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**Europe opened to dialogue: a common voice
for a political and democratic Union
Historical memoirs of the Messina Conference
and the relaunching of the European Constitution**

The European Union has to give an answer to the internal challenges derived from national selfishness and to the external challenges of a world that is not able to unite democracy, peace and development.

Life experiences suggest that it is important to widen the democratic consent by involving more and more people and enabling governments to meet their needs.

The fall of the Berlin Wall has released new energies, but globalization cannot ignore the local development. It is possible to combine local peculiarities and sustainable development.

The “European Communities”, after the two world wars’ disasters, have put together the main resources they had at that time, first coal and steel, later agriculture and other functional policies to strengthen peace and prosperity.

The success of the Community and the intergovernmental method and the need for peace made it possible to open the doors of this Happy Castle to other States.

The European Union, born in Maastricht, was defined as a possible Europe. Kohl has unified Germany relaunching the process of European integration, Mitterand led the coalition of agreement together with the other ten Heads of State.

The Commission played a ruling and far-sighted role, leading the Structural Funds reform and the European Single Market to success under Delors’s Presidency, thus starting a definite and defined way for the birth of a single common currency.

The Summit of Milan in 1985, chaired by Italy, represented an important restart, after Fountainebleau, positively interpreting the Treaty of Rome that established the E.E.C., and thus allowing the beginning of the Treaties reform and the birth of the Single European Act.

In the absence of an external pressure or challenge and the doubts on the future of the Soviet Union, the beginning of a democratic process or authoritarian government, the Heads

of State and Government, gathered in Maastricht, would not have shared such an advanced Treaty in terms of transfer of sovereignty, but insufficient to face and govern, at the European level, the new challenges, responding to a request for a democratic Europe by the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, which have just been freed by the fall of the communist regime.

Conscious of the Maastricht Treaty limits, compared to the more or less pacific evolution of the former communist countries, the Heads of State or Government, gathered in the Dutch city, agreed for a new Intergovernmental Conference in 1996 aiming at amending and completing the Maastricht Treaty.

The enlarged Europe was born in Amsterdam, the new institutional balances allowed the reinforcing of the community method compared to the intergovernmental one. The internal challenge must combine the joining of new States with the strengthening or governability of the European Institutions.

In this historical period, first the European Communities and later the European Union constructed a democracy in Europe through a process of assent steadying the irreversibility of peace by sharing the “*aquis communautaire*”. In the meantime they achieved a community governability at European level, the most advanced compared to the selfishness of the States.

But in Nice the intergovernmental Union has gone stronger and does better correspond to the French ruling vision of the European Union.

The Council gets more strength with a different number of votes for each single State and the Commission is weakened in its leading function of carrying out community policies in the interests of the European citizen and to support the integration.

It is obvious that the single States believe they cannot renounce their right in having their own Commissioner to protect their national selfishness and the relative decisions as well as the new reform are postponed.

This way the strengthening becomes secondary compared to the challenges of enlargement. The European Union took another step forward, despite the results were below the expectations. Furthermore the vote system, with a double majority, has been “shyly” adopted and the awareness of external challenges and the inadequacy of the decisions require another appointment for a functional reform concerning the new boarder-lines of the Union.

The new scenery of the international policy requests a political role of the Union, which in this context becomes an increasing need.

The different ideas or voices of the Heads of State or Government are obviously not in harmony to give a credible and incisive policy of the Union, hence supporting common interests belonging to European integration.

The achievement of the culture of peace and democracy helps the Union to continue the reform process to allow a better governance of the future Europe.

The Convention for a Constitutional Treaty represents a shareable answer for reaching a more important participation of the civil society working out the main rules of the European fundamental law.

It's impossible to reach a Constitution postponing an important explanation about the real reasons, the role and the final aims of the European Union.

Many believe that the French referendum wasn't against Europe but against Chirac. The left wing electorate, during the French-election for the President, were "obliged" to vote Chirac just to avoid Le Pen. During the referendum, the electorate had regained his freedom to judge Chirac's policy.

The Dutch referendum was the answer to a "temporary" uneasiness that the local policy wasn't able to solve, while an historical strengthening of the Union can be the right answer for their problems.

In a European contest, the negative answer of the French and Dutch electorate to the Constitutional Treaty represented a little minority compared to the positive answers of a qualified majority of the States of the Union expressed either by parliamentary votes or by referendum.

The long period of reflection and the capacity of Ms. Merkel of aiming an agreement does not surely strengthen the integration process. The Treaty of Nice allows us to govern the Union.

The reasons of the negative Irish answer are the same of the Dutch one, but this negative result can represent a resetting and sharing moment about Europe's future.

How should the possible Europe look like? Certainly not the one with the governments putting a volley of veto, but always prepared, above all more sceptics, not to say No to the ample quotas of the Structural Funds, without thinking that they are the consequence of the transfer of sovereignty. They do represent the most important instrument for social and economic cohesion that allows the Union Market to be functional also for the weak areas.

The States and the people have to give an answer to the youth marching in favour of the peace. The Union has to start again the way to a Constitution; the Constitutional Treaty being

approved by a qualified majority of European citizens could represent the right compromise, brings back to memoirs and reaffirms the shared values of fifty years of peace and democracy.

The direct election of the European Parliament set for the next month of June is the most intensive moment of democracy participation.

States and governments that have already approved the Constitutional Treaty should support the direct election of the Commission; the European parties should put the president candidates as the first name on the electoral list and following that with the Commissioner candidates.

It is imperative to give a correct democratic role to the Union Government, and to avoid to have a President subject to the decisions of a real executive board of great States.

Europe of the dialogue has to strengthen its democratic road and has to give strength to his political role sharing the most advanced institutional balances, giving the Union the possibility to speak with one voice.

A new “Messina” Conference can help not to forget history and shared values, which have strengthened peace, democracy and wellness in Europe.

In the world, there is a strong demand for a European Union, rightly seen as the bearer of peace, and concrete instruments of solidarity.

The great history of the European Union has built “bridges”; this is shown by the availability to welcome new States and by the politics to be on good terms with neighbours because that strengthened peace and democracy beyond the limits of the new borders.

Europe has to run its own political role and a common voice or identity that has not to depend on the rotating Presidency; It has to outline a democratic way between small States and big Regions without damaging the States that allow the existence of the Union.

The challenge is the skill to share and practice democratic rules aware that we live in a different world and “Yalta” is past and the “aquis” are not only the European one. For this matter we follow to open our borders to other States, to other religions without an ethnic distinction, with the aim to develop different languages. Furthermore we should not forget to help the integration of Turkey to find a new partnership with Russia, giving to the NATO an up-to-date role to maintain peace.

Let's avoid that politicians “without any experience” could light fires at the Union's doors, let's read them the Fedro fairy tale of the wolf and the lamb reminding them its message; we have also to underline that it is not allowed to violate the sovereignty of a State in the name of a “friendly” ethnic group: we should remember Berlin and overcome Poli.

For this aim, the European Union can play a role of peace also for the integration for the people of the Black Sea, having developed common politics that granted the overcoming of religious fences, involvement of minorities and the diversity felt as richness.

The Union support to the academic world has not to be forgotten because it has been giving voice and priority to the development of the South/East Dialogue for a long time.

In this framework it is important to give credibility and to honour the commitments of Rome with the signature of the Constitutional Treaty taking the opportunity of the European elections and relaunching a new Messina, in order that the European citizens could reflect and decide on the future of Europe opened to dialogue.