



European Movement Mouvement Européen

10 years after Laeken: A new Convention for a stronger Union

Times of crisis are always times of opportunities. The Laeken Declaration of 15 December 2001 started a process to elaborate a Constitution for the European Union. We now have the Treaty of Lisbon, which has been a great step forward. Nonetheless, it has become clear that even with the new treaty, the EU is not equipped with the appropriate instruments to pull itself out of a fundamental crisis. A crisis that has not only developed from a debt problem into a full blown economic and social disaster but also into a substantial questioning of six decades of European Integration. Indeed, the issues that need to be addressed go to the core of the European Project.

A political Union – strengthening the community method

A monetary union needs a political and fiscal union. The European Commission has the democratic legitimacy from the European Parliament, elected by the citizens, to coordinate European Policies. It is independent of national interests and not dominated by certain countries. Strengthened by this legitimacy and independence, it is able to provide determined decisions in case of a crisis at European level. We believe that the only right way forward is to strengthen the European Commission to play the role of a European Economic Government.

New Economic Instruments and a stronger system of Own Resources

Common policies need common resources. A European Monetary Fund (stability and solidarity fund) should be established to counterbalance monetary speculations against a member state. It must be a true EU-fund and not a fragmentation of 27 different national funds.

The launch of a Eurobond market would create greater liquidity and stability. Alongside national and European measures to control deficits, having a common management of public loans would ensure lower interest rates for many member states and enable more space for economic development. At the same time, the European Union should promote a stronger control of the banks and the financial markets.

We need the introduction of a Tax on Financial Transactions and a real European VAT in replacement of the member state's national contributions, promoting economic growth and social development in all member states. As any member state will in consequence ask for a "fair return" to its contribution, their funding of 80% of the EU's budget is in its very nature a non-communitarian system that is chaining down the EU capability to use the budget as a political tool.

A Convention "European Economic and Fiscal Union" - aiming at cohesion and solidarity within the Union, especially in the Eurozone.

All proposals for the next steps of European Integration must be discussed in a transparent and inclusive way. The appropriate platform should be a new Convention "European Economic and Fiscal Union" with the participation of the European Parliament, the parliaments of the 27 Member States and the European Commission as well as the involvement of citizens and civil society organisations, overcoming the blockades by vetoes and promoting majority decisions started in the procedure of the convention.

The time has come where half-hearted measures will end in a break-up of the Union. Ten years after the Laeken Declaration, European leaders must now decide whether they want to fall back into 27 nationalisms and 27 isolated policies or if we use this crisis as a chance to deepen the European Integration. The support of the citizens in the European Union must be won by an open debate and clear messages underlining the benefits of a stronger Europe.

The European Parliament should use its right of initiative to ask for a modification of the treaties and to call for the new convention. The overall aim must be a more united and not a more fragmented Europe.