



Welcome

I would like to warmly welcome you all to our first Maurits Coppieters Centre newsletter.

In the Centre Maurits Coppieters (CMC), we continue to look for alternatives to the current economic and institutional frameworks within the European Union, promoting and paying tribute to the organisation's cultural and linguistic diversity. We also seek for means by which democracy can be further anchored, through exercising the right to self-determination.

For the second time, the CMC held its Annual Assembly together with the European Free Alliance and the European Free Alliance Youth. We discussed the economic crisis and the penury suffered by a sizeable number of our people. However, some very encouraging news has also emerged. Our organization continues to prosper and grow stronger. We have consolidated further alliances and incorporated new and valuable members to our Scientific Advisory Council. We have also seen a growth in the mobilization and dynamics of social and political movements supporting the right to decide.

These are times in which self-determination is coming into its own and we wish to renew the theoretical grounds and the democratic mandate of this collective political right, which symbolizes a hope for social transformation and political change for thousands of people in our countries. In 2014, we also expect to carry out new activities related to taxation and linguistic rights, paradiplomacy and the geopolitics of stateless nations, some of which are promoted by members who are running their first projects with the CMC.

*Xabier Macias
President of the Centre
Maurits Coppieters*



From left to right: Eric Defoort, EFA president; Günther Dauwen, EFA Director and Xabier Macias, President of the Centre Maurits Coppieters, at the 2014 EFA General Assembly in Santiago de Compostela

#TIME4SD

28 European Free Alliance (EFA) member parties will run for office in the May European Parliamentary (EP) elections. They will keep working for more self-determination in Europe. They will keep defending EFA ideals, and enlarging the number of our MEPs (Members of the European Parliament). It is time for self-determination, it is our TIME!

The EFA reflects a general trend across Europe: ancient nations, regions and peoples, currently under the jurisdiction of various states, are increasingly calling for enhanced autonomy or

outright independence. They want to bring decision-making powers back home. In 2014, after the EP elections, we will witness two independence referenda that may well redraw the borders of the United Kingdom and the Spanish state and reshape the map of Europe as we know it.

*It is high time for self-determination!
It's time for a Europe of the Peoples!*

For the EFA the issue of self-determination takes centre stage. For us, the

era of the imperial, artificial nation-state, held together by force, is over.

We urge the European Union to prepare itself to welcome new emerging states, we urge European decision makers to start preparing for internal enlargement - a juridical concept coined by EFA MEP Neil MacCormick and further developed by the Maurits Coppieters Centre.

It is high time for self-determination! It's time for a Europe of the Peoples!

*Günther Dauwen
Director of EFA*

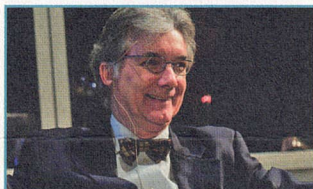


FOCUS ON: GENERAL ASSEMBLY

It's about time!

CMC joins round-table debate on self-determination

Santiago de Compostela - The debate was organised by the Maurits Coppieters Centre (CMC), the European Free Alliance and the European Free Alliance Youth during our General Assembly in February.



Daniel Turp

Daniel Turp, the CMC's advisor and International and Constitutional Law Professor at the University of Montreal, Roccu Garoby, President of the EFAY and advisor on the Multiannual Financial Framework for the Greens-EFA group in the European Parliament (EP) and Lorena López de Lacalle, EFA's Vice-president and International Relations Secretary at the National Executive of Eusko

Alkartasuna discussed the main political challenges for the next few months in Europe.

The debate, moderated by journalist Laura Pous Trull, was framed under the designation "the self-determination generation". The three speakers agreed that 2014 is going to be "the year of self-determination", especially considering the referendums planned in Scotland and Catalonia.

2014, a year in which some of the main points of the EFA manifesto will undoubtedly shape the politics developed in Brussels.

They stated that the European Union will have to find a political and not a legal solution to the hypothetical independence of Catalonia or Scotland, arguing that it would be unrealistic to expel these two historical nations from the EU just because they decide, democratically, to



Roccu Garoby

become independent. On languages, the Alfonsi report with its benefits for the protection and boosting of minority languages in Europe was one of the main highlights of the discussion. The speakers explained that the EP has taken an important step in the right direction and called for more determined action in the future to protect minority languages appropriately.

On the Economy, the speakers highlighted the need to offer more powers to regions and local governments, who are closer to citizens and usually understand better their needs and problems. All the speakers regretted the high unemployment rate in Europe (especially in member states such as

Spain) and stated the need to implement effective policies to help young people to get jobs.

The debate offered a good opportunity for the three organizations on the General Assembly to explain their ideas on the issues at stake.



Lorena López de Lacalle

The audience was also able to participate in the debate, putting questions and helping develop a discussion that is going to provide a framework for 2014. A year, in which some of the main points of the EFA manifesto such as self-determination, the need to build a more democratic and transparent EU, or the urge to overcome the Eurozone crisis will undoubtedly shape the politics developed in Brussels and the future of the European Union.



Round table-debate on self-determination in Santiago de Compostela (15 February 2014)



Alan Sandry at the REdefining self-determination in the 21st Century Conference in the European Parliament

The peoples themselves must decide.

Brussels - The recent UNPO Conference at the European Parliament provided the perfect platform for expressing views on national and collective self-determination.

Following the precedents set by the UN Charter of 1945 and the UN Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, peoples throughout the world are beginning to assert themselves in a bottom-up demand for recognition of their traditions and their place in society.

Individual freedoms should be paramount, and no individual should be forced to accept

customary group practice. However, community development should be encouraged and a history of democratic conviction, or a willingness to accept new democratic processes (in the case of a nation emerging from totalitarianism), should ensure acceptance of the self-determination position by other protagonists.

Individual freedoms must be paramount.

Plurality of citizenship is important in order for societies to progress. Alongside this, we should start envisaging communities of 'peoples' who can interact

through paradiplomacy and cultural diplomacy. In the long term, this may prove a more rewarding option for personal and collective freedoms than rushing into organising these peoples within centralised state structures.

Ultimately, it is the peoples themselves who must decide, without hindrance or persuasion, how they see their futures. Only then will self-determination, through collective deliberation, begin to set the scene for the creation of a more harmonious geo-political environment.

*Alan Sandry
Ph.D. in Political Science*



Seen on Twitter

@YesScotland Mar 19
@NicolaSturgeon: "For me, the debate is about what kind of society we want Scotland to be" <http://bit.ly/1nDc093> #indyref

@Josep_Huguet Feb 15
The Alfonsi Report, approved by the European Parliament, is a gateway to ensuring that States recognize national diversity. #Time4SD

@EUPARTYEFA Feb 14
The EU must contribute to consolidating the democratic principle of self determination plus states must guarantee it #Time4SD #EFA14 pic. twitter.com/dz0Dh9p1Uk

@AlynSmithMEP Mar 28
Cardiff airport selfie with **@JillEvans** MEP heading for Anglesey, me to Scotland after some great **@PlaidCymru** campaigning pic. twitter.com/Kwr9Qg1fQI



Brussels, we have a problem.



Jaume Garau

The EU's Regional Policy is aimed at encouraging more harmonious economic growth among the different European

territories. The problem is a lack of transparency when it comes to the criteria by which European investments are distributed within the different territories of a state. Anomalous situations arise frequently today.

There are regions with similar incomes that receive very different sums from European financing. This is the case of Northern Ireland and the

Balearic Islands, to name but two. They make large contributions to the community budget, but only receive tiny investment capital from the EU. We need the Governments of Member States to clearly explain the criteria used when deciding on how the investment capital is distributed.

*Jaume Garau,
Ph. D. in Economics*

Jill Evans

INTERVIEW

Let's start with the "hot topic" of 2014, the referenda in Catalonia and Scotland. I would like to know your opinion about this.

Well, I think that the two planned referenda are opportunities to talk about basic democratic rights. Since democracy is a basic principle for the whole European Union, I think every democrat should be on the side of the people who want these referenda to happen. After so many months saying that he would not comment on what was an internal Member State matter, president Barroso's statement on Scotland was disgraceful. It was a clear attempt to influence the debate in Scotland.

How do you see this declaration of independence in relation to the EU? And regarding EU citizenship, what would happen to the people in any newly independent nation?

The EU can't just continue as it has up to now. It has come through the economic crisis but it has been pushed right to the limit and things have to change. Now people are demanding more democracy and more accountability. I think that this is the moment to bring that about. The referenda are catalysts, in a way, for further changes across Europe as well.

What do you think of current EU linguistic policies? What should the EU do in the next parliamentary term to give continuity to the work

done on these issues? What are the policies that need to be put in place in order to empower minority languages?

Since the aim -that we constantly hear from the Commission and other EU institutions- is to bring Europe closer to people, then if you don't speak to people using the language that they speak -literally- this is never going to happen. People will always see Europe as something alien and far away.

We need to refocus on people and social issues in Europe.

In areas like Wales, for example, if language is not a criteria when looking at the impact of planning new developments, then we are going to see our language being constantly undermined. Here in Parliament we very often call for an environmental impact assessment on all kinds of developments, so we should have linguistic impact assessments too. It is important to highlight that language diversity can actually benefit the economy.

Where do you think the EU should put more effort in overcoming the crisis? What are the best strategies for building a sustainable European welfare state?

I think the whole approach to the crisis has been wrong. Austerity policies across Europe have caused tremendous misery. We have been calling instead for more investment



and job creation. We have lost sight of what the goal of the EU was. If you look at the Lisbon Treaty the goal was full employment. We need to be able to use the enormous resources that we have in the EU budget to stimulate the economy again. We need to refocus on people and social issues in Europe because the economic crisis has shifted the entire focus onto the economy and financial markets. Furthermore, what research has shown is that not only can small states survive, but by working together they can actually be more flexible and survive an economic crisis better than large states.

I think we should be looking closely at issues like the minimum income or wage, which I know that, at the moment, the EU has no competence over, as such, but if we had some kind of minimum income or benefit then that would help correct the current situation. A financial transaction tax is something that we have always believed in. This is a very popular issue amongst people and it is a way for the bankers and the financial sectors to pay something back for all the trouble they have caused. I know that European

taxes, as such, might not be welcome (certainly not in the UK) but in this case, I think it is something that we really need to push very hard on.

How do you see the upcoming European Elections? What stands do you take and how do you see the decline in trust in the EU by its citizens since the beginning of the crisis?

That varies among different countries, but, in general, there is indeed a lack of trust. It is a very difficult election for us because it is hard to have a real debate about Wales' national interests and Wales' future in Europe when all the attention has been focussed on whether the UK will stay in or get out the EU altogether. EFA parties have shown that we can make a difference, even being a small group in Parliament.

Most of the issues we have discussed, such as linguistic equality, cultural issues, democracy and the right of small nations would not be on the agenda at all if it wasn't for us. It is a crucial election for the EFA as well as for Europe because we have to put these things at the top of EU agenda again.

Editorial board - Xabier Macías, Günther Dauwen, José Miguel Martínez Tomey, Alan Sandry, Josep Vall and Antonia Luciani

Advisory Scientific Council - Luc Boeva, Xosé Manuel Nuñez-Seixas, Carmen Gallego, Josep Huguet, Jaume Garau and Daniel Turp

Coordination - Ignasi Centelles and Albert Sesé

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