the East with the coronation of Ivan IV "The Terrible" as Czar of Russia. This process, although extensive, was not fully complete: in Europe, medieval structures such as the Hapsburg Empire in Germany, the Italian republics and principalities and the peculiar Polish federal monarchy continued to exist. Even King Charles I of Spain wanted to revitalize the idea of a Christian empire, but failed in the attempt (Medina 2000, 3).

With the new geopolitical order, the territorial state guaranteed peace and security within its frontiers; but on the other hand, the division of Europe into territorial States was a debilitating factor and a source of discord in the face of aggression from the exterior. Growing insecurity followed from the constant threat posed by Turkish armies, who on two occasions came close to conquering Vienna, advancing towards the heart of Western Europe. In the face of this situation of instability and danger, some thinkers and statesmen felt the need to overcome the emerging territorial division of Europe via the constitution of a form of association between the territorial states. One of the first precedents can be seen in the late middle Ages in the work of Pierre Dubois (1250-1320), *De Recuperatione Terrae Sanctae* (1306). Here, for the first time we see proposed a political structure for Europe distinct from the idea of empire and closer to models which would later be called federalist. Dubois did not believe in a universal monarchy; he preferred an egalitarian federation of nations which he called a "Christian contractual republic". The new Europe would be governed by a council of Christian princes, aided by three prudent laymen and three wise clergymen who would resolve any differences. In the XV Century (1468), Jorge Podiebrad, king of Poland (1420-1470), with the Italian gentleman and adventurer Antonio Marini as adviser, proposed a grand congress of European states under the presidency of the Pope and the Emperor, in order to coordinate a defence against the Turkish threat. This entailed the formation of a European league bound by a treaty of non-aggression, which would be made up of the princes of Borgonia, Venice, Poland, Hungary and Bavaria. The formation of a diet or European parliament, a court of justice and a common army was discussed here.

The idea of a supranational union as a means towards territorial security percolated through to some theorists of the new Europe as they observed how both national and religious wars tore Europe apart and reduced Europeanness to a sleeping entelechy. In 1623, Aymeric Crucé (1575-1648), priest and mathematician, published his *Nouveau Cynee*, a treatise on the means for, and possibilities of, establishing general peace and freedom of commerce all over the world. Crucé was aware that the many religious and territorial conflicts in the new Europe could only be vanquished by economic stability and a political dialogue which could overcome national interests. To this end, he proposed the creation of a league of states structured around a permanent senate of ambassadors and an assembly of princes which would meet in the presence of the Pope, periodically or in the case of conflict. In order to augment the effectivity of his project, he proposed the free circulation of people and goods, a common currency, the unification of weights and measures and a European capital, which would be Venice.

A few years later, Crucé's idea was taken up by other theoreticians who defended, with some minor reservations, the same ideal of a supranational Europe. Special relevance is given to the figure of Maximillian of Bethume, Duke of Sully (1559-1661) for his prescience. In his *Memoirs*, he designed a European union of fifteen states, composed of sixteen monarchies: Spain, France Denmark, Sweden, Great Britain, Lombardy; five elective monarchies: that of the Emperor, the papacy, Poland, Hungary and Bohemia; and four republics: Venice, Switzerland, Bulgaria and Italy. In this Europe, three religions would coexist in mutual tolerance: the Catholic, the Lutheran and the Calvinist. This would be presided over by a "High Christian Council of Europe", aided by a permanent senate of sixty members (four from each state) and a common army.

Towards the end of the XVII and beginning of the XVIII Centuries, there arose new reflections and studies with strong convictions and diverse readings, that established federalism as the political basis for Europeanness. Among others, we should note the *Essay on the Present and Future of Peace in Europe for the Establishnent of a European Parliament of States*, published in 1693 by William Penn (1644-1718). A religious non-conformist from Oxford, founder and first governor of Pennsylvania (North America), who, from the starting point of a frontal attack on emergent nationalism, ideated a Europe based on representation and political economy. These ideas would also be defended by the Frenchman Charles Irénée Castell (1658-1743), on the publication of *Projet pour rendre la paix perpétuetlle en Europe*. In this project, he defended a united Europe composed of 22 member states – these nations would be Christian, with the possibility of affiliation open to Moslems. A house of representatives would exist, an army would be raised in case of necessity, and a capital city established in Utrecht, a "free, peaceful, healthy, industrious and tolerant" city.

4. The Idea of Europe in XIX and XX Centuries

All these supranational and integrating alternatives, despite their commendable nature, did not transcend the plane of political reality. Moreover, after the French Revolution of 1789, we can assert that the national State imposed itself overwhelmingly, being one of the characteristic features of contemporaneity. In the XIX and early years of the XX Century, there arose in Western Europe new political entities such as Belgium (1830), Italy and Germany (1870), Norway (1907), and in Eastern Europe Greece (1830), and, later, Serbia, Montenegro, Rumania, Bulgaria and Albania between 1877 and 1913. If any vestige of the empire remained, the first World War saw to the end of it; as a consequence, new state entities arose in Central and Eastern Europe: Austria, Czechoslovakia, Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxemburg and Poland. This process of the

creation of states by secession would continue on after the second World War (Malta, Cyprus), and after the disintegration of the Soviet block, (the break up of the U.S.S.R.), of Czechoslovakia and of Yugoslavia. In short, the idea of the nation-state not only did not disappear with contemporaneity, but it has asserted itself as a form of political and cultural existence within the greater framework we call Europe.

The question that must be asked is, "Why, in the midst of all this nationalistic and fragmented evolution, has Europe maintained latent the idea of a common or supranational Europe since the XV and XVI Centuries?" The answers may be many, but perhaps only one would be truly satisfactory: the persistence of Europeanness; a cultural ethos that has strongly impregnated the individual and collective consciousness of its peoples, conferring upon them a feeling of belonging to a superior reality called Europe. This is a feeling which, if in reality has not been made politically effective, can be said to have been, to a greater or lesser degree, present as the irrepressible dream of Europeanness.

It is true that this dream has overwhelmingly manifested itself in the form of theoretical arguments or disastrous military conflicts. From the end of the XVIII Century, from the other side of the Atlantic, an alternative model of political organization was presenting itself to Europeans: the federal model of the United States of America. The federal constitution of this country recognised the sovereignty of each member state, but established commonly held institutions; the Presidency and Congress, which could establish a common army and even a currency. In 1814, the Count of Sant Simon (1760-1825), with the help of his secretary Agustín Thierry, following the American blueprint, published a seventy-page paper entitled *On the Reorganizatioin of European Society*. The aim was to create a federal Europe in order to avoid a disastrous repetition of the Napoleonic wars. He formulated the idea of free trade as a guarantee of economic progress and stability, along with a European Parliament with an elected prime-minister, and a king of Europe, who would be English. In 1834 in Berne, Guiseppe Mazzini founded the "Young Europe" movement in order to bring about a free and united Europe in conjunction with the revolutionary movements of the distinct European nations. In 1843, Victor Hugo prophesised: "The day will come when we will see the emergence of two monolithic blocks: the United States of America and the United States of Europe, one facing the other, hands outstretched across the sea, exchanging their produce, their products, their commerce, their industry …". Such wishes seldom saw the light of day. In 1860, a commercial treaty was signed between England and France, a treaty which should have served as a model for other countries and opened the way to a single Latin monetary union. The treaty was in force, albeit with some ups and downs, until 1927, and whose member states included Greece, Switzerland, Belgium and Italy.

All these good intentions remained in the realm of wishful thinking, unable to impede either the meteoric rise of nationalistic movements or an escalation of the arms race which culminated in the First World War. In consequence, there was a head on clash with the political and economic viability of nationalism, and at the same time, the flame of European federalism was rekindled. France, in this instance, was on the verge of taking a leading role. Joseph Caillaux, a minister in several successive governments, published two distinct works: *My Prisons* (1920) and *Quo vadis France, Quo Vadis Europe* (1922). Here, he defends a united Europe based on economic and financial solidarity and on free trade. Great Britain would be excluded from this, as it already formed part of a commonwealth covering another part of the planet. The idea of a reconciliation and unification was given wings by Count Coudenhove-Kalergi, an Austro-Hungarian aristocrat, who in 1923 founded the Pan-European Movement in Vienna. His philosophy can be summed up in two words: "reunification and *écroulement*". In 1925, Edouard Herriot stated before the French Assembly: "My greatest wish is to witness the birth of the United States of Europe", and in 1926, he took part in the founding conference of the Pan-European Congress in Vienna which was attended by worthies such as Aristide Briand, Leon Blum, Thomas Mann, Paul Claudel, Jules Romains, Sigmund Freud et al. In 1930, Aristide Briand rekindled the flame of pan-Europeanism with his memorandum to the Society of Nations where he suggested the formation of an assembly of representatives of all governments with an executive organ and a permanent secretary. His project was a frontal attack on nationalism and was rejected by all with the sole exception of Bulgaria and Yugoslavia. The 1930's saw the rebirth of the idea in the magazine *Etats-Unis d'Europe,* and in 1939, when the Second World War became a reality, Coudenhove-Kalergi published the work *Europe United*. In short, there had been many good intentions and projects, but the new world order of 1945 would make possible the realization of the ancient myth of a united Europe. Nationalisms entered a phase of crisis.

5. The Birth of the European Union

In reality, the impulse for the creation of the European Communities came from the U.S.A., as with all impulses towards integration after the Second World War. Following the Potsdam Conference of 1945, President Harry Truman came to the conclusion that the greatest challenge to the West was that of containing Soviet expansionism and of making western Europe a solid and non-exclusive

entity; a Europe which would once and for all bring an end to atavistic nationalisms and would find in its own integration, its true razon d'être. (Rodriguez Carrajo 1996, 19f.).

To this end, the Americans initially counted on the integrating impulse of the United Nations, in whose founding charter it was proclaimed:

"We the peoples of the United Nations determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind, and to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small, and to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained, and to promote social progress and better standards of life within the framework of greater freedom, and for these ends to practice tolerance and peaceful coexistence with one another as good neighbours, and to unite our strength to maintain international peace and security, and to ensure, by the acceptance of principles and the institution of methods, that armed force shall not be used, save in the common interest, and to employ an international mechanism for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples. We have resolved to combine our efforts to accomplish these aims. Accordingly, our respective Governments, through representatives assembled in the city of San Francisco, who have exhibited their full powers found to be in good and due form, have agreed to the present Charter of the United Nations and do hereby establish an international organization to be known as the United Nations."

No less important in this task was the inestimable aid of Britain and especially of Winston Churchill who, in collaboration with Truman, pushed through the general endorsement of the *Parliamentary European Union*, and would demand in 1947 with the convening of the first European Parliament "the immediate establishment of a United States of Europe and the establishment of an emergency court for the elaboration of a federal European constitution" (Schneider 1963, 33). After the Hague Conference of 1948, this petition would culminate in the creation of a European Movement, which, the following year would result in the creation of the European Council (Medina 2000, 6), founded with the clear aim of healing the wounds of the second World War. In its statutes, it is stated: "The aim of the Council of Europe is to achieve a greater unity between its members for the purpose of safeguarding and fomenting the ideals and principles which are their common heritage and facilitating their economic and social progress, pursuing a common course of action in the fields of economy, society, culture, science, law and administration, as well as safeguarding and developing the rights of man and fundamental liberties."

Parallel to this idea, general opinion was looking ever more favourably on the concept of European integration with a view to the development of a balanced, supranational economy with mutual solidarity among its participants. Upon these foundations would rest all posterior initiatives of the new Europe. In this aspect, the first milestone was reached on May 9, 1950 with the so-called "Schumann Declaration" (drawn up in collaboration with Monet). This was an attempt to integrate under a single authority, also open to other European countries, all French and German coal and steel production. This idea would have its symbolic continuation on April 18 1951, when Belgium, Holland, Luxembourg, France, Italy and the Federal Republic of Germany signed the "Paris Treaty" by means of which the "European Community of Coal and Steel" was constituted and which came into effect on July 23 of the following year.

With this economic idea, Europe was taking a protectionist stance in the face of the power of the United States. It was a form of national consolidation within the new European space. Within this framework, there soon arose new ways to broaden and deepen relations in a more united Europe. The "Mesina Conference" addressed precisely this when, in 1956, it proposed a study of possible new forms of European integration and union. To this end, the "Spaak Committee" was set up. (It was presided over by the Belgian Foreign Minister of the same name.) As a result of the Spaak Committee's report, the minimum conditions were established for the creation of the "European Community of Atomic Energy", and the "European Economic Community". This double idea (atomic energy / economy) would soon mature to become the great motor of the new Europe. Specifically, on March 25, 1957, the "Treaty of Rome" was signed. The six signatories of the "Paris Treaty", Belgium, Holland, Luxembourg, France, Italy and the Federal Republic of Germany signed agreements by which the "European Community of Atomic Energy", and the "European Economic Community" were constituted. These treaties came into force on January 1 1958, making EURATOM and the EEC a reality.

From here on, the European Economic Community was in every way a supranational entity whose attention was focussed on two fundamental aspects of the new order: atomic energy and the supranational economy. Nowadays, almost fifty years later, the European Union has twenty-seven member states: Belgium, Holland, Luxembourg, France, Italy, Germany, Denmark, Ireland, the United Kingdom, Greece, Spain, Portugal, Austria, Finland and Sweden. On April 16 2003, the European Parliament approved the adhesion of ten new countries to the European Union: Czech Republic, Estonia, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Malta, Poland, Slovenia and Slovakia. From January of 2007 there is two new States members: Bulgaria and Romania. This was a significant expansion and a great step forward in a dynamic model of Europe. A Constitution signed in Rome

on October 29 2004 by the heads of state and government of all the member nations would guarantee this progress after its ratification and coming into effect in November 2006.

6. Europeanness as a Key to Convergence

What has happened to the European Constitution after the "No" of France and Holland? Has the condition of Europeans been lost along with its most authentic characteristic, Europeanness? The answer is a rotund no. The new Europe can not be reduced to what sociologists call a political, media and economic "technosystem" or "technostructure", in which citizens give their uncritical assent with disconcerting passivity to the coordinated decisions of others. For this reason, the "No" vote is of profound significance and is much more than a passing obstacle to the future of the European Constitution. Above all, it is a crisis of integration which brings into sharp relief the "so-called" Welfare State. In short, it is overwhelmingly a form of self-protection; a demand for change; a belligerent response to a political action which has in practice attempted to make of Europeanness a construct without the authentic nucleus of its history: the humanistic, personal, transcendental and civilizing dimension which has presided over its spirit.

A return to a proper consideration of Europe is absolutely essential. This necessity cannot fall back into the frustrating paradigms of the statist, economistic and utilitarian omnipresence that has governed it thus far. To consolidate and reinforce it we must once more turn our attention to education (Novoa, Lawn 2002, 23). Needless to say, the idea is not new. Towards the end of the sixties, Jean Monnet had already stated, "*if we had to start all over again, I would start with education.*". The decade of the seventies saw some timid moves in this direction. The eighties continued this, with noteworthy effort and investment. The XXI Century has evaluated all this and found it to be wanting. Its content has been principally practical and social (Valle et al. 2003, 18). It initially arose in the Janne and Andonio reports (1973, 1985 respectively), and later took the form of multiple programmes centred mainly on a greater cultural, technological and scientific interchange between the States, in the defence of multiculturalism, the cultivation of language learning, technical and professional exchange, the reverential cult to physical, psychical and gender non-discrimination, equal opportunities, attention to immigration, an ongoing learning process, a great respect for the educative sovereignty of the States, etc (Etxeberría, 2000, 19ff.; Valle 2006, 410ff.). These are important areas where, undoubtedly, we have taken great steps forward, although there is still a long road ahead. This shortfall can be explained in part by the lack of binding policies to the resulting initiatives, their legal weakness, the more than obvious ethnocentricity of the States and especially because the educational proposals that have promoted a European identity have been given a markedly sociological, functional, secular und utilitarian focus which has greatly burdened the better of these intentions.

There is no easy solution, all the more since no clear and homogeneous idea of what Europe should be exists, but only a dynamic plurality of ideas and rhythms which aspire to finding common ground within this framework of diversity (Prats, Raventos 2005, 27f.). This circumstance, far from being an obstacle, is its greatest virtue since it inherently affirms the feeling of belonging to that higher order spiritual community that is Europe. New sensibilities demand the construction of this order using not only quantitive, but also, to a greater degree, qualitative parameters. It is all about working towards a common identity, which, from the point of view of human diversity (both individual and collective), should have as the basis and intangible beginning of the old and yet new European identity mankind and its individual, social and transcendent rights. One might argue that this challenge is an unachievable utopia, unattainable when one's argument is based on values blurred and numbed by the prevailing omnipresence of relativism, statism and individualism. However, we do not base our argument on such values; we would be mistaken. Europeanness is a quality far richer than any unilateral reductionism brought about by modernity. Above all, it is a way of being and acting, which has had, as the non-renounceable basis of its construction and historical identity, mankind and its moral, intellectual and transcendent character. The words of John Paul II should thus take on a practical, full and modern meaning when he states, "I, Bishop of Rome and Pastor of the Universal Church, from here in Santiago de Compostela cry out with love for you Ancient Europe: Renew your roots!" (John Paul II. 1982), given that, "a society that forgets its past exposes itself to the risk of being unable to face up to the present and worse still of becoming the victim of its own future" (John Paul II. 2003).

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