

This manifesto on the future of Europe dated May 6, 2011 stems from a series of eight roundtables on "The Costs of Non Europe", organized by the Faculty of Political Sciences "Cesare Alfieri" University of Florence between November 2010 and April 2011, in collaboration with the Scuola Superiore Sant'Anna of Pisa, and with the participation of over thirty academics, undergraduate students majoring in International Relations and European Studies, and the student association "Meridiani"

## **Declaration of Florence. The World won't wait for Europe**

The global economic crisis has hit Europe hard, but European governments and EU Institutions have not yet adequately responded. Our continent has the potential to revitalize its economy and role in the world, but it is paralyzed by in-fighting and lack of political unity. In a globalized world, only great powers - such as the United States, China, India, Russia, Brazil - wield significant influence. By themselves, the nation states of Europe are economically and politically too small to play a meaningful role on the international stage and to ensure the security and prosperity of its citizens.

Europe is free from conflict after centuries of bloody wars, but violent conflicts around the world persist. The defense spending of EU member states is about half of the United States. But while Europe collectively spends the second most on defense in the world, Europe's capacity for force projection is weak—as was clearly demonstrated in Libya. The squandering of 27 separate armed forces through the inefficient allocation of resources makes the case for a common European defense clear. A unified force would reduce military spending and increase the effectiveness of interventions.

While Europe continues to depend militarily and strategically on the United States, Europe has to deal with growing energy dependence on Russia and instability in North Africa, the Middle East, and the Caucasus. The European Union is the largest importer and second largest consumer of energy, but compared to the U.S., electricity prices are higher by 21% and gas by as much as 90%. As long as member States negotiate their own energy deals, their bargaining power will remain limited. Collective purchasing, accompanied by a European carbon tax, would reduce energy costs for citizens while as increasing resources for EU-wide investments in alternative energy, and green energies and energy saving production technologies.

In the face of monumental changes triggered by the fall of the Soviet Union, Europe has responded constructively with the creation of the single market, enlargement, and the introduction of the Euro. The euro insulated Europe from pressures in the oil market when the price of oil rose from \$18 a barrel before September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001 to \$120 in 2003. And since the financial and economic crisis of 2008, the European Union has created 16 million jobs, which is for the first time more than the United States. But the euro alone can not compensate for the absence of a European fiscal and economic policy. A single market and currency for 17 member States cannot be reliably sustained with 27 separate national economic policies that are often inconsistent with each other.

National responses are increasingly inadequate to a variety of challenges such as

climate change, fostering sustainable development, and adapting to global competition. In 2010 the public expenditure of individual States represented between 40 and 67 percent of national GDP. To save themselves and their banking systems, European countries have created a bailout fund of 700 billion euros, which is equivalent to more than 5% of European GDP, while the EU budget has remained at 1% of European GDP. This is inadequate and the budget of the EU must be enlarged in light of the growing powers of the EU and the fact that over 60% of national legislation derives from actions taken at the EU-level.

Europe is still the world's biggest economy and the largest center for savings. Its citizens enjoy the best quality of life, a high level of education, and the greatest longevity in the world. Yet the perception of inevitable decline is spreading and it remains difficult to plan for the future. Unless the current trend is reversed, continued low birth rates will further decrease the working-age population-- in the coming decades there will be a reduction of twenty million workers. It is in this context that we should frame economic, social, and immigration concerns.

Despite having made great strides in the past fifty years, the EU is now gripped by a deep crisis. National governments, rather than building a promising future for young Europeans, tend to look backwards, and apparently regret the loss of closed national boundaries. Their approach enhances populism and euro-skepticism, which in turn encourage political opinions in favour of a return to national currencies and protectionism. The current political leadership is mostly concerned about national opinion polls and is light years away from the youth of Europe, from its life projects and the challenges that their generation must face.

We need more - not less - Europe to achieve sustainable economic and employment growth, to fight terrorism and organized crime, to protect the environment and guarantee energy supply and security, to adequately address migration flows in an increasingly inter-dependent world and maintain the values of solidarity, in short to build a better future for the European youth.

## **A call for the political revival of the European Union**

To ensure that Europe's decline does not become irreversible, we call upon governments, parliaments, political parties, European institutions, trade unions, and business associations to redouble efforts at European political unification. This is the only way for Europe to claim and gain a role as a world power-- an agent for peace and the development of all peoples.

We therefore call for the following reforms:

- Giving the EU the tools to revive the economy and increase employment, notably investing in technology, research and the infrastructure necessary for sustainable development. Further, a plan must be devised that is capable of adapting the European

social model to new challenges and to address increasing social inequalities.

- The implementation of EU policies in all areas in which national policies are clearly ineffective, as in the areas of security and immigration, energy and environment, and justice. The EU should have jurisdiction with regards to large financial crimes and transnational terrorism.

- Reinforcing permanent cooperation in defense matters. In addition reducing military expenditures; this would allow the European Union to have a greater capacity to act and could help to enforce rulings of the Security Council, thus giving practical effect to the provisions of Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations.

The political revival of a united Europe will need:

- A reduction of wasteful national spending and reform of the EU budget with an increase of EU's own resources. This can be accomplished through such methods as a carbon tax, the creation of Eurobonds, and strategic projects aimed at sustainable economic growth.

- European legislation and a structure adequate to combat financial and organized crime, and in particular the mafia, who until now have managed to avoid the actions by Member States.

- The creation of a European Energy Agency that has the task of negotiating the purchase price of gas and petroleum from producers, as well as coordinate policies of the Member States in the field of energy saving and renewable energy.

- Strengthening the powers of the European Commission to ensure an executive branch that is effective, transparent, democratic, and accountable to citizens and the European Parliament.

- A European electoral reform, including a significant number of MEPs elected on the basis of a single European constituency, so as to encourage national parties to push for meaningful government programs for Europe and present their candidates for the President of the European Council and Commission.

- A permanent seat for the European Union in the Security Council, the International Monetary Fund and World Bank.

- The abolition of the need for a unanimous vote in the Council of Ministers and the Council of Europe, starting with the use of the '*passerelle* clause' in the Lisbon Treaty.

- The abolition of unanimity for the approval and ratification of European treaties, replacing it with a European referendum for ratification, with a double majority of citizens and states, so that the Treaties come into force between the States in which there has been a majority in favor, while other forms of integration should be negotiated with

the others.

We therefore urge:

- The European Parliament to present the necessary amendments to the treaties and to make use of the new powers conferred by the Treaty of Lisbon.

- National governments to abandon shortsighted policies, and instead focus on long-term strategies and to continue on the path towards the unification of Europe in the interest of the new generations. This requires the use of tools already available, as seen in enhanced cooperation and the “Eurogroup.”

- Political parties to consider the European dimension as a crucial element of their policy programs and organizational strategies.

- The media to highlight, through the tools of investigative journalism, to what extent European citizens and especially young people are paying the “cost of non-Europe.”

To this end we are committed to

- An annual initiative to draw attention to the process of European integration, involving academia and Erasmus students, who are the symbol of a common Europe that already exists .

Only by re-launching the project of the United States of Europe, originally envisaged by Jean Monnet and Altiero Spinelli, can young Europeans hope for a better future, raise the stature of Europe in the world, and reverse the perception of an inevitable European decline.

Florence, May 6, 2011

(<http://www.unifi.it/relazioni-internazionali-studi-europei/CMpro-l-s-19.html>)