



Refugees welcome

In summer 2015 Europe experienced the largest flows of refugees since the Second World War. The stories of pain, suffering, and hope of the people who have fled Syria and other countries because of conflict have deeply touched the peoples of Europe.

Regrettably, the institutional response of the European Union (EU) has been and continues to be shameful, both as regards the war in Syria and the causes of this and other conflicts in the Mediterranean, and as regards the treatment of the families seeking asylum and the negotiations on admission quotas.

Europe was badly prepared for such a crisis: public expenditure on border controls in the last five years has been much higher than that for

Refugee crises are nothing new and will always occur.

providing for refugees or for humanitarian aid and rescue missions at sea. The uncoordinated response by

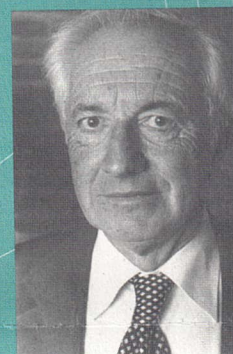
the Member States of the EU and a clear lack of willingness to take decisions on quotas and hosting have once again worn away at citizens' confidence in Community institutions, bringing into question the validity of the values of the Union and endangering the lives of displaced people.

Refugee crises are nothing new and will always occur, and this European Union is not fit to tackle them with humanity and respect for basic rights. It is the responsibility of us, the peoples to change this.

*Ignasi Centelles, Coordinator
Xabier Macias, President
Centre Maurits Coppieters*

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NOMINATIONS NOW OPEN



Roccu Garoby

Self-determination, the way forward!

A universal right - that is what the self determination principle is. No more, no less!

And just as with democracy, human rights, gender equality and sexual equality, there should be no limit to any universal right. Even if it were illegal, it would still remain a universal right.

The principle of self-determination is a universal right.

the United Nations Charter which underlines the peoples' right to self-determination. But while the principle of self-determination is

Fortunately, for decades, self-determination has been recognised by the international community through

a universal right, some people, states and powers, in a certain neo-imperialism, try to deny this fundamental and universal right. We must therefore proclaim that the principle of self-determination is indeed inalienable.

There is no future for any nation or society worldwide if the people, and especially young people, are not able to think about, debate and dream about their future. So let us share with you our dreams – a dream “which shall never die!”

Roccu Garoby, President of the European Free Alliance youth

Extract from the publication: “Democracy and European Emerging values”



Keeping human rights in the forefront



Johanna Green

Self-determination is a fundamental human right - it is not only enshrined in international law, but the expression of these rights is closely linked to identity, religious beliefs and even to dignity.

Taking into account the referenda in Scotland and Catalonia, the topic of self-determination is still sidelined and there is even a misunderstanding that self-determination is incompatible with the notion of territorial integrity.

It is vital to engage in dialogue with the respective stakeholders.

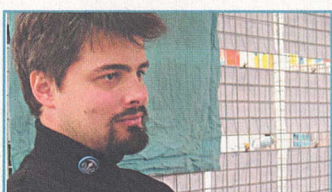
All these topics are, in fact, interlinked and remain important for the European Union in order to bring the

people to the forefront. The EU can, and has the obligation to, assist in promoting empowerment in that sense. There are many cases where human rights have been directly undermined for economic, political or security-related reasons, from the struggles in Ethiopia to those in Baluchistan. On the other hand, there are more successful cases, like the case of Kosovo, where seven years of independence has brought empowerment to the people. But also the case of Abkhazia where almost 20 years of de facto

independence has allowed for democratic institutions and regular elections, albeit challenges in terms of diplomatic recognition. It is vital to engage in dialogue with the respective stakeholders, ranging from politicians, academics, practitioners and representatives of minority rights organisations on the regional and national level. This is why it remains important to raise awareness on self-determination in the European Union.

*Johanna Green,
Program Manager of UNPO*

Brexit: Leaving the European Union?



Gael Briand

The handling of the Greek debt issue has been much discussed, not least among the European left. In Cardiff last July, Plaid Cymru MEP Jill Evans even said that she was "questioning the European Union for the first time in her life as an elected official", so shocked she had been by how it was dealt with.

Alexis Tsipras, whose ambition was to avoid yet further social regression for the Greek people, was effectively forced to bow down before the intransigence of the right-wing forces in power in practically every European state.

But there has been another threat to leave the European Union in recent months, this time coming from the United Kingdom.

Even though it has only a single MP in Westminster, UKIP, a Eurosceptic and hyper-nationalist party, put on a show of force at the elections last May and obliged the Conservative David Cameron to propose a referendum on

whether the UK should leave the European Union.

Can you be a member of the European Union while pursuing left-wing policies?

The government has explained that it does however support staying in the European Union subject to several conditions: renouncing a closer union, controlling immigration, but above all keeping the current process of economic deregulation, inter alia by accepting the transatlantic free trade treaty.

Two very different cases, then:

Greece would be ejected for following a left-wing policy while the UK would be kept in under the condition of keeping on with a right-wing policy!

The question that then arises is this: can you be a member of the European Union while pursuing left-wing policies? The acceptance of these policies by European "socialists" raises further questions. Should it then not be for the parties that represent national minorities to promote a different Europe? A Europe that protects, not a Europe that impoverishes.

*Gael Briand
Editor in chief of
People Breton*

Which Federalism for Europe?



Antonello Nasone

“Which Federalism for Europe?” is a short paper by Antonello Nasone and Attilio Pinna which was conceived as a basis for discussion in order to create a new perspective for European Federalism.

The starting point of this paper is the failure of the European Union to move towards federalism.

Over the years the EU has maintained a composition and an institutional structure based on the old states and on the fundamental reason for its foundation: an economic and commercial union.

The end of the Cold War which divided the European people for 40 years could have been the chance for Europe to redraw its institutions and design a new civil life based on communities of the peoples of Europe. However, it chose to organise itself on the political conditions set by the old states, with even the accession of new member states being permitted only through the mechanism of enlargement, without questioning the basis for staying together.

The only power which the EU has been able to create and impose on all its citizens is that of economics and bankers.

The new Europe was never born.

The European Communities are caught between the persistence of the old States on one side and the arbitrary decisions of the only decision-making body that the European Union has

managed to create, the ECB, on the other.

Europe is running the risk of being transformed into a territory dominated by the most powerful States and ruled by institutions, like the ECB, which are sorely lacking in democratic legitimacy.

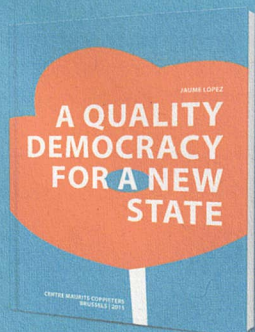
Europe should take on the task of creating a democracy able to rediscover the sense of community, not the creation of a “super-state”.

To create a Europe of the communities, all equal in worth, the acceptance of democratic rules is not enough. Europe should take on the task of creating a democracy able to rediscover the sense of community, not the creation of a “super-state” which tramples its own diversity. We should have the courage to think about European identity as a mosaic, where different traditions and way of living are protected.

Antonello Nasone
Researcher at
Istituto Camillo Bellieni

STUDY

A QUALITY DEMOCRACY FOR A NEW STATE



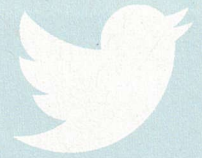
“A Quality Democracy for a New State” is the most recent study by the Centre Maurits Coppieters, focusing on direct democracy and the democratic drafting of constitutions.

The author of this paper, Dr Jaume Lopez, examines the possibility of strengthening democracy and its three main constituents: representation, participation and direct democracy, though mainly focusing on advancements in the latter.

The aim of this study is, therefore, to offer tools with which direct democracy

can be improved. Special emphasis is put on the case of Catalonia.

The study also gives insights from different contexts in which direct democratic elements are currently applied, ranging from the case of Switzerland to that of the United States of America. By focusing not only on improvements in direct democratic elements, but also on the democratic drafting of constitutions, the study reflects upon what the content and the procedures for a constitutional convention in the 21st century should look like.



Tweet!

Xabier Macias
[@xabiermacias](#)
April 18, 2015

The @IdeasforEurope assembly comes to an end in Lusitania. Green light for new projects for the stateless nations. #coppieters15



CIEMEN International
[@ciemien_int](#)
April 18, 2015

We are today welcoming new @IdeasForEurope members @fnexe (Valencian Country) and @Ezkerberri (Basque Country) #Coppieters15



Jill Evans
[@JillEvansMEP](#)
July 13, 2015

Never has Europe of the Peoples been so badly needed. Greece deserved solidarity & support. Got more austerity. Dark days. @Plaid_Cymru

Ska Keller
[@SkaKeller](#)
September 22, 2015

Solidarity only when it fits is not solidarity. #refugeeswelcome

“Diversity means Europe! If you do not understand this, you cannot understand the real Europe!”

INTERVIEW WITH
Jordi Sebastià, MEP and
Co-chair of the Intergroup
on Traditional Minorities,
National Communities and
Languages

**What can you tell us about
the parliamentary Intergroup
and what is your role in it?**

I am a Co-chair of the parliamentary Intergroup, where I sit as a member of the EFA group. The main focus is on the empowerment of national minorities in Europe, but also of minority languages or languages considered as a minority language. Because this area directly correlates with the aims of the EFA, I was considered as one of the Co-chairs of the Intergroup.

Why is it important?

A large proportion of the population in Europe is part of a minority group, which means that many of these groups share problems that could be resolved through a common “acquis”. Unfortunately this does not exist as yet. The European Commission has never considered problems concerning minorities as a main issue, which is why it is important to have an Intergroup in the Parliament to fight for the rights of minorities.

**What would you consider
the current priorities of the
Intergroup?**

Since the last round of enlargement in Eastern Europe we

have discovered that a many minorities are suffering from discrimination in their respective states. We are also focusing on the “traditional” minorities in the old member states, like the Basques and the Catalans. But in the Eastern member states, it has become clear for us that discrimination and persecution has seen a significant increase following EU accession. For instance, the Turkish minority in Bulgaria are not allowed to freely express themselves in their native language, which is a direct attack on human rights.

*We have to keep
stressing minority
right issues and keep
bringing them to the
forefront.*

This is one area of focus in the Intergroup, along with the general aims of preserving ethnic and linguistic diversity in Europe. Diversity means Europe! If you don't understand this, you can't actually understand Europe!

**So how do you see previous
efforts on the protection of
minority languages, like the
Alfonsi report or the NPLD's
Roadmap for Linguistic
Diversity?**

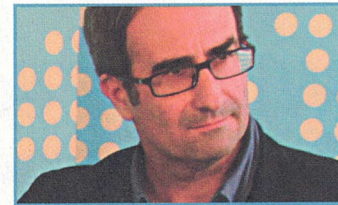
The Alfonsi report was a very important moment in parliamentary history, because for the first time the EP approved a declaration which clearly highlighted the importance of defending

linguistic diversity in Europe, by a large majority. The EP showed its sincere willingness to act on these matters. The Roadmap is also a very interesting concept in this regard. Our work now, as MEPs, is to push and highlight the importance of linguistic diversity and of the work that is being done by the stakeholders involved and to remind the other European institutions of this.

How is the Intergroup connected to other institutions like the CoE's secretariat of the framework for regional and minority languages, the OSCE's High Commissioner for National Minorities or the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights?

This is part of our daily work. We have regular meetings where we discuss current issues and encourage them to press for the implementation of initiatives. But we have to admit that there are no signs on the part of the European Commission that they will act on these matters, although a lot of work has already been done. We have to keep stressing minority rights issues and keep bringing them to the forefront. Institutions like the UN or the OSCE actually have the capacity to act on these issues in conjunction with European governments and the Commission, which is why the members of the Intergroup keep reminding them of these responsibilities.

In 2014, the EFA group published the Strasbourg Manifesto, stressing the need for a coherent monitoring mechanism for the protection of minorities at the European level, alongside the Copenhagen criteria for accession candidates. What could such



Jordi Sebastià

a mechanism look like?

The methodology for this mechanism is ideal. It could be used to detect problems and also to denounce violations of minority rights. But we need the support of authorities, institutions and organisations to establish this monitoring mechanism effectively. It is a great tool, but we need somebody with enough power to use and to implement it. Some regional/national governments have decided to act in this regard – the Basques and Catalans for example, who are using a list of criteria for the monitoring of developments in language policy. But, again, we need the support of institutions which themselves do not really have the power of state governments.

**What makes you optimistic
about the future protection
of minorities and minority
languages?**

Globalisation is all over the world and therefore, we need to keep direct links to our roots. If not, we are going to be completely lost, so minority languages are receiving increasing attention. Even if everybody speaks English in a globalised world, regional identities and languages are important for our self-discovery and we need to protect this diversity all over the world. We need to keep fighting for the preservation of identities through minorities and minority languages, which will also be important for our young people.

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