



FMA Bulletin

**European Parliament
Former Members Association**

No. 50/March 2015

www.formermembers.eu

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**Focus on
European Space Policy**

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Cover: the Eagle Nebula's Pillars of Creation. Copyright © NASA, ESA/Hubble and the Hubble Heritage Team. The Nebula is a young open cluster of stars in the constellation Serpens and includes several active star-forming gas and dust regions, including the famous "Pillars of Creation".

CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

The Editorial Board would like to thank all those members who took the time to contribute to this issue of the FMA Bulletin. The next issue will be published in June 2015. Contributions are most welcome. We would like to draw your attention to the fact that the decision to include an article lies with the FMA Editorial Board and, in principle, contributions from members, who are not up-to-date with the payment of the membership fee, will not be included.

The FMA Bulletin is produced for the members so please have your say. We need your suggestions and opinions. Please consider an article, book review, letter to the editor or simply write to tell us what you are doing now. Ideally, contributions should be sent by e-mail. For further details concerning the length of articles and deadlines, please contact the FMA Secretariat. If you send us an article, please provide your current email address. This gives readers, who would like to find out more, the possibility to contact you directly.

The FMA Bulletin is published by the European Parliament Former Members Association (FMA) with the assistance of the European Parliament. However, the views expressed in articles represent the views of contributing FMA members or guest writers and do not necessarily represent the views of either the European Parliament nor the FMA. Similarly, any advertisement does not imply an official endorsement by the FMA or Parliament.

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MESSAGE

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Member,

We celebrate the 50th Edition of our Bulletin. Let me express my compliments and sincere thanks to the current and former members of the Editorial Board for their work and commitment to providing a publication, which stimulates reflection and offers a networking platform for our members.

The year started with a shock for all of us, with the massacre of the Charlie Hebdo cartoonists. Allow me to pay tribute to them for their contribution to freedom of speech and press, for their sacrifice will not be in vain. Europe must be united in its grief, but should be able to react immediately and in a concerted manner. Mr Jean-Pierre Raffarin, former Prime Minister and current President of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the French Senate, wrote a touching article for us on France's loss of, among others, Jean Cabut, Georges Wolinski, Charb and Tignous.

On a more positive note, 2014 ended with a cornerstone for the European Space Agency and Europe in general: the arrival of the Philae lander on the surface of comet 67P/Churyumov-Gerasimenko, as part of the Rosetta International Mission. We have therefore decided to open this issue with a dedication to all the people who cross the space limits and give their lives to advance knowledge on the birth of the universe, but also improve communication, technology and security. We raise certain issues at stake that we consider very important to the European agenda and that may bring some hope and jobs to Europe-

an citizens. Franco Malerba, the first Italian astronaut and former MEP, takes us on a journey through European space history and its new prospects. Brigitte Langelhagen tells us the story of Galileo, as she was the first rapporteur on this issue, and Luigi Caligaris deals with the question of the future of the Galileo project.

In this issue you will also find some articles on our recent activities, including our annual cocktail dinner addressed by Mario Monti, Chairman of the EU High Level Working Group on Own Resources and former Italian Prime Minister, and our Annual Seminar, which focused on how to make progress towards an Economic Union and the future of the European Social Model. In order to have further insight into the topical subject 'Own Resources', José María Gil Robles and Jutta Haug share their opinions and considerations with us.

The EP to Campus Programme continues to run successfully thanks to members' willingness to contribute to this valuable initiative. In this issue, we publish accounts of last year's lectures and look forward to the continued success of our cooperation with universities and schools in the coming period.

As for 2015 events, on the afternoon of Tuesday 26 May EPRS is pleased to host an information seminar for FMA members on "Parliament's agenda-setting powers: Commission Work Programme and own legislative initiative", starting at 15.30 in the EP Library. The meet-



ing will be followed by the Memorial Service co-organised by the Association and the European Parliament to honour the memory of former colleagues who passed away during the last year. The former President of the European Parliament and FMA Honorary President, Lord Henry Plumb, will deliver the closing oration. The traditional cocktail reception and dinner debate will follow in the Members' restaurant. The Annual General Assembly will take place on Wednesday 27 May, with an election for five places on the Association's Board. You may cast your vote on the spot or via the proxy form, which will be sent to all members by post and by e-mail at the end of April. If you wish to participate in the May events, please complete the registration form included in this issue and return it to our secretariat.

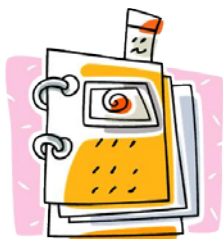
On 15 and 16 June, the FMA will continue with its visits to the Member State holding the Presidency of the Council of the EU. The visit to Riga will be the occasion to report on and discuss the main topics on the Latvian Presidency's agenda.

I hope to see many of you in Brussels on 26 and 27 May.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Enrique Barón Crespo". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above the printed name.

Enrique BARÓN CRESPO
FMA President



FMA'S ACTIVITIES

Dates for your diary

- **EPRS Information Seminar on “Parliament’s agenda-setting powers: Commission Work Programme and own legislative initiative”**, Tuesday 26 May 2015, 3.30 p.m., Library Reading Room, European Parliament, Brussels.
- **Annual Memorial Service**, Tuesday 26 May 2015, 5.45 p.m., ASP 5G2, European Parliament, Brussels.
- **FMA Cocktail and Dinner Debate**, Tuesday 26 May 2015, 6.30 p.m., Members’ Restaurant, European Parliament, Brussels.
- **FMA Annual General Assembly**, Wednesday 27 May 2015, 10.00 a.m., PHS 7C50, European Parliament, Brussels. The ballot for the votes will open at 9.45 and will close at 12.30.
- **FMA Annual Lunch**, Wednesday 27 May 2015, 1 p.m., Members’ Restaurant, European Parliament, Brussels.

Relations with non-European Former Members Associations

Canadian Association of Former Parliamentarians
Annual Meeting - May 31 - June 2, 2015
Ottawa



American Association of Former Members of Congress
Annual Meeting - June 16-17, 2015
Washington



Whilst clearly it is not possible for non Management Committee members to officially represent the Association, if you happen to be around any of these cities at the appropriate time, the FMA will be pleased to secure you observer rights.

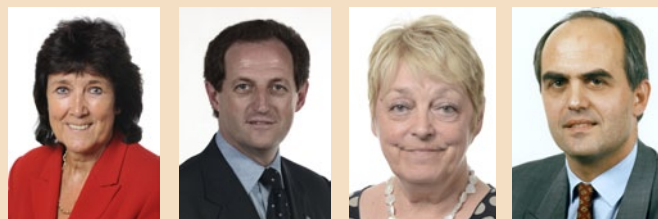
Lord Richard BALFE

Management Committee Member in charge of non-European FMAs

NEW MEMBERS



We would like to welcome **Pier Ferdinando CASINI** (Italy, 1994-2001, EPP), **Pierluigi CASTAGNETTI** (Italy, 1994-1999, EPP), **Kirsten JENSEN** (Denmark, 1989-1999, PES), **Mojca KLEVA KEKUS** (Slovenia, 2011-2014, S&D), **Nereo LARONI** (Italy, 1989-1994, PES), **Liz LYNNE** (United Kingdom, 1999-2009, ELDR), **Mario MANTOVANI** (Italy, 1999-2009, EPP), **Annemie NEYTS-UYTTEBROECK** (Belgium, 2009-2014, ELDR), **Georges ZAVVOS** (Greece, 1990-1994, EPP), who recently joined the Association.





IN MEMORIAM

It is with deep regret that we report the decease of:

Charles BAUR, France
Giovanni BERSANI, Italy
Philip BRADBURN MEP, United Kingdom
Sir Fred CATHERWOOD, United Kingdom
Giancarlo LIGABUE, Italy
Leonard Clemence TINDEMANS, Belgium
Dacia VALENT, Italy



If you are aware of a former member who has passed away, the Management Committee would be grateful to be informed through the FMA Secretariat in Brussels.



The Editorial Board is also prepared to publish obituaries written by members.

IN MEMORIAM GIOVANNI BERSANI 1914 - 2014

Giovanni Bersani was one of the founding fathers of our Republic and a key member of the political elite that helped to build a new Italy in the post-war years.

From partisan in the Apennines fighting for Italy's liberation to member of the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate, from the campaigns for the emancipation of share croppers in Bologna to the European Parliament in Strasbourg, from the founding of the Italian Christian Workers' Associations (ACLI) to the birth of the Christian Workers' Movement (MCL), from South American cooperation projects to the European-African partnership established by the Lomé Conven-

tion, in which he played a pivotal role, Bersani was heavily involved in countless areas, displaying at all times an extraordinary moral integrity and social and political commitment and an unswerving dedication to the common good.

He saw politics as the most noble form of altruism – as a means of fighting inequality around the world – and public service as a mission to bring assistance to the less fortunate and promote peace and solidarity between peoples.

He acted as a conflict mediator on countless occasions, from Senegal and Uganda to Somalia and Ethiopia, gaining the respect and admiration of the African leaders of the time. Everybody knew him, even though self-promotion was anathema to him, and his devout Catholic faith was reflected not in

public displays of piety but in the principles he stood for. He was the instigator behind a number of voluntary and international cooperation projects whose benefits are still being felt today.

I hope that the shining example he set throughout his life will serve as a lesson for us all and an inspiration for young people today and for many generations to come.

Pier Ferdinando CASINI
EPP-ED, Italy (1994-2001)
Chair of the Italian Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs



IN MEMORIAM PHILIP BRADBOURN OBE MEP 1951 – 2014

In 1999 Philip Bradbourn achieved a lifetime ambition with his election as a Conservative MEP for the West Midlands, and served with distinction for 15 years. With his death in December 2014, less than 6 months after his re-election, his constituents have lost a dedicated representative, and the European Parliament, an effective and committed politician.

In his first mandate, his background in local government immediately made him a valued member of the Transport and Tourism Committee. From 1999 to 2010, as Chief Whip of the Conservative MEPs, he helped them become disciplined and effective, and was the trusted adviser of 3 Leaders. In his second mandate, he was appointed Vice-Chairman of the Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs Committee. In his third mandate, he became Chairman of the EU-Canada Inter Parliamentary delegation, a perfect role for a “committed Atlanticist”. He took on a new role in Budgetary Control, applying forensic skills and sharp oratory to pursuing waste and maladministration.

Phil was proud of being “a lad from the Black Country”, born in

Tipton, and educated at Tipton Grammar School. After Wulfrun College, he joined South Staffordshire council as a planning officer, and remained a local government professional until he was elected as an MEP.

In 1969, he joined the Young Conservatives and quickly rose to lead the West Midlands region. He became British Vice-Chairman of the Democrat Youth Community of Europe (Christian Democrats and Conservatives) where he first met a number of his future MEP colleagues. From 1990 – 1993, as National Chairman of the Conservative Political Centre, he chaired meetings with Ministers and regularly presented to Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. His final voluntary post was to be Chairman of the West Midlands Conservatives from 1997 to 1999. After contesting two Parliamentary elections unsuccessfully in 1992 and 1994, in 1999 he was elected as one of 4 Conservative MEPs for the West Midlands Region.

In 1994 he was awarded the OBE for public and political service in the Queen’s Birthday Honours List. He had great pride in this recognition, but was very surprised in his first weeks as an MEP when he received an internal letter addressed to “Mr OBE”!

Phil was always an articulate advo-

cate of Conservative principles. He supported the UK’s role in Europe but was a strong defender of local accountability. He opposed the extension of EU competences, which he forcefully described as “Treaty creep”. But he had a pragmatic approach, and where EU funding was available, especially for transport projects, he made sure his region would benefit. His many speeches in Plenary sessions were always clear and to the point.

Phil valued the company of colleagues and was regularly found sharing a drink and a gossip in the Members Bar. He strenuously defended his right to smoke on European Parliament premises. He had strong ties to Malta, where he had a holiday apartment. He was keen to encourage young people in their early careers, and many of his alumni have gone on to make their mark in political life.

Phil lived for many years close to his family home in Tipton, before settling in Stonnall in Staffordshire. He was well known at all levels of the Conservative party. His passing was marked by tributes from the Prime Minister, David Cameron, and the Conservative Party Chairman Grant Shapps.

Malcolm HARBOUR
United Kingdom
EPP-ED (1999-2009), ECR
(2009-2014)

IN MEMORIAM LEO TINDEMANS 1922 - 2014

Rarely do tributes to a political figure concur to such an extent, but in this case there can be no doubt: Leo Tindemans was a convinced European.

As a student, and later as a young member of the Belgian Chamber of Representatives in the 1970s, he held what we saw as remarkably modern views, not only on Belgian federalism, but also on the future of Europe. His clear ideas, well thought out and down to earth, enabled him to win people over. He understood people and, therefore, the challenges they faced. In Belgium, he is



still regarded as one of the undisputed founding fathers of a federal system based on accountability, respect for diversity and solidarity. Change had to be brought about in a manner consistent with the standards of a constitutional state; this deeply held belief was illustrated in the address he made to the Belgian Parliament before dissolving his government, when he stated that ‘the Constitution is more than just a scrap of paper’.

His Vision for Europe, which he set out in his report on the future of the European Union, was characterised by the same desire for clarity, respect for the law, respect for individuals and respect for European values, and yet also dared to propose an ambitious path towards Economic and Monetary Union. His warnings and fears remain disconcertingly relevant today. At the Charlemagne Prize ceremony in Aachen in 1976, he warned the Heads of State and Government against leaving Europe unfinished, because ‘an unfinished structure does not weather well’.

His ideas and actions were informed by his philosophical convictions.

Leo Tindemans believed that the European economy had to rid itself of unhealthy forms of competition; in contrast to other continents, however, economic strength was not a goal in itself, but rather a means of making ordinary people’s lives better.

Leo Tindemans took the view that respect for the individual, a fundamental European value, had given rise to a new relationship between the individual and society. During his time as an MEP, Mr Tindemans was pained by the realisation that, barely one generation after the atrocities of the Second World War, polarisation and violence were rearing their heads again, threatening the freedom that Europe had acquired at such a great cost. In him, Europe had a political figure who still had the courage to say that working for a better Europe meant working for the good of your own country.

Mathieu GROSCH
EPP-ED, Belgium (1994-2014)

AIACE

The FMA Management Committee would like to inform members about the Association of Former Staff of the European Union, known by its acronym AIACE, from its French title, the *Association Internationale des Anciens de l’Union Européenne*.

Since 1969 AIACE has existed to maintain close links between the former officials of the different EU institutions and to represent them in dealings with the EU and national authorities.

It is organised through its Member State Sections - at present there are only 15, namely, those in the States that joined before 2004 - with an International Board and Council that deals with the institutions,

particularly on matters of pensions and the medical cover provided by the JSIS.

My discussions with the Head of the Parliament’s Unit for Members’ Salaries and Social Entitlements in DG Finance, which deals with former MEPs’ pensions and medical cover, suggest that his Unit provides an excellent service in these fields for former MEPs, who are covered by a Statute different from that of former officials. For any query you may have on this matter, please contact: former MEP.rights@ep.europa.eu.

However, each National Section of AIACE organises every year a number of social and cultural events with the aim of encouraging continuing contacts among its members.

Several former MEPs who have had experience as an EU official have joined their own National Section and have found it a very worthwhile experience.

The International President of AIACE has informed me that the Association would welcome any former MEPs who would like to become members. Should you wish to do so, you should apply to your National Section, who, I know, would welcome you.

In order to join, please click on www.aiace-europa.eu, where you will find (under ‘Structure’) a list of the telephone numbers and email addresses of all the fifteen National Sections.

Anthony SIMPSON
Member of the FMA Board



PAYMENT OF THE FMA ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FEE

Dear Member,

I remind you that following the vote at the Extraordinary General Assembly held on 18 October 2012, the FMA Statutes have been modified to ensure the effective payment of the annual subscription by the day before the General Assembly of each calendar year and to contribute to a sound financial management of FMA budgetary resources.

According to new Art 7 (1) of the FMA Statutes: "Members of the association are required to pay an annual membership fee. Payment of the annual fee is due on the day before the General Assembly of each calendar year. Members who have not paid by the due date will be lapsed and no longer entitled to the benefits of membership".
According to new Art. 6. 4 (b): "Membership is suspended as long as the membership fee remains unpaid."

Therefore, I would kindly ask you to make sure that you have paid the 2015 membership fee or that you will pay it **by 26 MAY 2015** in order to be entitled to vote, either by proxy or in person, at the General Assembly on 27 May 2015.

For your complete information, you can pay the amount by credit card through the [online payment system](#) installed on the FMA website or through [bank transfer](#) to:

*KBC Bank European Parliament Branch
Rue Wiertz, B-1047 Brussels
Account number: 424-6110711-22
IBAN number: BE06424611071122
BIC: KREDBEBB*

Kind regards,

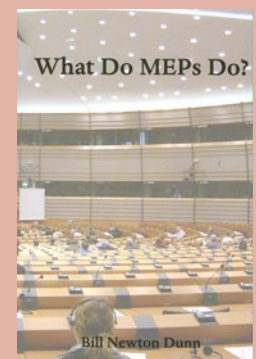
Jan-Willem BERTENS
FMA Treasurer

NEW PUBLICATION

A book of instant history about the Seventh European Parliament: it is called "**What Do MEPs Do?**". Immediately after the May 2014 election, **Bill Newton Dunn** asked every MEP to write an account about how they experienced the Seventh Parliament. 47 MEPs from 17 member states and from left to right in the political spectrum replied. Each MEP wrote their own personal account of what their work was between 2009 and 2014. It contains real insights which the public never hears.

As well as being Instant History, the book could be useful to students who are studying politics, also to members of the public who are thinking of standing for election, and also to members of the public who know very little about how the parliament works.

The book costs twenty euros in paper form. It may be ordered from Allendalepublish@aol.com. It is available also on Amazon.com.





“DEMOCRATIC CHANGE IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE 1989-90; THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE END OF THE COLD WAR”

The Historical Archives Unit prepared a study entitled: ‘Democratic Change in Central and Eastern Europe 1989-90; the European Parliament and the end of the Cold War’, in the European Parliament History Series, based on the documents preserved in the EP’s Historical Archives. The study analyses the events that led to democratic change in Central and Eastern Europe from the perspective of the European Parliament as detailed in its historical documents. It traces the discussions and opinions of Parliament over the years regarding a) the events leading to democratic change in Central and Eastern Europe, paying particular attention to the events of 1989 and b) Post-communism and Eastern enlargement.

A conference was organised on 3 February 2015 at 18.00 pm in the EPRS Library Reading Room, Altiero Spinelli Building (ASP 05D), and the paper was discussed with Mr Valdis DOMBROVSKIS, Vice-President of the European Commission (Prime Minister of Latvia 2009 – 2014), Mr Enrique BARÓN CRESPO, former President of the European Parliament, Mr Hans-Gert PÖTTERING, former President of the European Parliament, Ms Marju LAURISTIN, MEP, and Mr Jacek SARYUSZ-WOLSKI, MEP.

If you want a paper version of the study, please contact: eprs@ep.europa.eu.

The European Parliamentary Research Service has also an external website which has accessible to every citizen: <http://ephinktank.eu/>. In the website, you can find articles on current topics and issues, comments by guest bloggers, and even collection of graphs, charts, tables and maps with statistical data.

The European Parliament Former Members Association is glad to inform you that also this year the EPRS will organise a seminar for FMA members on 26 May in the afternoon. Register through the form that you will find at the end of this issue!



SAVE THE DATE!

The Committees of Budgetary Control (CONT), Legal Affairs (JURI), Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE) and Constitutional Affairs (AFCO) will organise a joint hearing on 26 March 2015, focusing on “Towards a high degree of accountability, transparency and integrity in the EU Institutions”. Check the EP website for updated information.

MAKING EUROPE SAFER FOR ITS CITIZENS

The horrific murders at the editorial offices of Charlie Hebdo and in a Porte de Vincennes supermarket have left our nation with two gaping wounds, wounds which will not be quick to heal.

Many people seemed to feel an immediate need to denounce these savage attacks on freedom of expression. Others raised their voices to acknowledge the talent of the artists involved, to voice their respect for the police officers whose task it was to protect them, to denounce the monstrosities of anti-Semitism, to condemn the alliance between fundamentalism and terrorism, and to defend the Republic.

On 11 January 2015, the people of France came to their country's defence, as they have done time and again. The representatives of the international community demonstrated their sympathy and solidarity. The French authorities' response to the tragedy was worthy of the very best traditions of the Republic.

The challenge we now face is twofold:

- Firstly, to build up a range of policies - in the areas of intelligence, defence, the police, justice, etc. - which enable us to fight terrorism effectively.
- Secondly, to develop integration and education policies designed to help us rid our country of those



The first cover of Charlie Hebdo after the attack, published on 14 January 2015.

who wish it harm and who are opposed to European values.

If we are to achieve either of these aims, cooperation at European level is essential now. The EU cannot simply stand idly by while the danger to its citizens continues to grow.

In this area, perhaps, it might have a better chance of securing the popular backing it has not yet obtained for its policies on employment, the other major concern for ordinary Europeans.

Jean-Pierre RAFFARIN

Chair of the Foreign Affairs, Defence and Armed Forces Committee, French Senate

FOR FREEDOM AND FOR TOLERANCE

*Por los golpes recibidos
Por aquel que no resiste
Por aquellos que se esconden
Por el miedo que te tienen
Por tus pasos que vigilan
Por la forma en que te atacan
Por los hijos que te matan
Yo te nombro Libertad*

(Gian Franco Pagliaro, 1969, based on the poem 'Liberté' by Paul Éluard, 1942)

On 11 January 2015, members of the public filled the streets of Paris and numerous other European cities to express their opposition to the terrorism and barbarism at the root of so much death and destruction, embodied most recently by the murders of 11 staff members at Charlie Hebdo, six other civilians and three police officers. Around 4 million French citizens marched along the streets of Paris and other French cities in defence of democratic values. The Charlie Hebdo attack was a brutal blow aimed at the heart of democracy, of coexistence and tolerance, of freedom of expression and respect for others, of dialogue and understanding. The unshakable principles of liberty, equality and fraternity have been firmly rooted in French society for more than two hundred years. France is a model country, where the diversity of its citizens' cultures and faiths is part of its very nature and reason for being. 'I am Charlie', 'I am a Jew', 'I am a cop' – these were the most prominent chants to be heard during the march. In addition to a number of European

UKRAINE AND ITS FUTURE

Since its independence in 1991 Ukraine has never lived through such unparalleled challenge and change as it has experienced in 2014. Change came not from the institutions of state but from the ground up and by the will of the people. The Maidan movement started with students but ended up mobilising an entire society. It was not clear how long or if it would last. The freezing Kiev winter and the Orthodox Christmas in January 2014 were speculated on as break points but the mass protest movement continued to grow. Like any mass movement it was diverse and attracted many strands but to describe it, in the pejorative manner that President Putin chooses to, as driven by anti-Semite, Russophobe, neo-Nazis is a travesty, a self-serving big lie. No amount of Russian propaganda and repetition of that lie should be allowed to defame the Maidan movement. The story of Maidan is a story of individual dignity and of a society's collective wish for a new direction.

Maidan was a *cri de coeur* for fundamental change. They flew the flags of the EU and of Ukraine. They wanted change not vague promises. They wanted to rid their country of corruption. They saw the EU as a beacon of freedom, democracy, hope and opportunity. They had witnessed its transformative capacity through their near neighbour Poland whose progress left them trailing far behind from a broadly similar post Soviet point of departure. They were choosing to step into a different future not back to a jaded past. They were not stooges to be manipulated by any external hidden hand. This movement came for somewhere deep within the consciousness and will of the Ukrainian people themselves.



Press conference (December 2013) of Martin Schulz with former EP President Cox and former Polish President Kwasniewski on their monitoring mission in Ukraine. Picture © European Parliament.



The EP President, Martin Schulz, before the minute of silence in front of the European Parliament in Brussels on 8 January 2015. Picture © European Parliament.

leaders, the rally was also attended by the President of the Palestinian Authority, Mahmoud Abbas, the Prime Minister of Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu, and the President of Mali, Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta. Certain individuals were conspicuously absent, however, such as Marine Le Pen, Leader of the far-right National Front, and her father, Jean-Marie Le Pen, both of whom seem to prioritise political conflict over unity in grief and solidarity.

French society has taught the whole world a lesson – that of strength of spirit in the face of enemies who threaten freedom of expression and promote intolerance. Leaders from Muslim and Jewish communities marched together to show that violence and hate are part of no religious creed. We must not turn a blind eye to jihadi terrorism, which so recently stained the French capital with blood.

For many years, fundamental rights have been threatened by those who use murder, kidnapping, violence and fear to seize power and impose tyranny. The attacks that took place in New York, London, Madrid and Paris were the macabre and dramatic outcome of this barbarism. Ministers of the Interior across the EU must act to uphold democracy through the rule of law with greater control and determination than ever before. Police forces should collaborate and cooperate. Member States should share and exchange intelligence, for example via the Schengen Information System, and should support the work of Europol. A common European strategy on terrorism should be developed. There has to be a crackdown on the illegal arms trade under the European Firearms Directive, and the Internal Security Fund should be strengthened. In short, we must try to do all we can to prevent all forms of extremism and radicalism, such as xenophobia and racism.

María IRIGOYEN PÉREZ
S&D, Spain (2010-2014)
mirigoyenp@gmail.com



Protests in Maidan Square, Kiev, March 2014. Picture © streetwrk.com.

Since the collapse of the Yanukovich administration and the Russian assisted flight of its leaders, Ukraine has successfully held two elections – Presidential and legislative in 2014 – in spite of the unprecedented difficulties confronting the state. Extremists got derisory votes. The elections clearly reflect the democratic will of the vast majority of the electorate. The Verkhovna Rada has produced a government supported by a parliamentary majority and one that can act. This is important because Ukraine needs institutional stability in order to confront its multiple crises. The new government program is lengthy and complex. To deliver on its promise will take enormous effort. It will not be an easy task to accomplish but it is a beginning, an important first step. Ukrainians will need not just the goodwill but also the practical solidarity of the outside world and especially of the European Union and its member states.

The state of the economy is a major concern. Rising prices, falling exchange rates, declining output and the additional costs of the war in the East, economic and defense, add up to a serious challenge for the government. This is no less so for the EU and all others who are committed to helping Ukraine get back on its feet. There is no quick fix and no low cost solution. Ukraine will need to be a focus of collective care and attention for many years to come.

The Minsk process negotiated last September to try to contain the military crisis in Donbas and to find a basis for dialogue has been honored more often in the breach than in the observance of its conditions. The difference between words and deeds when it comes to fulfilling its terms so far has robbed this process of the credibility needed to succeed. Dialogue that ignores realities on the ground would be an illusory road to nowhere. To succeed it requires good faith by all parties involved.

It is complicated by Russia's implausible deniability of the extent of its engagement in this proxy hybrid war and its 'humanitarian' supply lines through porous eastern borders. A Christmas calm has been replaced by fresh assaults whose epicenter has been concentrated on Donetsk airport a totemic space prized symbolically by both sides.

There is an unhappy history in Ukraine of changes of government being defined by changes of personnel but not of practices. The time for hidden hands manipulating public administration and the judicial system in dark corners and behind closed doors needs to cease. Curbing the opaque political role and influence of oligarchs needs to be part of this appetite for change. The separation of powers between politics and the administration of justice is an essential reform. Law needs to be applied without fear, favor, malice or prejudice and to be seen to be so. Without an independent judiciary Ukraine will continue to struggle to liberate itself from the things that in the past have prevented a better future for its people. Most of all systemic and embedded corruption needs to be rooted out. This is the enemy within no less self interested in resisting change than any external enemy.

2015 will have its story to tell. Let us hope that for Ukraine, at last, it will be one of reform, renewal and hope. Ukrainians deserve no less.

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Wall of memory in Maidan Square, Kiev, in March 2014. Picture © streetwrk.com.



SWEDEN AND NATO

Only last year, 2014, Sweden celebrated its 200 years of peace. In Europe and elsewhere few countries have a similar, fortunate record.

Centuries of unbroken peace – how did that come about? Explanations often mentioned are Sweden's geographic position, its policy of non-alignment, the determination of its political leaders to avoid Sweden being drawn into war, the country's comparatively strong defence forces and, not to be forgotten, a substantial amount of luck. Whatever the reason, the psychological consequences of this long peace period remain strong. Not only is neutrality seen as an efficient way not to be attacked or drawn into war but also as something that gives our nation a touch of moral superiority – a proven country for peace! That we for our freedom are indebted to those who fought and suffered for theirs does not always come to our mind.

Even to question neutrality was for decades considered with great scepticism and for any politician a sure way to be branded as a person not to be trusted.

This attitude changed somewhat after the fall of the Iron Curtain and the communist regimes in Europa. But not totally! Non alignment remained a corner stone for our security policy and the Liberal Party was for many years the only one advocating Swedish membership in NATO.

The instability caused by the Russian occupation and incorporation of the Crimea, its aggressive policy against Ukraine and Moldavia, threatening pronouncements of president Putin and other Russian leaders, the fast increase of Russian military forces in the Baltic region and the way the Russian air forces and navy behave in our



NATO Secretary General, Jens Stoltenberg, meets with the President of the European Council, Donald Tusk. Picture © NATO.

immediate neighbourhood have had an impact on the public opinion in my country.

Opinion polls indicate that support for Swedish membership of NATO has increased considerably. In a poll last month, ordered by the "Swedish TV", 29 % turned out in favour of membership and 32 % against. Normally 50% or more has been against. That 49 % did not express an opinion may be interpreted as a sign of bewilderment.

A government commission on Swedish security suggested that Finland and Sweden together should investigate the question of membership in NATO.

The four political parties - the Conservative, the Liberal, the Centrist and the Christian Democrats – ruling Sweden as "The Alliance" 2006-2014 – seem now all to be open for membership in NATO. The government, based on the Social Democrats and the Environment party, is against. So is the Left party while the nationalist party to the right, the Swedish Democrats, seems to favour a deeper cooperation with NATO but not membership.

It is clear that a decision to join NATO requires a solid political majority. It means the Social Democrats and the Alliance. Prime minister, Stefan Löfven (S), has ruled out this as an option during the present parliamentary period, ending 2018.

That doesn't mean that the question is buried. The parties in favour of membership will do their utmost to win a majority of the Swedish citizens for the cause. More military interventions of Russia anywhere or increased Russian pressure on Finland and/or the Baltic states may quickly change the situation. Should Finland for any reason decide to apply for membership of NATO, Sweden might do it too.

A consequence of the increased instability is also that Sweden will strengthen its defence. How much remains to be seen. And in the European Council Mr Löfven, Sweden's prime minister, has spoken in favour of enlarged sanctions directed against the Russian economy.

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A SUITCASE THAT CAN SAVE LIVES

We have to help! This was the feeling that made the hundred or so members of the Sierra Leone community in North Rhine-Westphalia, the largest German Land, decide to hold a charity gala event in the Land capital, Dusseldorf. They were shaken to the core by the horrifying daily media reports about the Ebola disaster in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone.

I too wanted to help because I had visited Sierra Leone, a country ravaged by ten years of civil war, with a European Parliament election observation mission in 2002, as a member of the Committee on Development and Cooperation and Vice-President of the ACP/EU Joint Assembly. It did not require much imagination to see what a blow this disease represents for a country on the road to democratisation which was seeing the first signs of economic growth. That is why I enthusiastically supported the project.



Picture on top. From left to right: Abdul Fadul Kamara, Deputy Chairman of Sierra Leone Community NRW e. V, Karin Junker, Vice President of Global Democracy Initiative, and Maja Braun, moderator of the Ebola Charity Gala.

Picture below. Ebola suitcase laboratory, developed by the Egyptian scientist Ahmed Abd El Wahed.

It was a great success with a colourful and thought-provoking programme of music, entertainment and information to sing along, clap along and dance along with – an explosion of African joie de vivre with a magnificent performance by artists from around the world who have brought their culture and their commitment to their new home on the Rhine and Ruhr. Deutsche Welle, the German international broadcaster, also contributed with a haunting film about Ebola missions in Freetown, the capital of Sierra Leone, as did the presenter Maja Braun who is knowledgeable about Africa. The President of the European Parliament, Martin Schulz, sent a moving video message and North Rhine-Westphalia MEPs announced their solidarity with words of support, while the Mayor of Dusseldorf, Thomas Geisel, conferred his patronage on the event.

A highlight of the evening was the presentation of an Ebola suitcase laboratory, developed by the Egyptian scientist Ahmed Abd El Wahed of the Primate Center, Göttingen. It is portable, solar-powered and delivers an on-the-spot diagnosis in just 15 minutes. It is simply ideal for countries with poor infrastructure, but also practical for European airports and hospitals. Sponsors are still needed for it to go into production. The cost of such a suitcase is about EUR 5 000. The European Union has managed to set aside more than a billion euros for combating the Ebola epidemic: surely it can raise the relatively small sum required to manufacture a suitcase which will be able to save thousands of lives! Martin Schulz, please take over!

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KEY FACTS

Ebola virus disease (EVD), formerly known as Ebola haemorrhagic fever, is a severe, often fatal illness in humans.

The average EVD case fatality rate is around 50%. Case fatality rates have varied from 25% to 90% in past outbreaks. As of 21 February 2015, in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea 14 134 people were tested positive to EVD; of those, 9 541 people died.

The first EVD outbreaks occurred in remote villages in Central Africa, but the most recent outbreak in west Africa has involved major urban as well as rural areas.

Community engagement is key to successfully controlling outbreaks. Good outbreak control relies on applying a package of interventions, namely case management, surveillance and contact tracing, a good laboratory service, safe burials and social mobilisation.

Sources: www.who.org and www.cdc.gov.

THE RULING OF THE EUROPEAN COURT OF JUSTICE ON THE ECHR

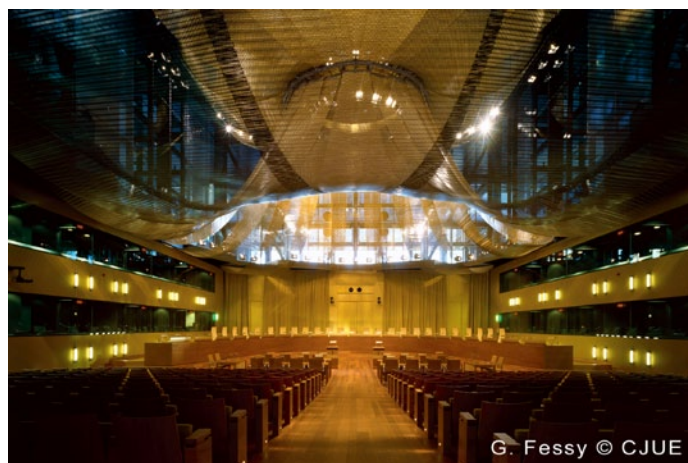
All 28 EU Member States have signed the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ECHR). All 28 are members of the Council of Europe. And all 28 fall under the jurisdiction of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) in Strasbourg.

Based on these facts, the Lisbon Treaty provides that the EU as a whole should accede to the ECHR (Article 6 TEU). It goes on to add, however, that such accession should not affect 'the competences of the Union or the powers of its institutions' (Protocol 8).

This is a Catch-22 situation, i.e. impossible, which has, logically, been noticed by the EU Court of Justice, precisely the institution whose 'powers' would be seriously undermined by the parallel competences of the other court – the ECtHR in Strasbourg.

The decision of 18 December 2014 in which the EU Court rejected the draft agreement on the accession of the European Union to the ECHR as being 'not compatible with EU law', is not, however, merely a reassertion of judicial powers. It is also a political reaffirmation of the 'intrinsic', judicially independent nature of the EU, of its legal personality that is separate from that of the individual Member States (Article 47 TEU).

The Court referred to the basic fact that the countries in question, as EU Member States, have ruled out the fact that their mutual relations may be governed by any law other than that of the Union. Acceding to the



The Main Courtroom of the European Court of Justice. Picture © CJUE.

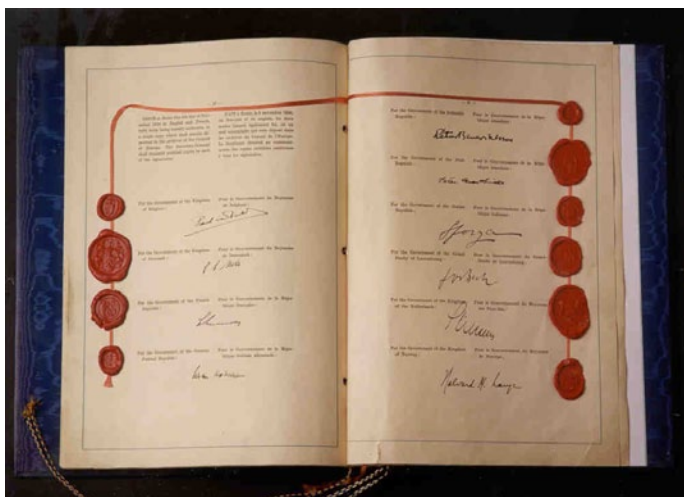
ECHR, however, would involve 'external control' by an international body with 47 member countries: 19 more than the 28 EU states – from Macedonia to Azerbaijan, from Russia to Turkey. Not to mention its 'military arm' in defence of rights – the Strasbourg Court, which has one judge from each of those countries. Judges who, if the EU were a member, would, ironically, not even be subject to the constraints of the EU Court of Justice in delicate matters relating to the common foreign and security policy (CFSP).

The key point of the decision, in other words, is that what may be good for individual Member States and their legal systems is not good for the Union and its overall identity. The EU is, politically and legally speaking, something more than the 28 states that make it up. A strange consequence of this decision is that the famous 'explanatory' notes that accompany the Charter of Fundamental Rights, annexed to the Treaty of Lisbon, have lost much of their value.

These 'explanations' were, in fact, all designed to connect the meaning of the individual articles of the EU Charter to the jurisprudence of Strasbourg and its evolution (Article 52,7 CFREU).

This ran counter to the independent effectiveness and evolution of the EU Charter, as is now clear, since the EU judges have highlighted the great difficulties inherent in merging two jurisdictional areas that are different both geopolitically and in terms of their relevant legal systems.

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The European Convention. Picture © ECHR.

OWN RESOURCES OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

1.- Article 311 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union requires the Union to 'provide itself with the means necessary to attain its objectives and carry through its policies' and provides that 'the budget shall be financed wholly from own resources'. This therefore enshrines the two principles that any healthy public economy should observe: financial sufficiency, i.e. the provision of the income required to cover expenditure (or, in other words, not spending beyond its means), and financial independence, that is to say financing using its own resources, without depending on the goodwill of other centres or levels of government.

Unfortunately, these two principles, which have been firmly established in the treaties since the very start of the process of European integration, have not always been observed. Or, to be more precise, they were observed in the beginning and have since been flouted.

2. The European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) used to observe these principles, and was financed by rights to the production of coal and steel that the Community received directly, so these did constitute own resources. The common market was initially funded by contributions from the Member States, but Article 210 of the Treaty of Rome enshrined the aim of being wholly financed from own resources, an aim which was in fact achieved in the early 1970s.

However, the situation began to decline towards the end of that decade. Problems with the calculation of VAT based resources, the increase in the Community budget and the principle of a 'fair return' which was first cited by Margaret Thatcher, and then by many other countries, led to a system

which, on 7 April 2014, was described by the European Parliament in the Dehaene/Jensen report as:

'non transparent, unfair, not subject to parliamentary control, highly complex and totally incomprehensible to European citizens, and [...] such a system violates, in essence, the letter and the spirit of the Treaty [...] and it contributes to the recurrent problem of shortage of payments in the annual budgetary procedure'.

3. The situation has become untenable to such a point that the European Parliament has established the High Level Group on Own Resources, composed of members designated by the European Parliament, the European Commission and the Council and chaired by Mario Monti, which is tasked with delivering proposals for an overhaul of the system for 2016, most likely based on the following criteria:

A) Fiscal sovereignty of Member States.

B) Fiscal neutrality or constant fiscal burden (a principle that is as popular as it is unrealistic). It is more likely that the group will call for new sources of tax revenue (for example a tax on financial transactions or duties on aviation fuel).

C) Sufficiency.- Make no mistake – we are talking about trying to reverse the trend and going back to the budget limit of 1.25 % of GDP as established in the Edinburgh agreement, at least to begin with. But let's be clear: this order of magnitude means that the Union will still have to find additional financial resources.

D) Progressivity (still required) and stability, which has to be the result of flexibility, not rigidity.

E) Transparency and simplicity.- This is something that is increasingly being demanded by citizens.

F) Low implementation costs.- Thanks to advances in technology, it is now possible to calculate VAT with real data, without having to use complicated and confusing statistical calculations.

E) Fairness with respect to citizens and the Member States.

We wish the High Level Group every success in its endeavours, and ask our parliamentary colleagues involved in this legislation to continue, without any loss of robustness, the European Parliament tradition of requiring 'better taxation with better representation'.

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Group photo: Ivailo Kalfin, Member of the EP, Clemens Fuest, President and Director of Science and Research of the Centre for European Economic Research (ZEW) in Mannheim, Daniel Dăianu, former Member of the EP and former Romanian Minister for Finance, Mario Monti, Kristalina Georgieva, Ingrida Šimonytė, Deputy Chairperson of the Board of the Bank of Lithuania, Alain Lamassoure, Member of the EP, Frans Timmermans and Pierre Moscovici (from left to right). Picture © EC.

OWN RESOURCES: DEMOCRACY AND TRANSPARENCY AT LAST!

The EU own resources system has existed for 45 years.

For more than 20 years Parliament has repeatedly taken the lead in calling for thoroughgoing reform.

In the negotiations on the 2014-2020 financial framework Parliament made its approval subject to the condition that a 'high-level group' of Parliament, Council, and Commission representatives be set up to deal with own resources. Once agreement had in this way been wrested (really!) from the Council, the group set to work; chaired by the estimable Mario Monti, it submitted its first interim report in December 2014. The report, however, does not (or not yet) give cause for real optimism about the prospect of progress. It merely takes stock – how many times has that been done before?

Composed as it is of distinct parts – national civil servants, national governments, and national political leaders from 28 Member States – the Council is too ponderous and does not care enough about transparency; and, despite the assertions forever being made to the contrary, the latter point also goes for change. For the Council, passing off EU revenue as Member States' contributions is a reliable measure of its power.

The Commission, which should actually be the driving force of integration, is too much of a toady to the Member States, too much like the 'secretary to the Council'.

Yet there is nothing unusual about what Parliament has been asking for more than a generation. It is perfectly simple and natural and, from a democratic point of view, entirely legitimate.

- The first step, on which everything else depends, is to eliminate democratic deficits. Parliament is the only EU institution to be elected directly by the peoples of Europe. Its Members should exercise democratic control and represent the interests of ordinary Europeans. However, they should also bear responsibility in relation to their sovereign and be answerable for the substance of policies. Democratic accountability thus implies full budgetary rights as regards both expenditure policy and revenue policy.

- There has to be a fundamental change to the make-up of revenue. The present financing system – a mixture of agricultural levies, sugar and isoglucose levies, customs duties, a proportion of the Member States' value added tax receipts, and a percentage of gross national income – is practically unintelligible even to experts. The public cannot tell which taxes are levied to finance EU expenditure and how much is paid.

- The UK rebate is no longer justified and, together with the rebates on the rebate, must be done away with altogether. The pattern of expenditure financed under the EU budget has changed considerably over the past three decades. Existing policies have been reformed more than once, and other policy areas and new Member States have been added. The privilege accorded to the United Kingdom has become obsolete – not least in view of the country's strong economic performance – and is imposing unfair burdens on all the other Member States, including those which are economically far less potent.

- What needs to be done in the light of the foregoing is to introduce a European tax to replace the own resources used up to now. Our expectation is that this would not entail any additional cost to taxpayers. But they would at last be able to see how much and what proportions they were contributing to the EU's finances. Parliament has never specified what kind of tax should be levied. It has always been clear that the choice should be based both on economic criteria and on administrative practicalities and political considerations. The Commission's last proposal to date, in 2013, whereby a proportion of the future financial transaction tax would be declared own resources, was widely supported in Parliament.

The current financing system is neither transparent nor democratic!

And there is another point to bear in mind. The EU in its present form was not worked out in a day. Similarly, the idea now is not to produce a theoretically logical, transparent, and democratic financing system overnight and implement it the day after.

But we have to start – not least because a new financing system will make Europe a little more tangible to Europeans!

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PORTUGAL AND THE CRISIS

The international crisis which began during George W. Bush's second term was largely resolved, as far as the United States is concerned, during Barack Obama's first term. The European Commission under Barroso, on the other hand, displayed huge weaknesses and vulnerabilities; it was not genuinely effective; and the conduct of Jean-Claude Trichet made the situation worse because he was never able to secure a more prominent role for the European Central Bank.

Mario Draghi's positive yet realistic role paved the way for more effectively combating the crisis across most of Europe. In Portugal, the absurd manner in which the right-wing government behaved, significantly and viciously exacerbating the austerity proposals of the 'troika' (IMF, ECB and European Commission), pushed Portugal into an unwarranted recession, drastically increasing unemployment, slashing the value of most pensions, and leading to the needless disappearance of many companies and the forced emigration of hundreds of thousands across generations.

In the run-up to Christmas, the European Commission, free of Barroso, voiced sharp criticism of the Portuguese Government, almost all of it justified.

At all events, I do not think the European Commission has fully understood Portugal's social and economic situation: a discredited and indefensible President of the Republic, a distinctly unpopular government, a section of the media linked to a right wing with no serious policies, and a number of sections of society and of the economy in serious difficulty.

Unemployment has grown exponentially since the end of the last century. At that time, with António Guterres as Prime Minister (who is now UN High Commissioner for Refugees), unemployment in Portugal was around

3 %, with public debt just under 60 % of GDP. At the start of 2015, national unemployment was over 13 % and public debt had more than doubled by comparison with the turn of the century. The right-wing government's policies have been catastrophic for the country.

In education, numerous mistakes and absurd decisions have been made, affecting large parts of the system, ascribable for the most part to the government. Such decisions have engulfed almost all the public and private, primary, secondary and higher education sectors in a vast sea of incompetence. In secondary education, there have been two-month delays in placing teachers, with a series of changes to criteria and evaluation tests being set which defy all logic.

In science and technology, the reduction in funding for research projects, without clear criteria, has made it very difficult to continue with a host of projects, leaving many lecturers and researchers either jobless or under-employed.

In the health sector, many nurses and doctors have left Portugal for the United Kingdom and elsewhere. Many health facilities have not had the capacity to meet the urgent needs of the population.

Public works have been neglected, viciously cut back in a way that has not been seen since the liberal monarchy in the mid-19th century. This aggressive policy has contributed to the rise in unemployment in the construction industry and in the areas of urban renovation and road improvements.

The social security authority has cut most pensions awarded by previous democratic governments, while preparing to dispense with many civil servants, without any proper explanation.

All in all, there are almost no policy areas in which serious mistakes have not been made. Those mistakes will have to be rectified by democratic and progressive forces led by competent politicians.

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Lisbon protests (Photo © Pedro Ribeiro Simoes)

EU TRANSPORT POLICY: GROWING CONCERNS ON A LOCAL AND GLOBAL SCALE

It is interesting to see how the emphasis has shifted in EU transport policy.

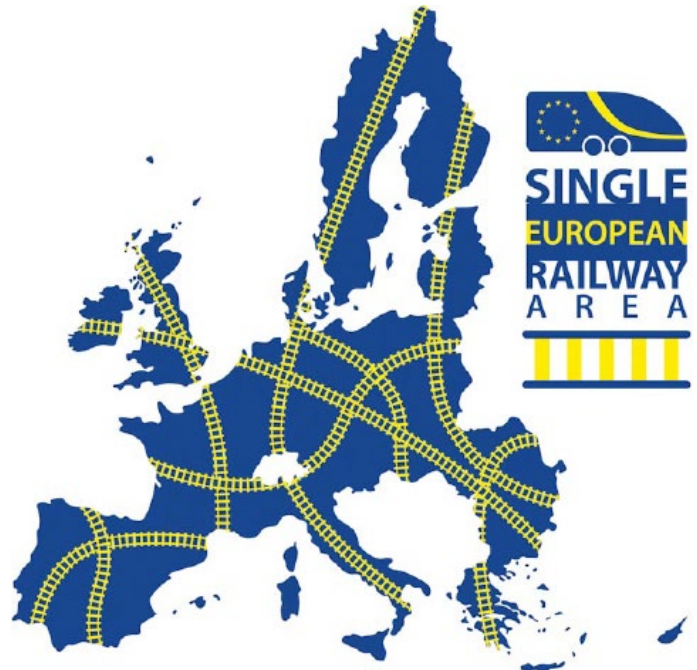
The original 1957 Treaty of Rome made rail, road, and inland waterway transport a focus of attention. EU funding, either granted under the ERDF or, more especially, to finance infrastructure, was confined to less developed regions, in keeping with regional policy criteria.

Once it had been recognised not only that Europeans needed to be brought closer together, but also that energy and environmental costs had to be lowered, the Maastricht Treaty gave pride of place (and Articles 170 to 172 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union continue to do so today) to trans-European transport networks, along with telecommunications and energy networks, one aim being to avoid the economic and social costs incurred in air transport within Europe, which has now been replaced to enormous advantage by high-speed rail. A further welcome development from this point of view is that the trans-European transport network (TEN-T) has been singled out as the main network to complete by 2030.

The subsidiarity principle implies that higher authorities should not be called upon to do what can be done equally well, or indeed better, at a level closer to citizens. It is curious to note that while this approach has been gaining currency, the EU has also been addressing itself to urban transport, a fact reflected in the 2007 Green Paper, 'Towards a new culture for urban mobility', and the 2009 Action Plan on urban mobility.

Its interest is, moreover, understandable to the extent that the percentage of the total population living in towns and cities increased from 71% in 2000 to 73% in 2010 and is expected to rise to 82% in 2050; this trend is accounting for a very high proportion of energy consumption and pollution as a whole.

Some countries have cities with millions of inhabitants; and the resulting congestion in and around urban areas, with all the delays and nuisances which that entails, translates into a cost approaching, according to the Commission's calculations, EUR 100 000 mil-



lion a year, in other words about 1% of EU GDP, to say nothing of the harm done to people's day-to-day well-being.

Furthermore, as the Commission itself points out, 'Urban mobility is also a central component of long-distance transport', given that 'Most transport, both passengers and freight, starts and ends in urban areas and passes through several urban areas on its way'. It will therefore be necessary to 'provide efficient inter-connection points for the trans-European transport network and offer efficient "last mile" transport[, ... this being] vital to the competitiveness and sustainability of our future European transport system'.

The countries and regions of Europe, then, should be brought together, implying a need for them to join forces in promoting large-scale networks financed by EU contributions, the TEN T budget, EUR 26 250 million, being provided under the Connecting Europe Facility within the 2014-2020 multiannual financial framework. Secondly, the immense cost of congestion in towns and cities has to be avoided, and that is why support for urban transport more than doubled during the life of the two previous financial frameworks.

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WOMEN AND THE AIMS OF PEACE AND SECURITY IN THE WORLD

It seems to me as if the world is becoming an increasingly violent and cruel place for us, its people: conflicts triggered by the proliferation of weaponry for defence and security are becoming increasingly extreme, and these in turn will lead to more and more despair and terror, a never-ending spiral of violence in which we are investing enormous economic and financial resources.

And yet, in the face of the technological progress that has been made with arms in the 21st century, virtually nothing is being done to foster peaceful attitudes, to consolidate the 'human element' as a peace-making factor and to use the potential inherent in women and gender diversity to promote peace and security in the world. Virtually no mention has been made in recent major political crises of peaceful responses or approaches to discourage violence. Nor have we upheld the UN resolutions that apply in such cases.

The UN has been working with the new hope represented by women as peacemakers. It laid the foundations for this in Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), emphasising the importance of women's equal participation and full involvement in conflict prevention and resolution and in building and maintaining peace. It also called on UN Member States to guarantee equal participation and urged all parties to ensure increased representation of women and to mainstream a gender perspective into all peacekeeping operations.



A female member of the Ethiopian battalion of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) joined the military observers in a parade to receive the medals in recognition of their contribution to the mission. UN Photo © Christopher Herwig.

At the very heart of this matter lies the fact that as women we are an active, peacemaking majority, but we have been excluded from war-related decision-making for centuries (...). I believe the time has come to focus some of our efforts on achieving this ultimate aim by making sure that women for peace are included in worldwide peace and security policies.

Later, with specific reference to involvement in decision-making, the Security Council adopted resolution 1889 (2009) as a complement to resolution 1325 (2000). In Resolution 1889 the Security Council urged UN Member States to take further measures to improve women's participation in peace processes and to draw up a set of indicators to track the implementation of resolution 1325. Lastly, resolution 2122 (2013) emphasised accountability in respect of the implementation of resolution 1325 and the importance of women's participation in all stages of conflict prevention and resolution, and in post-conflict peacebuilding.

At the very heart of this matter lies the fact that as women we are an active, peacemaking majority, but we have been excluded from war-related decision-making for centuries. Although we have a number of important UN resolutions behind us – resolutions that have received enormous backing from around the world – there is no point in any of this if those resolutions are ignored. The European Union should not forget about us, because many of today's hawkish defence and security politics were adopted as ways of securing the ultimate aim of fostering peace, security and progress in Europe and the world. I believe the time has come to focus some of our efforts on achieving this ultimate aim by making sure that women for peace are included in worldwide peace and security policies.

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THE EVOLUTION OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN THE EUROPEAN NEIGHBOURHOOD: THE CASE OF AZERBAIJAN

Julie Ward, Member of the European Parliament, FEMM Committee, presented the report of Anne-Marie Lizin, International Coordinator of the Mission of the League in Bakou and Gabala (9 September 2014)

The delegation of the League of International Women's Rights has recently conducted a fact-finding mission in Azerbaijan in order to meet with experts, NGOs and state institutions working on women's rights. Here below you can read the summary of conclusions, presented the 9 September in the European Parliament, with Julie Ward, Azay Guliyev and Hijran Huseynova and addressed to the European Commission (Commissioner Hahn).

Azerbaijan, as the only secular country with a majority of Muslim population among the Eastern neighborhood, is a unique country, in that it has introduced many positive initiatives for women's rights and gender equality in the span of only a few years.

These initiatives include:

- Legal reforms for gender equality as well as initiatives in order to ensure the active participation of women.

KEY INDICATORS

- Population, total (millions): 9.42 (2013)
- GNI per capita, Atlas method (current US\$): \$7,350 (2013)
- Poverty headcount ratio of \$1.25 a day (PPP) % of population in 2008: 0.3%
- Female labor force participation: 67% (2013)
- Fertility rate, total (births per woman): 2.0 (2012)
- Share of women employed in the nonagricultural sector (% of total nonagricultural employment): 43% (2012)
- Maternal mortality ratio (modeled estimate, per 100,000 live births): 26 (2013)
- Number of weeks of maternity leave: 18 (2009)
- Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament (%): 16% (2014)

Source: World Bank's website.

- Measures to develop women's employment and financial independence.
- The fight against early marriages through the implementation of the necessary legal changes and the active involvement of state institutions, NGOs and religious figures.
- The fight against domestic violence through the implementation of the necessary legal changes and shelters.
- The fight to change the mentalities through projects, campaigns and trainings.
- The active role of the SCFWC (the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs chaired by Mrs Huseynova).
- The support of the CSSN (the Council on State Support to NGOs) to women's NGOs and initiatives (chaired by Mr Azay Guliyev).
- The appointment of women deputy-governors and training future women leaders in the administration of the State as a result of the administrative reform.

We believe that the progress in Azerbaijan in terms of women's rights is impressive. The commitments of the NGOs as well as the women themselves, who are highly active in society, certainly offer positive prospects for the future.

We have a number of recommendations to Azerbaijan and the European Union:

- Further projects and campaigns should be initiated in Azerbaijan in order to change the mentalities regarding women's rights and gender equality, especially on rural areas;
- Necessary trainings should be organised for local police forces to actively involved them in fight against forced marriages and domestic violence;
- The newly elected European Parliament should consider these efforts as emblematic, for the relations between Europe and its neighbourhood;
- The European Union should understand that progress and achievements in terms of women's rights are equally important for the fight against the religious extremism in the European neighbourhood;
- The progress on women's rights should be included among the strategic objectives of the European neighbourhood policy.

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FOCUS



**European
Space
Policy**

SPACE IN 2015

27-28 January 2015

7th Conference on European Space Policy

The annual conference of the European Commission on the European Space Policy was dedicated to services and space applications. If 2014 was the year of the Rosetta's successes and of the new launcher Ariane6, 2015 should see in the front line the Copernicus program (earth observation satellite) and the first call for services' programmes for Galileo under the supervision of the European Satellite Navigation Services (GSA - European Global Navigation Satellite systems Agency). Representatives of the European Parliament and of the European Commission stressed the importance of the EU contribution to the government investments in the space sector - 11 billion euros in the period 2014-2020 - and the expectation that a strong European Space Policy contributes to the industrial innovation, growth and the industrial revival after the crisis of the recent years.

30 November - 11 December 2015

COP 21 Conference on Climate

Satellite observations provide vital support for future action on climate mitigation and ad-

aptation, with satellites enabling major advancements to climate science and models used by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. As a strong supporter and official Observer to the UN Climate Change Conference, ESA will communicate the results of its Earth Explorers research satellites providing new insights into the climate change process.

Launch of Galileo Satellites

2015 will see the continuing launches of satellites to build the constellation. Six satellites will be ready for launch in 2015. The launch sequence is still under evaluation and will be decided by the European Commission.

Intermediate eXperimental Vehicle (IXV) Mission

For some years, the development of critical re-entry technologies through basic research and preparatory programmes has been pursued, paving the way for the flight of an experimental craft. The IXV objectives are the design, development, manufacture and flight verification of an autonomous European lifting and aerodynamically controlled re-entry vehicle. On 11 February, IXV completed



a tour around earth, in order to collect sensitive data for future launchers, and ended its trip 110 minutes later in the water of the Pacific Ocean (trajectory shown in the picture above © ESA). This launch represents a cornerstone for a wide range of applications in future space transportation and the first "space shuttle" without wings. For more information, visit: http://www.esa.int/Our_Activities/Launchers/IXV

HUBBLE 25th Anniversary

Hubble, the first major optical telescope was launched on 24 April 1990 from space shuttle Discovery and this year we will celebrate its 25th Anniversary. The Hubble Space Telescope has been conceived, built, assembled, operated, and managed by a diverse group of hundreds of scientists, engineers, and technicians around the world working for the many partners that make up the Hubble Team, in particular NASA and ESA. Above the distortion of the atmosphere, Hubble has an unobstructed view of the universe. Scientists have used Hubble to observe the most distant stars and galaxies as well as the planets in our solar system and it is driving astronomical research in general.

Sources of information are the websites of ESA, NASA, European Commission and Wikipedia.



Hubble Space Telescope. Picture © NASA

THE ASTONISHING POSSIBILITIES OF SPACE

On 22 November 2014, the day before Samantha Cristoforetti became the first Italian woman in space, Samantha and five other Italian astronauts including me took part in the popular television programme “Che tempo che fa”, which is where I first became truly aware of the 30 years separating me - the first Italian astronaut - and Samantha, the latest star on the Italian and European space scene. The astonishing beauty of the Earth when viewed from an altitude of 400 km, the breathtaking sight of the sun illuminating our fragile atmosphere, the colours of the oceans, mountains and deserts, the aurora borealis and the continents picked out at night by the lights of their cities: although all of these will spark off the same emotions, there is now a large and comfortable station up there which, in my day, was still on the drawing board. GPS navigation is now also available and, above all, the very latest information technology is used everywhere. IT has revolutionised space travel. For us, the astronauts of the 90s, the ability to send and receive emails was considered highly advanced, whereas today we have social media, instant photos and the internet within reach at all times. However, I wonder whether the underlying situation has changed in any significant way: I can recall the debates which took place in the European Parliament during my time as an MEP between 1994 and 1999 on the launching of the Galileo GNSS (global navigation satellite system) project, and the Commission’s efforts to take the ESA out of the intergovernmental sphere and make it an EU body. Today, when we look at EU-financed projects such as Copernicus and Galileo, we can see that we have come a long way since then, but when it comes down to it, much remains the same.

At international level, the ‘space race’ is still based on a mixture of competition and cooperation, and every ‘first’ still sparks renewed scientific, technological and industrial interest: the Rosetta spacecraft travelled to a comet millions of kilometres away from Earth and landed the Philae scientific probe on it, thereby showing that Europe was capable of carrying out highly complex space missions; NASA is getting ready to explore Pluto with a probe in 2015; Japan is working on a mission to bring back to Earth samples from an asteroid; while other countries - China and Korea - are emerging as new global players in maritime and space technologies. In the field of manned space flight, the United States are seeking to regain a visible supremacy with the Orion

project (Orion is a space vehicle which recently passed its first trial of an orbital launch), which offers exciting new prospects for space travel, including a return to the moon, the capture of an asteroid and the circumnavigation of Mars. In the meantime, the international space station has reached maturity with a highly successful rotation of astronauts from the five co-owner agencies (NASA, ESA, Roscosmos, JAXA and CSA). We saw Samantha Cristoforetti celebrating Christmas with her Russian and American counterparts in an atmosphere which did appear to be in any way affected by the current geopolitical differences between the West and Putin’s Russia.

In early December 2014, one of history’s shortest yet most significant ESA ministerial conferences took place in Luxembourg, in the course of which the development of a new, more flexible and more competitive launch vehicle, Ariane6, was confirmed against a background of competition from SpaceX, the USA’s new low-cost space corporation. EU ministers have also agreed to continue Exomars, an ambitious European programme under Italian and UK leadership, with two missions on the cards: in the first, in 2016, a satellite will orbit Mars and a probe will land on its surface; and in the second, in 2018, a vehicle capable of moving around, drilling into and probing the surface of the planet will be deployed, to see whether there is life on the Red Planet. The history of Mars suggests that, a long time ago, the environmental conditions could support life. Now that the atmosphere and surface water have dissipated, could life still be sustained beneath the planet’s surface?

EU ministers have loosened the purse strings not so much in pursuit of a utopian dream as for pragmatic, economic reasons. ‘Space is central to the global communications revolution,’ Roberto Battiston, president



ADM-Aeolus is the first space mission to acquire profiles of the wind on a global scale. These near-realtime observations will improve the accuracy of numerical weather and climate prediction and advance our understanding of tropical dynamics and processes relevant to climate variability.
Picture © ESA.



Franco Malerba during his first space mission.

of the Italian Space Agency, said at the OECD Space Forum meeting held last December. ‘It is a renaissance for the 21st century’. The OECD regards the downstream services offered by satellites as the most important aspect of the ‘space economy’. We’re talking about a total annual turnover of USD250 billion (2013 figures), whereas the upstream manufacturing component is worth only USD6.8 billion (Europe’s share of which is USD1.9 billion). This return-on-investment argument becomes even more convincing when one considers the infrastructure that will help to improve traditional services and activities on Earth and to prevent and mitigate the effects of natural disasters. Obvious examples are Europe’s Copernicus (Earth observation) and Galileo (satellite navigation) programmes, which have come on in leaps and bounds in 2014. Copernicus’s successful start, with the first satellites now in orbit and the wise political decision taken to make the data freely available to all experts in the field, marks the beginning of an era of big data collection in the field of Earth and atmospheric sciences. And, as they say, the best is yet to come.

Franco MALERBA
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GALILEO – EUROPE’S PRESENCE IN SPACE LOOKING BACK INTO THE FUTURE

GALILEO, a top-class high-tech innovation for Europe. The keywords are satellite navigation! The forecast that was made over 10 years ago: independence

and approximately 200 000 new jobs on the basis of a profitability calculation of 1 : 4 (EUR 1 expenditure: EUR 4 income = value creation). And this with only a moderate use of public funds - in comparison with other infrastructure projects!

To date, the Americans have had a monopoly. Their world-renowned GPS (Global Positioning System) is free of charge, but has a military orientation. By contrast, GALILEO’s primary focus is on the civilian population. At first, the Americans did not like the ambitious plans one bit. But 11 September 2001 made it desirable to have a reliable partner in Europe.

Europe’s decision to undertake its first common technology project finally came about only after lengthy discussions. It had a competitive advantage, for apart from the Americans there were no competitors, but the money, the technical and scientific knowhow and in particular a healthy sector of small and medium-sized businesses which would be able to use the innovative technology. This sector, along with consumers, were to be the winners – and this is of course still the aim today.

However, the market launch was supposed to take place back in 2008! Just in time for the Beijing Olympics! In order to be able to deploy their own resources more effectively in other cost-intensive areas, the Chinese supported GALILEO with cash and an office in Beijing, even before the final decision had been made in Brussels! I inspected this office, because at that time I was the responsible GALILEO rapporteur at the European Parliament, and had been for many years.

All of the ‘Global Players’ are now catching up: The Chinese are developing their own satellite navigation system, Beidou. The Americans are modernising their GPS in line with market requirements as from this year! Russia is completing its GLONASS system, which has to date not been finished for cost reasons, and even India is now developing its own system!

And Europe? A first test satellite was launched into space in 2005; as with all subsequent satellites, using Soyuz rockets! A second quickly followed, as did four more in 2011 and 2012. Germany took the lead in the European space industry. Work began!

Things did not always run smoothly: in August 2014, two operational satellites got into the wrong orbit; however, at least the data was able to be put to scientific use! In 2015, a total of six further satellites are to be

launched – and the remainder are then to enter into operation by 2017, according to the ESA (European Space Agency); that is 24 in total!

Some of the major tasks – such as the search and rescue function by way of improved SAR (Search and Rescue) services – should be activated this year!

The further plus points are:

- free basic service
- commercial services (improved accuracy)
- Safety of Life services (air travel, sea travel)
- publicly regulated service (civil protection, national security)
- relations with third countries (by cooperation between the industry and service providers)

GALILEO offers something to everybody – walkers, pedestrians, car drivers, pilots, doctors – it can be used every day!

However, GALILEO does not operate in a vacuum: EGNOS (European Geostationary Navigation Overlay Service) helped the industry to prepare for the development of GALILEO; it is a satellite-assisted system for guaranteeing the quality of and improving GPS radio navigation signals, with a positional accuracy of 1 – 3 metres (in contrast to the American GPS, which has an accuracy of 10 – 20 metres).

The idea of the GNSS (Global Navigation Satellite System), along with its GSA (European GNSS Agency, Prague), is also indispensable. It encompasses the entire value chain – from supply, i.e. the provision of the satellite signals, to sectors such as antennas and receivers; from product equipment and hardware to the provision of added-value services. This offers a huge (!) amount to industry and the economy!

Third: The European developments are overseen by the ESA!

Jan Mayen Island in the Norwegian Arctic: the site is housing a Galileo Sensor Station plus satellite link to pass data back to the Galileo ground system. picture © ESA.

The positive EU space prognosis for engineers, technicians, scientists, citizens and the economy is becoming a reality! The future has begun – many years ago, in fact!

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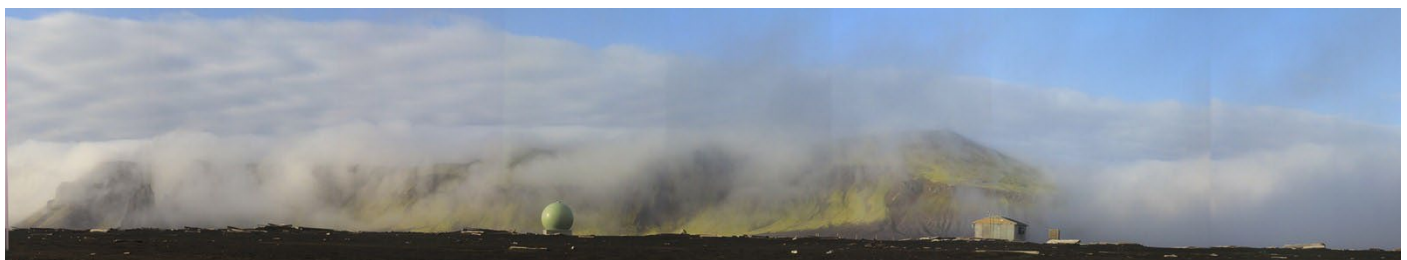
GALILEO: A MODERN-DAY PENELOPE'S WEB?

Two satellites launched under Europe's Galileo satellite navigation programme failed to reach their intended orbit position at approximately 24 000 km from the Earth's surface. Following the incident, a number of questions which were thought to have been settled have hit the international headlines once again, namely:

- 1) Can the EU really afford such an expensive toy – it costs around €1 billion a year – given that it would be possible to use other satellite systems free of charge, such as the United States' GPS system or Russia's GLONASS?
- 2) Given the delays incurred in the Galileo programme (which was launched in the early 2000s) and the scheduled completion date (the target is to have 30 satellites in orbit by 2019), will the programme still be competitive in technology and performance terms by the time it is completed?
- 3) Is the Commission the right institution to be overseeing such a complex project which, much like Penelope's web, appears to be standing still rather than steadily moving towards completion?

These questions may be answered as follows:

- 1) Europe's EGNOS system, the precursor to the Galileo programme, has been up and running for almost four years now and is performing no less well than the US's similar WAAS system, providing assistance for precision landings at more than 100 European airports





The Galileo operations team, seen in the Main Control Room at ESA's Space Operations Centre, 28 August 2014. Picture © ESA

and opening up small and medium-sized airports to new commercial routes.

2) There has been some good news from the European Space Operations Centre (ESOC) in Darmstadt: an extraordinary orbit correction manoeuvre has been carried out on the two 'injured' satellites that were launched in August 2014.

3) Satellite navigation is now a big part of our lives and, above all, of our economies: more than a third of the cars sold in Europe today are fitted with in-vehicle navigation systems; around two thirds of automatic tractors currently use EGNOS/GPS-based navigation systems; and thanks to satellites, costly terrestrial radio beacon networks are becoming increasingly unnecessary in maritime navigation and rail traffic control safety standards have improved significantly.

4) Electricity grids and mobile phone and IT networks are synchronised with atomic clocks fitted to satellites which are accurate to the nearest nanosecond (i.e. one billionth of a second), thereby providing an incredibly precise measure of time.

5) The project has allowed the EU to move forward by enabling its administration to hone its management skills on a complex engineering project and, above all, by demonstrating how Galileo, as a pan-European infrastructure with a global remit, can bring all of the Member States together in pursuit of a common objective. So Galileo gives the idea of a politically more united Europe an entirely new dimension...

6) From a geopolitical point of view the Galileo programme is a key means of gaining some distance from the US sphere of influence, which is something that has to be done if Europe is to achieve strategic independence. At present, European military assets can be used only with the consent of the United States, which grant countries full access to their 'military' GPS on a

case-by-case basis, following lengthy negotiations. Even though NATO covers most eventualities, this situation is unacceptable for a Europe striving to achieve sovereignty, unity and independence while maintaining its long-established partnership with its US ally.

The Galileo programme is therefore of key political importance to the EU, given the contribution it can make to our defence and to air and maritime transport.

Luigi CALIGARIS

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Jean-Jacques Dordain, ESA Director General (on the right), and Daniel Calleja Crespo, Director General for Enterprise and Industry at the European Commission (on the left), during the signature of the delegation agreement on the deployment phase of the European satellite radionavigation programme Galileo, and the signature of the 4th amendment to the delegation agreement on the further implementation of the European satellite navigation programme EGNOS, at ESA headquarters in Paris, on 16 July 2014.





Jan Mulder among students after the Public Lecture in Varna.

EXPERIENCES OF A SEMINAR IN VARNA

The University of Varna in Bulgaria requested the Former Members Association to provide them with a speaker on the subject of Food Security. I applied and was selected.

It proved to be an interesting experience.

The university is approximately 100 years old and situated at an attractive location in the centre of the town. At first sight the university building and its population look like any other institution of that kind in the European Union.

Every effort was made to give the visitor a warm welcome. Accommodation was provided in an excellent hotel in the immediate vicinity of the university.

The first day was spending in discussing the various subjects relative to Food Security in workshops. GMO, E values, a quality food policy, all subjects were intensively discussed in various groups. The outcome of these group discussions was not all too different of what the outcome would be in say the Environment committee of the European Parliament albeit that no firm conclusions were formulated in writing. Also here a certain distrust of GMO's and the questioning of the value of certain indications on the label of foodstuffs.

The next day was the day for the real lecture. Around 150 students turned up. I spoke in my lecture on the two aspects of food security. First the Treaty foresees that the Common Agricultural Policy must provide, among others, sufficient food at reasonable prices. Some 50 years ago the first goal was to produce sufficient quantities. Now an important aspect of the policy is to prevent wastage, which according to the statistics is 25-30% of the quantities coming on the market.

On the subject of food quality and food safety I outlined the experience in the European Union with the various food scandals in the past which led to the establishment of the European Food Safety Agency (EFSA) in Parma, Italy. And I dwelt on the differences in the functioning of EFSA with regards to that of the Food and Drugs Administration in the United States. And I referred to an initiative report that I presented to the plenary of the E.P. in 1998 on a food quality policy for the European Union. The conclusions of this report are still topical in my view. There are too many quality indications at present. Some 500 exist at this moment and it is for the average customer impossible to know what these indications represent. More simple indications are necessary. I paid much attention to the decision making process in the EU. I explained the role of the Commission, the Council and the Parliament. As always, most people are not familiar with the process but the audience proved receptive. There was quite some discussion and further questioning. My impression was that there was a positive mood towards more cooperation in Europe. Several students spoke about their enthusiasm for the Erasmus programme. They are eagerly looking forward to study elsewhere in the Europe.

It was for me a valuable experience to speak and discuss in this part of the European Union.

Jan MULDER
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OUR ADDED VALUE

After nearly thirteen years in the European Parliament I am back home in Malmö, Sweden. During the autumn last year I was busy leaving my flat in Brussels and trying to adapt to the new life at home.

Thanks to CANDRIAM for supporting this programme.



Right away I joined the Former Members Association. For me this was very important, not losing the contact with Parliament and former colleagues. My Swedish liberal friend Hadar Cars and ALDE friend Henrik Lax from Finland have always been mentioning the work that the FMA is doing in a very favourable way.

When there was an opportunity to visit De Montfort University in Leicester, England, for “EP to Campus”, I applied and was accepted. The programme was very well prepared by Professor Alasdair Blair and his team with Suzanne Walker in the forefront. Together with my highly appreciated colleague, Malcolm Harbour, we had three active days in De Montfort University. We met many students and discussed various topics such as challenges for the EU, unemployment, lack of growth, problems within in the eurozone and of course the elephant in the room; Britain leaving the EU.

The discussions with teachers and postgraduate research students working on European integration were intensive and fruitful – at least for me. I also find it very enlightening to debate research papers such as “UK refusal to adopt the Treaty on Co-Ordination, Stability and Governance, and the alternative model the UK uses to ensure fiscal stability” and “Managing universities in times of austerity and crisis”.

On the second evening we had a public meeting “European Question Time”, a special debate explaining the issues behind the European union headlines. The interest was high, the University auditorium was completely full, and we got a lot of questions:

- What does Europe mean for you?
- Representation in the EU
- Immigration in the EU
- Britain’s relationship with Europe
- Budget contributions to the EU

The last day we left the DMU and met pupils from secondary schools in Leicester. The event in the St Mary de Castro Church included a question and answer session about European issues as well as the launch of the DMU Commission “100 Ideas to Change Leicester”.

My conclusion when leaving the De Montfort University and “EP to Campus” programme is very clear. For me these meetings and discussions and debates with school children, students, teachers and the public were extremely interesting and valuable. I would like to recommend my friends in the FMA to participate in the upcoming “EP to Campus” events. For the universities

and their students it is an added value to discuss these issues with politicians and lawmakers. The same goes for us, former MEPs, we can use our experiences and also get to grips with the current debate about Europe among the students.

Olle SCHMIDT

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REFLECTIONS ON DE MONTFORT EP TO CAMPUS

I fully endorse the very positive comments by my friend Ole Schmidt. It was a very well organised programme with excellent outreach into the local community. As it was close to my ‘home’ region, it was very valuable to get the views of citizens and young people about the work of the European Parliament. We were able to challenge many false perceptions, especially the view that the UK has no influence in the EU. Ole was very helpful in providing a different viewpoint – “as others see us”.

We also found that there was much interest in the economic and single market aspects of the EU. These are not always central in EP to Campus programmes and we hope there will be more interest in this crucial policy area.

I encourage more colleagues to take part in future events. De Montfort is already advertising its 2015 programme, which will take place from 1st to 3rd December. Be there!

Malcolm HARBOUR

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Thanks to CANDRIAM for supporting this programme.

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SOME INSPIRED THOUGHTS

Mario Monti was an outstanding Commissioner. He had a significant and beneficial effect on the main areas he covered - Competition and the development of the internal market. He persuaded both the Parliament and the Council to move forward in both these areas. Indeed to many he was “super Mario”.

Later he was Prime Minister of Italy for a short period. More recently he was appointed to the Italian Senate as a “Senator for Life”.

He did not come from a political background. Indeed his academic background might lead one to assume his speeches would be rather dry. What a wrong assumption! At the alumni dinner he proved to have all the ingredients of a good after-dinner speaker-mixing argument, information with humour and charm.

On being introduced at the dinner as a “former” prime minister of Italy, he said he is a “former” trainee in the European Commission, a “former” Commissioner, and a former Prime Minister. He seemed doomed to be referred to as “former”. Indeed he might be increasing the list of “former” titles. Although he had been appointed a “Senator for Life” in Italy, the government of Italy was moving towards removing non-elected Senators. So he could soon hold the title of “Former Senator for Life”.

On a more serious level he expressed his concern about the need for a deeper understanding between North and South Europe. He had some concern about attitudes in northern Europe towards the south and in the south in countries like Italy and Greece toward the need for compliance to necessary decisions (although he did have a gentle side swipe at recent strictures from the Commission towards Italy).

On being asked who in politics had impressed most, he bowed to tact and said he would rather refer to an impressive occasion. Then he referred to the remarkable and beneficial interaction at summits during the Eurozone crises between Barack Obama and Angela Merkel “under the gaze of the incredibly soft and serene eyes of President Hollande.”



Picture © European Parliament.

“Is Europe integrating or disintegrating?” he said “I think both at the same time”. He gave examples from the financial context e.g. Banking Union where Europe is clearly integrating. But he also gave the obvious counter examples in terms of euro scepticism. But he returned to humour. He recounted an anecdote on leaving a European Council arm in arm with Angela Merkel She said “Mario you didn’t mention Eurobonds?” He replied “I knowbut I am glad you noticed”.

On being asked who in politics had impressed most, he bowed to tact and said he would rather refer to an impressive occasion. Then he referred to the remarkable and beneficial interaction at summits during the Eurozone crises between Barack Obama and Angela Merkel “under the gaze of the incredibly soft and serene eyes of President Hollande.”

When thanking him for his address, President Barón Crespo said his speech had been an excellent example of how humour and irony can oil the political process.

Robert MORELAND
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EUROPE HAS TO GO BACK TO BASICS TO GET OUT OF THE CRISIS

The present crisis doesn’t leave us many choices: either the European Union (EU) goes back to the basic values of the European project, or it will face the

risk of implosion.

Europe is the only block in the world still struggling to get out of the economic crisis, causing immense suffering to its citizens, particularly the young and the unemployed.

People feel lost, abandoned, and, believing that the European project has no answers, are moving away from the Union project, from democracy and from politics; these trends became clear in the last European elections.

This is a very dangerous path and the risk of losing control of the European project has become very real.

The present situation is partly a consequence of how badly the EU dealt with several changes of the last decades: globalisation, technological change, the enlargement of the EU and the increase of the power of the financial sector - which, by the way, was the sector that managed to get the most out of globalisation and technological innovation.

There are of course many successes to account for: the single market, the single currency and, more recently, the new regulation of the financial markets and the banking union, the latter still needing to be completed.

But the present crisis is also the result of the options taken by the EU in the management of the macro economic agenda which has been, to say the least, problematic. For too long the discussion evolved around virtuous against spendthrift countries, virtue against sin, reward against punishment. This approach was not only childish, but has proven to be very dangerous, and we are still paying a political price for not having been serious and objective in the analysis of what went wrong: the remedies didn't achieve the expected results and the burden on our citizens is clearly too violent.

There was a lack of understanding that there is no invisible hand to promote convergence among countries in a single market and in a single currency shared by economies with different levels of competitiveness. What happened was, indeed, exactly the opposite: divergences increased throughout the years of the functioning of the monetary union.

That's why we need to revisit the whole of the European agenda, to go back to basics and open a broad



Annual Seminar 2014. From left to right: Kajus Hagelstam (Head of Unit "Economic Governance Team" in the EP), Elisabetta Fonck (FMA Secretary General), Enrique Barón Crespo (FMA President) and Prof. Ansgar Belke (University of Duisburg-Essen). Other speakers were Elisa Ferreira MEP and Christof-Sebastian Klitz (Head of the Brussels Office of the Volkswagen Group). Picture © European Parliament.

discussion about how Europe and its single currency can function.

Can we have a single currency among member states that not only have abandoned the exchange rate but have also their budgets under tight control and with very little fiscal room, without an anti-cyclical instrument to stimulate the economy when needed?

The Juncker investment fund is a positive step because at least it recognizes the problem, but is it enough?

Can we live with our present high tax pressure on common citizens and allow multinationals to pay ridiculous amounts of taxes because the EU doesn't have a minimum of tax coordination?

From the beginning it was well known that the eurozone was not an optimal currency area, but there was a generalised belief that political will would always be there to fill in the gaps in order to keep the area stable and united. The truth is, however, that all of a sudden, we were left with pure economics, and politics seem to have vanished.

What we need to ask ourselves is very simple: are we willing to fill the missing gaps or not? Do we have the political will to address this issue openly or not?

These are the questions for which our citizens deserve an answer.

Elisa FERREIRA MEP
S&D, Portugal
Member of the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs

PUBLIC DEBT, REFORMS, AND GROWTH PROSPECTS OF THE GREEK ECONOMY: DOES GREECE NEED ANOTHER HAIRCUT?

How to assess the Greek economy after six years of unprecedented recession?

The economy seems to be finally recovering on the back of growing exports. For the first time in six years Greek exporters are winning market share and can create new jobs. But still the Greek economy is not over the hump: As soon as Samaras contemplated about exiting the IMF programme and thus borrowing 12 bn EUR on the capital markets, yields on Greek sovereign bonds immediately sky-rocketed to nearly 9 percentage points. This immediately indicates that a precipitant exit from the rescue programmes could mean a dangerous backslide for the Greek economy.

The Greek government says that at a time when all the indicators show the economy growing (fastest rate in EU) is wrong to insist on hard austerity measures now. Fast growth is the best situation to keep budgets under control. Keeping expenditure under control does not constitute 'hard austerity', but common sense. You cannot argue that austerity is bad when the economy goes down and also argue that austerity is bad when the economy is going up. This is because otherwise you would per se negate the existence periods well suited for cutting back and/or avoiding excessive expenditure.

Is the Greek debt sustainable? Greek debt is mainly foreign debt. If exports continue to grow it can become sustainable, especially at the ultra-low interest rates

Greece is paying on its official debt. The original main problem of Greece, the excessive government debt level, has been postponed to the far future quite some time ago by the euro area finance ministers: this is because the maturity of the up to now granted loans is very long – on average 32(!) years and interest rates very low.

Shouldn't the Europeans deliver their part of the November 2012 agreement on helping with the debt, and if yes, should that be through a haircut, lowering interest rates, extending the maturity, etc? Given the very poor track record of the Greek government some say that there is simply no trust that any haircut in official debt would not just be used as an excuse to spend more and reform less. But European partners may deliver by trying to soften the Troika's as well as the Greek government's stance in one way or the other. However, a haircut would pose significant problems for the European Central Bank's envisaged bond purchases.

What structural reforms should Greece put an emphasis on? Implementation of the laws passed until today and rooting out corruption should be the priorities now.

SYRIZA promises many measures like increasing the minimum wage and low end salaries as well as pensions. Is that achievable? Today these increases cannot be financed. Only if exports continue to grow, wages and pensions can go up again.

What would it mean for Greece, and perhaps for Europe, SYRIZA coming to power?

There will be a lot of nervousness all around. But the European partners have decided by now that Greece is no longer systemic and they are therefore prepared to be tough.

Are so many within Europe, and even the IMF and the US, wrong when they keep pushing Germany for a more expansionist policy in the Eurozone? Even the strongest expansionary policies in Germany will not pull Greece and the Southern part of the eurozone out of their problems.

Prof. Ansgar BELKE
Ad personam Jean Monnet Professor for
Macroeconomics
Faculty for Economics and Business Administration
University of Duisburg-Essen



Annual Seminar 2014. Picture © European Parliament,

FMA ANNUAL EVENTS

9-10 December 2014

On 9 December in the afternoon, FMA members had the pleasure to visit the Belgian Senate in Brussels. The visit included a presentation of the premises and an explanation of the legislative reform, followed by a Q&A session.

Martin Schulz, EP President, opened the cocktail reception, stressing the EP support to the FMA, as “former MEPs are the reserve forces of the Parliament”. He was glad to see Mr Mario Monti, as FMA Guest Speaker of the evening, who focused his speech on austerity and economic development in Europe followed by an intense and lively question and answer session on EU own resources and financial and economic issues.

The day after, members gathered to discuss with different speakers “how to make progress towards an Economic Union and the future of the European Social Model” with Elisa Ferreira MEP, Anskar Belke, Kajus Hagelstam and Christof-Sebastian Klitz.

More pictures, details and videos are available on the FMA website at www.formermembers.eu.

Pictures:

1. From left to right: Roland Roblain, Director General of the Quaestors Bureau of the Senate, Enrique Barón Crespo and Andrew Rezsöházy, Director of “Legal Affairs and Documentation”.
2. From left to right: Enrique Barón Crespo, Martin Schulz, Mario Monti and Pat Cox.
3. From left to right: Mario Monti, Francesca Ratti (EP Deputy Secretary General) and Lord Richard Balfé.
4. Prof. Anskar Belke, University of Duisburg-Essen.
5. Marie-Claude Vayssade, former MEP.
6. Kajus Hagelstam, Head of Unit “Economic Governance Team” of the European Parliament.





FMA EVENTS
26-27 MAY 2015 - BRUSSELS

PLEASE COMPLETE IN BLOCK CAPITALS AND RETURN BY 12 MAY:

Name: Mr/Mrs _____

will take part in the **EPRS INFORMATION SEMINAR** on “*Parliament’s agenda-setting powers: Commission Work Programme and own legislative initiative*”, on **Tuesday 26 May 2015** at 15.30 in the Library Reading Room.

will take part in the **FMA DINNER DEBATE** on **26 May 2015 at 19.30**, preceded by a cocktail at 18.30. The price of the dinner is **55€ per person**.

alone

accompanied

If you are accompanied, please indicate the name and the date of birth (if necessary to issue an EP access card) of the accompanying person (number of guests restricted to 1 person but exception can be made at discretion of the Chairman): _____

Total amount: € _____

if you would like to book a *vegetarian meal*, please indicate the names: _____

If possible, I would like to sit with: _____

will take part in the **AGA LUNCH** on **27 May 2015 at 13.00**. For FMA members only, the Lunch will be offered by the Association.

alone

accompanied

If you are accompanied, please indicate the number of accompanying persons: _____ (**€38 per person**)

Name and date of birth (if necessary to issue an EP access card) _____

Total amount: € _____

if you would like to book a *vegetarian meal*, please indicate the names: _____

CANCELLATION POLICY

The deadline for cancellations is **Monday 18 May** for either Dinner or Lunch. Any cancellations after this date will not be refunded and all booked meals will have to be paid for. If the Association has not received the due amount by **18 May**, the booking will automatically be cancelled.

PAYMENT For all Dinner tickets or additional (non-FMA members) Lunch places

1. I will pay the total amount from a Belgian bank account to the “European Parliament Former Members Association” at KBC bank, European Parliament, account number: 424-6110711-22.

2. I will pay the total amount by an international bank transfer to the “European Parliament Former Members Association” at KBC bank, European Parliament Branch, Rue Wiertz, B-1047 Brussels, account number: 424-6110711-22, IBAN code: BE06 4246 1107 1122 BIC: KREDBEBB.

3. I will pay the amount by credit card through the online payment system available on the FMA website: www.formermembers.eu, section Members' area. To enter this section, you will need your username and password. If you have forgotten them, you can find them through the "Lost your login information". The Secretariat can also provide you with this information.

Please indicate your name and the reason for payment: Dinner or Lunch and number of persons.

Please return to FMA by 12 May

European Parliament, JAN 02Q073

Rue Wiertz, B-1047 Brussels

Fax: 32/2 284 09 89

E-mail: formermembers@europarl.europa.eu