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In co-operation with
This issue marks the end of the first volume of 'Social Europe, the journal of the european left'. Having reached this point, we think it is the right time to pause for a moment and look back at what has been achieved and introduce some amendments designed to enhance the overall publishing project.

Our record so far makes us proud. We can claim to be a truly European journal. In only four issues we have published articles by authors from 16 different countries. Amongst our writers were four former Prime Ministers and two current EU Commissioners as well various top politicians from across Europe and some of the most eminent academic thinkers on European affairs. The diversity and quality of our authors have been the basis on which we have established a readership of a few thousand politicians, academics and interested citizens not only from Europe. The quality of our publication has also been recognised by the world's leading information access provider EBSCO publishing which licensed 'Social Europe, the journal of the european left' for their online journal databases that are available in public and academic libraries worldwide. Hence, 'Social Europe' will be accessible in a number of different ways in future.

Even though a lot has been achieved, there is yet more to be done. In addition to the quarterly publication of the main journal, we will start sending a newsletter in which important and urgent information will be disseminated to the currently more than 3500 recipients on our email list. We take our readers' already stretched mailboxes into consideration and therefore will normally not send more than one or two newsletters in between two journal publications. Our newsletter is open, so if you have information you think is important for people interested in the wider European left and academia you can contact us at info@social-europe.com. As we are an instrument to stimulate political debate we are particularly interested in online research or free thinking papers we can include in our newsletter. Please send abstracts for consideration first. For the most urgent pieces of information we have set up a newsblog on our website www.social-europe.com. Visit the 'news' section for the most up to date information. If you would like to be kept informed about 'Social Europe' please sign up for the newsletter on our website.

In order to make our journal project economically sustainable we appeal to you to contribute the suggested 5 Euro donation per journal issue. We think that 'Social Europe, the journal of the european left' serves its purpose best as an freely available publication with no formal charge on it. However, we need to make sure that we raise more funds from donations or otherwise this policy is unsustainable. If you would like to support our journal project on a more structural basis you can become a 'Sponsor Member' of 'Social Europe'. Please see the 'Sponsor Membership' section on our website for further details.

We would like to thank all our authors and partners for their work over the last year and of course our readers, current and future, for their interest. As we enter our second year, we appeal to you: let us together drive forward the debate about a social Europe and work hard to make it happen.

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Social Europe the journal of the european left March 2006

Henning Meyer
Managing Editor
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Gender equality is rising up the political agenda. With emerging demographic problems of ageing societies, low birth rates and the subsequent onset of shrinking labour markets, politicians and economists from left to right are coming to the realisation that not only do we need more women to work, but we also need more women to have more children.

Feminists have been making the social justice argument for gender equality for many decades. In a condensed form, this argument goes something like this: women are equal to men, they deserve to be treated according to in all spheres of life - social, economic and political, private and public. This is an irrefutable truth but unfortunately only in some parts of the world has this argument achieved concrete results. My argument in this article is that the progressive case for gender equality currently carries more weight if it combines the social justice and the economic case, than solely focusing on the social justice case.

I will focus exclusively on women in the labour market, what is known in the jargon as women's economic empowerment. There are profound gender equality problems elsewhere in society (violence against women including trafficking and prostitution) and politics (low representation of women) which I will not deal with here. Achieving greater gender equality in one area has positive spill over affects in other areas and such achievements are mutually reinforcing. It is no coincidence, for example in Sweden, as Inger Segelstrom has mentioned in her contribution to this edition, that high levels of representation of women in Parliament (the highest in Europe, with women making up 45 per cent of MPs) go hand in hand with a high level of female participation rate (70 per cent).

The jury is still out as to what exactly the progressive case for gender equality is. It is much easier for social democrats to define the anti-progressive than to pin down and agree on the progressive case. As Magdalena Andersson cogently argues 'progressive politics has an obligation to fight old-fashioned structures'. I will explore how some policies which claim to be 'progressive' are still operating within the parameters of these old-fashioned structures, instead of aspiring to overturn them.

Over the last few decades, in some parts of Europe, there has been significant progress in achieving the greater economic independence of women and in particular higher participation levels of women in the labour market. However, this progress is unevenly spread and the disparity with men's employment and earnings is still glaringly apparent. In the EU of 25 member states, the average female employment rate stands at 55.7 per cent, whilst over 70 per cent of men are in employment. In every member state the employment rate of men is higher than that of women. The smallest employment gap (the difference between percentage of men and women in work) is found in Sweden (2 per cent), the largest in Malta (over 40 per cent). Moreover, the gender pay gap remains stubbornly high and shows no signs of closing. On average in the EU, women earn 15 per cent less for every hour worked than men. This reaches higher levels in countries with higher participation rates. Ironically, it is the countries with low percentages of women in work which make this average lower than would otherwise be the case. Women are concentrated in low-paid sectors even in the most gender equal societies, such as Denmark and Sweden. Part-time employment also affects women's earnings, with 32.6 per cent of women workers in part-time work compared to 7.4 per cent of women workers in full-time work.
men. Given the status quo of gender equality in the labour market, why is the most effective case for gender equality oriented towards economic considerations? Europe is faced with huge demographic challenges, an ageing population which is due to decline from 2025 onwards. It is not unusual to read headlines which alert readers to 'Europe's demographic time bomb' and 'rapidly shrinking labour forces'. Academics from different disciplines have been warning us about a potential demographic decline for many years but the rest of the world has only recently been slowly waking up to the reality of it. This is coupled with sluggish growth in many parts of Europe.

This is where the economic case for gender equality becomes so powerful. In terms of economic efficiency, it simply does not make sense to waste the potential of half of the workforce. This case becomes much more urgent against the backdrop of Europe's current demographic challenges. An ageing population has implications for the public purse. Our economies and welfare states are not sustainable if there are more people in retirement and fewer people in work, unless there is pension reform, an increase in birth rates and an increase in numbers of people in employment. Women hold the key to two out of three of these solutions.

However, this puts several demands on women: to work more, to have more children and in an ageing society the burden for caring for elderly relatives often falls on women. Therefore the key element of a progressive view of gender equality is that women and men should be enabled by the state to combine work with parenthood.

Statistics show a new phenomenon emerging. We today observe a positive correlation between fertility and women's employment rates. High fertility countries also have high employment rates for women. Notably in the Scandinavian countries, high levels of employment go hand in hand with high fertility rates. Work has become the pre-condition for having children.

In an ever-increasingly globalised world of permanent change, in countries where women are not able to combine work and family commitments, they are choosing work over having children. Southern European countries with traditional gender roles have not been able to deal with the economic uncertainties of globalisation and have some of the lowest fertility rates in Europe. Evidence shows us that in those countries women would like to have more children. There is a baby gap between the number of children desired and achieved. Women are delaying having children with the average age of women at the birth of their first child rising steadily in all EU countries.

Having children has huge implications for a mother's employment, careers prospects and life-time earnings. Recent statistics show that having children decreases the employment rate of women by as much as 14.3 points, whereas it has the reverse affect of driving up men's employment rates by 5.6 points. Moreover, women with children are more likely to be in part-time work than men or women without children. One third of women with one child and half of women with three or more children work part-time. The number of children has no perceivable affect on men working part-time.

Gosta Esping-Andersen underlines that the differences between the opportunity cost for lifetime earnings for women with children is larger in some countries than others. In the UK, it is estimated that women with two children will forgo approximately 50 per cent of her potential cumulated life-time earnings, in contrast in Denmark there is hardly any significant loss in life-time earnings. As he rightly points out, a loss of a woman's earnings does not only affect her adversely but her family has higher risks of household poverty if she is not in work.

The policy mix for enabling men and women, fathers and mothers, to combine work and family commitments must contain three essential elements: universal, affordable childcare provision, shared parental leave and the changing role of men.

Firstly, the lack of childcare provision in the vast majority of member states also makes it economically unviable for one of the parents to work. For example in Spain, the cost of a full-year quality care place is equal to a third of an average woman's income. In a small minority of member states, childcare is heavily subsidised which enables both parents to combine work and family life. Gosta Esping-Anderssen provides a strong case for investing in universal and affordable childcare by showing in a cost-benefit analysis that the medium term returns of such an investment far outweigh the short-term. However, the problem for governments is that their electorates judge them on short-term rather than medium term achievements. However there is an immediate economic gain in terms of job creation. Esping-Anderson predicts a job multiplier effect for which every 100 jobs that women are enabled to keep or go back to, 10 jobs are created in the service economy (carers, cleaners etc).

Secondly, the right balance has to be struck for leave entitlements. If parental leave is too long, the chances of discrimination against women increase and employers are unlikely to invest in the skills of women of childbearing age. If parental leave is too short, there is increased probability that the mother will decide to stay at home longer and thus lose her connection with the labour market. Provisions in some member states have tried to encourage men to take their share of parental leave. Some feminists argue that this is the only way to fight discrimination in the labour market. Men of childbearing age will thus be regarded as having the same risks (in terms of taking leave provisions) as women. However, we are a long way from that situation. A recent Eurobarometer survey found that 75 per cent of
men were aware of their right to take parental leave but 85 per cent said that they would not take it. Even in the deeply progressive and social democratic country of Sweden only 15 per cent of men take up parental leave. Various factors account for this widespread reluctance. Stereotypes certainly contribute as does the lack or loss of remuneration in some countries during parental leave. The persistence of the gender pay gap contributes to this phenomenon in cases in which the father earns more than the mother. Parental leave schemes which encourage the father to take up part of the leave (in Iceland half the parental leave will be lost if the father does not take it) and compensate wage levels need to be put in place. Moreover, stereotypes must be broken down, which is not necessarily something that one can legislate for.

Achieving greater gender equality requires not only a liberation for women but also for men. The stereotypes of the male breadwinner should be a thing of the past but there is still a residual notion of this. This also has implications for earnings (with women concentrated in low-paid sectors) and the role of men and women in the home. The statistics show that very few men take any responsibility for domestic tasks. A culture change is needed, it has started but the pace is too slow in many parts of Europe.

It might seem simplistic to reduce the policy mix to these three elements but an overhaul of the current system, especially a revolution in childcare, is what is needed. There is an over-reliance in some parts of Europe on part-time work. I believe that promoting part-time work, instead of concentrating our efforts on childcare, is not the right progressive approach to gender equality.

The proponents of part-time work argue that women want to work part-time. I concede that it might be the case that some mothers, just as some fathers, might want to work part-time during the early years of their children's lives. However, we cannot quote the figure of those working part-time as an indication of those who 'choose' to work part-time because a lot of working parents simply do not have that choice due to under-investment in childcare and pre-schooling. We should not be satisfied with this second best alternative.

Moreover, part-time work is generally paid at a low level and at low seniority levels. In some member states, it contributes significantly to the gender pay gap. For example in the UK, the gender pay in part-time work stands at over 40 per cent. This has implications for well-qualified women whose skills are underused when they are part-time.

Some have suggested that we need to focus on creating better quality part-time work. It might be the case that we can successfully encourage job-sharing of high level posts in public services and charities. However, companies do not have the economic incentive to offer job shares, especially in systems in which it is more expensive to pay two people instead of one. Social democrats, however, are not necessarily in agreement on this. As I mentioned above the jury is still out on the progressive case for gender equality.

In conclusion, the demographic challenges we face add a fresh economic impetus for greater gender equality. European politicians and policy makers are beginning to realise that the only way to succeed in a globalised world of an ageing population is to enable women to both work more and have more children. The childcare revolution should be our top priority. There is also a strong economic case for this in terms of job creation. Enabling both parents to work full-time, whilst balancing work and family commitments should be our aspiration, not some kind of half-way house in which a high percentage of women work part-time and are thus undervalued and underpaid.

References


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I am convinced that only with every other person in politics being female we will get an equal society. My experience from the PES-women in Sweden is that when women first occupied every other place on all lists in the election of 1994 (locally, regional and to the Parliament) big steps towards gender equality were made.

In the European Parliament there are only 30 per cent women, so we have a long way to go. I am proud that the Socialists have 40 per cent women in their group when the Conservatives only have 25 per cent women. It makes a difference in every day decision-making for women, men and children.

Being a woman in politics you always have to be present and where the decisions are made. But that is not enough. You always have to wear your gender glasses and think extra about how to support women as a group but also as individuals. Otherwise women tend to be forgotten or men are always more important when it comes to elections or to support someone. Men often support other men. Men have always been better at supporting one another and also at getting women to support them. We, the women, have a lot to learn from that support. You always have to remember to appoint other women after yourself when you get a new job, advance or are appointed to a new position. Grow by growing together with other women.

I am not worried anymore about realising every other woman in our European party PES, soon we will be there. The climate is right and no one can or will stop that.

In order to be a woman in politics you have to have the life around you well organised. When we in the Nordic countries talk about our model we make it possible for women to both work and have a family. We need both day-care centres for children and elderly care for our grandparents. Otherwise women cannot work or have to stay at home to serve lunch to the kids, be home when school ends or take care of the elderly generation. But to be a woman in politics you have to live equal at home and share the daily life and responsibility for children, housework, relatives and friends with your partner. This knowledge is the background to why social democratic women in Sweden worked so hard to get the party to become feministic in the year of 2001. A feminist is someone who recognises that we live in a society, at work and in family life, where women have a role of minor importance and power. If you recognise this and want to do something about it you can call yourself a feminist. To get the party not only to change but also make it give women equal opportunities at work, in sociality, in family life and also in politics we needed decisions and changes to the party statutes. Today in some towns, for instance in the city of Stockholm, we have fewer men in top positions than women. So we demand the concept of ‘every other’ because it has proved to be so successful. At least 40 per cent of one of the sexes is a first step but it takes every other to make a real change.

It is important to use politics as a role model. The next step is changing society. And it is only the political system that can do that. I am thinking about achieving a representation level of every other woman also in the private sector, on the boards of our banks, enterprises and the unions. It seems like men are ruling wherever there is power and money around.

In one field though, we have to solve the problems together. This is men’s violence against women and children. The PES-women and the PES are campaigning against sexual slavery accompanying the football World Cup in Germany this summer. Here, the women in politics can take an initiative, as we have done, but the results have to come by working together with all comrades in the party. As long as there is demand for prostitution, women and children will be bought. So we have to fight the buying with joined forces. Sexual slavery can only be solved by national legislation stopping demand for prostitution. The same is true for men’s violence against women and children. Good men have to be more active in the debate and support solving the problems for men who try to solve their own problems by abusing women and children.

I am quite positive that we will push this agenda forward quickly since these issues are high up on the political agenda today. But it will take a lot of hard work for the party and also for women and men together.
Social democracy benefits women. Around the world women earn less than men, own less than men, are less literate, less educated, there are fewer women than men in professional occupations and high status positions, and women are more subject to physical and sexual violence in and around the home than men. Social democracy equalises. Where social democratic policies are pursued there is greater equality and this improves the lives of women as a group on all these measures and more, as has been clearly demonstrated in the work of Wilkinson and others. The social democratic welfare state has been described as an instrument for the redistribution of wealth from men to women.

Since this is the case, you would think that women would unequivocally support social democratic politics both with their votes and with political activism. Women do vote for parties of the left, but not in proportions radically different from those of their male counterparts. Gender gaps are interesting and variable, and politicians need to take account of them, but they do not show the vast differences that one might expect if women were, as a group, voting in their class interest. Women do join social democratic political parties and do run for office, but their party membership is not very different from that of men, and we see across Europe that women run for office and are elected in smaller proportions than men in parties of all persuasions. Despite such high profile figures as Angela Merkel and Margaret Thatcher, parties of the left are, for the most part, more hospitable to women than parties of the right, but the picture is complicated and little can be taken for granted.

Here is the question: if social democracy is objectively more beneficial for women than most of the alternatives, how can its proponents persuade women voters of this? Parties have approached this from two directions: policies and people. The first is a traditional strategy: shape policies to serve the interests of the groups whose votes you seek to attract. The second is newer and more controversial: put up candidates who are members of the group whose votes you seek.

Parties fall into three different groups around the issues of getting more women elected. There are those that take the issue on and put pro-active measures in place; there are those that recognise a problem and exhort their members and officials to get busy, but avoid taking direct action; and there are those that do not consider the relative absence of women from elected office a problem. In general, parties of the left make up the first and second groups, while parties of the right make up the third, although the soft right, like the Conservative Party in the UK, is wising up, and far right parties will deploy women as candidates and representatives strategically.

For political feminists and politically ambitious women, the arguments are clear; but how does it look form the other side? Are there clear benefits to social democratic parties from the active promotion of women as candidates and elected officials? The following discussion will consider first the numbers and proportions of women in parliaments and parties around Europe. It will then rehearse the arguments favouring more equal representation of women and men and the strategies and mechanisms that have been mobilised in order to achieve this. Finally, it will consider what we hope to achieve by improving the gender balance of elected representatives and whether this serves specifically social democratic goals.

Women in Parties and Parliaments in Europe

The proportion of women in the parliaments of OSCE member countries is 18.5 per cent (19.0 per cent in a single or lower house; 16.3 per cent in an upper house). However, this diminishes to 16.8 per cent (17.0 per cent in a single or lower house; 16.3 per cent in an upper house) when the Nordic countries are excluded - not surprisingly, since Nordic countries occupy four of the five top spots on the Inter-Parliamentary Union's international table of women's participation. Looking at the countries of the European Union, the proportion of women elected ranges from 45.3 per cent in Sweden to 9.1 per cent in Hungary.

The various countries of the EU tend to elect more women to the European Parliament than they do to their own parliaments. Thus, 57.9 per cent of Sweden's MEPs are women and 37.5 per cent of those returned from Hungary - although there are exceptions: Finland, for example, returned a slightly smaller proportion of female MEPs in 2004 than members of its own parliament in 2003. The lowest proportion of female MEPs is to be found among the Poles, only 13 per cent, while Cyprus and Malta did not elect any women to the European Parliament in 2004.
Parties of the left across Europe tend to return a greater proportion of female representatives to national and local assemblies than do parties of the right. In France, where female representation has always been low (prior to the implementation of Parity, see below) the highest numbers of women deputies were usually from the left: in 1986 female deputies made up 9.9 per cent of the socialist group elected, whereas the right had only 3 per cent. The 2002 election, (post Parity) returned 16.3 and 19 per cent female representatives from the two main left-wing parties, while the two main right-wing parties returned 10.4 and 6.8 per cent. In Spain the Socialist Party (PSOE) has consistently returned a higher percentage of women than other parties, as has the Labour Party in the UK. The same pattern appears to hold in the former communist countries, for example, in Hungary, where politics is male-dominated and masculine in political culture, the left-wing party, MSzP, returned 12.9 per cent, the highest proportion of female MPs, at the 2002 election.

Similarly, when we look at the political groups in the European Parliament there is considerable variation in the proportion of women members in each, although women figure far more strongly in the groups to the left of the political spectrum than in those to the right. In the Green/European Free Alliance Group 47.6 per cent of the members are women, the Group of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe has 41 per cent, and the Parliamentary Group of European Socialists has 38 per cent. By contrast, in the Group of the European People’s Party (Christian Democrats) and European Democrats 23 per cent of members are women, the Union for the Europe of Nations Group has 16.8 per cent and the Independence/Democracy Group has 9 per cent. An exception appears to be the Confederation Group of European United Left/Nordic Green Left with 29 per cent women.

The Arguments for More Equal Representation

Does any of this matter except as a rather minority and obsessive pursuit within political science? Arguments in favour of actively promoting the election of women fall into three categories: equal opportunities, best value, and effective democracy. The first of these is the easiest to deal with and support. The goal of facilitating equal opportunities is by now deeply embedded in EU policy, and it is widely accepted that simply having anti-discrimination legislation and regulation is not enough. In addition to the existence of non-discriminatory rules and regulations, practices and outcomes have to be demonstrably non-discriminatory. Accordingly, despite the absence of laws prohibiting the election of women, if we see that very few women are elected we will, at the very least, suspect that discrimination of some sort may have taken place along the way. We shall therefore be obliged to find ways to achieve more equality of opportunity.

Equality of opportunity relates to the second argument given above: best value. With elected representatives, as with any other important occupation, we want to make sure that the most able people are in post; this might be termed getting the best value from them. If our representatives are not drawn from the widest possible constituency - if groups of people do not take part in the selection process - we may suspect that we are not getting the best possible representatives and representation.

The third argument is the most contentious: effective democracy. This suggests that our representative body should include people from across the range of differences in the community. Further, it argues that if it does not, if representatives are drawn from a narrow section of the community and the parliament does not include people from significant groups, the representative legitimacy of the parliament is undermined. With regard to women, this argument has been developed along the lines of a politics of presence by Anne Phillips and others adopting her model. This contends that women's presence among elected representatives is important because women as women have different experiences and perspectives from men. These experiences and perspectives, which men are less likely to have access to, are important for political policy and decision-making.

Thus, the project to increase the number of women elected can be pursued from two quite different perspectives. Stripping political systems of all forms of discrimination and opening them up to politically ambitious and able women is an equal opportunities programme that does not necessarily have any other ideological content; when opening the political agenda to women’s experiences and perspectives is added, this is a feminist programme.

Equality Strategies and Mechanisms

It is usually argued that while cultural and socio-economic explanations of women's relative absence from elected office (and of differences between countries) are intuitively appealing, political variables are in fact the most significant. There is some correlation between religion, the date at which women got the vote, the presence of women in professional occupations and the proportion of women in a parliament (Mercedes Mateo Díaz summarises the research on this). However, the strongest correlation is with the electoral system. Generally, proportional representation and multi-member constituency systems return more women than do first-past-the-post and single member constituency systems. In addition, many (but not all) of the countries with high proportions of elected women operate some sort of quota system.

Some 75 countries internationally operate, or have operated, electoral quotas for women; in twelve of these the quota is of parliamentary seats that are set
Quotas may be mandatory or voluntary and may be used at party or parliamentary level. They are more easily introduced in a PR system, where manipulating positions on a party list can be used. In EU countries quotas are mostly at party level, and more often voluntary than mandatory. Broadly left-wing parties are more likely to use quota systems than conservative parties, and tend to include more women as representatives even without having a quota. In Europe, parties of the left started to introduce quotas in the 1980s. These included Green, Social Democrat, Communist, Socialist and Labour parties.

Quotas are often associated with the Nordic countries, but this is to make the mistake of generalising from the example of Norway, which is probably the paradigm of quota use: only one party in Sweden has a quota and Danish parties ceased to use them in 1996. The relatively high numbers of women elected in all the Nordic countries appears to be due to political culture and activism as much as quotas, for example, the Swedish principle of Varannan Damernas, 'Every Other Sea a Women's Seat' that has been in operation since the 1980s.

In the UK, the Labour party has managed to circumvent the apparent conservatism of the first-past-the-post, single member constituency system by using women-only short lists in a proportion of key constituencies, in addition to making use of the additional member provision in elections to the new regional assemblies. Enabling legislation was passed in 2002. In 1999 France took the unique step of legislating for sex parity in party candidacies; this has proved problematic so far with parties apparently struggling to find enough candidates, and some parties preferring to pay the penalty for not meeting the parity requirement. Nonetheless, the percentage of women elected has increased.

In a few countries women's parties have been created to counter exclusion. These tend to appear where the promises of equality have not been met and/or where there are traditions of separate women's organisations.

The Women’s Coalition of Northern Ireland (WNIC) seems to be a response to the resolute exclusion of women and women’s issues from a political system that prioritises equality between religious groups. Women's parties in former soviet republics and other formerly communist countries seem to be both a response to exclusion, and the continuation of a tradition of separate women's organisations. The creation of a women's party in Greece is a rather different affair, since this appears to be a party promoting the support of women's traditional social roles.

Quotas are mostly at party level, and more often voluntary than mandatory. Broadly left-wing parties are more likely to use quota systems than conservative parties, and tend to include more women as representatives even without having a quota. In Europe, parties of the left started to introduce quotas in the 1980s. These included Green, Social Democrat, Communist, Socialist and Labour parties.

Quotas are often associated with the Nordic countries, but this is to make the mistake of generalising from the example of Norway, which is probably the paradigm of quota use: only one party in Sweden has a quota and Danish parties ceased to use them in 1996. The relatively high numbers of women elected in all the Nordic countries appears to be due to political culture and activism as much as quotas, for example, the Swedish principle of Varannan Damernas, 'Every Other Sea a Women's Seat' that has been in operation since the 1980s.

In the UK, the Labour party has managed to circumvent the apparent conservatism of the first-past-the-post, single member constituency system by using women-only short lists in a proportion of key constituencies, in addition to making use of the additional member provision in elections to the new regional assemblies. Enabling legislation was passed in 2002. In 1999 France took the unique step of legislating for sex parity in party candidacies; this has proved problematic so far with parties apparently struggling to find enough candidates, and some parties preferring to pay the penalty for not meeting the parity requirement. Nonetheless, the percentage of women elected has increased.

In a few countries women's parties have been created to counter exclusion. These tend to appear where the promises of equality have not been met and/or where there are traditions of separate women's organisations.
Portugal, and the USA. She concluded, ‘The results suggest that the conventional wisdom about women’s greater conservatism across Europe is no longer valid.’ (Norris, 1996). By 2003 Inglehart and Norris were finding further consolidation of this trend in Western Europe and concluded that women held more ‘left-leaning’ values that men in most countries (Inglehart and Norris, 2003).

So, research suggests that the voting behaviour of men and women will be similarly shaped by events and policies much of the time, but may be affected differently on occasion. For example, De Vaus and McAllister found that women were more opposed to war, the use of force, nuclear energy, and nuclear weapons than men, and were more likely to support welfare programmes and environmentalism, and Inglehart and Norris refer to differences in ‘value orientations’ particularly with regard to ‘post-materialism, the role of government, and gender equality’. Whatever may have happened in the past, conservative parties today cannot rely on any difference being to their advantage among female voters any more than parties of the left can rely on having the edge with men: at one point in the UK young men were more likely to vote conservatively than young women.

There is a growing assumption that having more women as candidates and elected representatives makes a party more appealing to women - and possibly to some men. This assumption exists in an uneasy balance with worries about whether people are prepared to vote for a woman. Women’s preference for voting for women is a frequently repeated credo. Repeated at least as often is the claim that, contrary to the belief that women favour voting for women, they in fact are resistant for a woman. Women’s preference for voting with worries about whether people are prepared to vote for a woman. Women’s preference for voting for women is a frequently repeated credo. Repeated at least as often is the claim that, contrary to the belief that women favour voting for women, they in fact are resistant for a woman. Women’s preference for voting for women is a frequently repeated credo. Repeated at least as often is the claim that, contrary to the belief that women favour voting for women, they in fact are resistant for a woman. Women’s preference for voting for women is a frequently repeated credo. Repeated at least as often is the claim that, contrary to the belief that women favour voting for women, they in fact are resistant for a woman. Women’s preference for voting for women is a frequently repeated credo. Repeated at least as often is the claim that, contrary to the belief that women favour voting for women, they in fact are resistant for a woman. Women’s preference for voting for women is a frequently repeated credo. Repeated at least as often is the claim that, contrary to the belief that women favour voting for women, they in fact are resistant for a woman. Women’s preference for voting for women is a frequently repeated credo. Repeated at least as often is the claim that, contrary to the belief that women favour voting for women, they in fact are resistant for a woman. Women’s preference for voting for women is a frequently repeated credo. Repeated at least as often is the claim that, contrary to the belief that women favour voting for women, they in fact are resistant for a woman. Women’s preference for voting for women is a frequently repeated credo. Repeated at least as often is the claim that, contrary to the belief that women favour voting for women, they in fact are resistant for a woman. Women’s preference for voting for women is a frequently repeated credo. Repeated at least as often is the claim that, contrary to the belief that women favour voting for women, they in fact are resistant for a woman. Women’s preference for voting for women is a frequently repeated credo. Repeated at least as often is the claim that, contrary to the belief that women favour voting for women, they in fact are resistant for a woman. Women’s preference for voting for women is a frequently repeated credo. Repeated at least as often is the claim that, contrary to the belief that women favour voting for women, they in fact are resistant for a woman. Women’s preference for voting for women is a frequently repeated credo. Repeated at least as often is the claim that, contrary to the belief that women favour voting for women, they in fact are resistant for a woman. Women’s preference for voting for women is a frequently repeated credo. Repeated at least as often is the claim that, contrary to the belief that women favour voting for women, they in fact are resistant for a woman. Women’s preference for voting for women is a frequently repeated credo. Repeated at least as often is the claim that, contrary to the belief that women favour voting for women, they in fact are resistant for a woman. Women’s preference for voting for women is a frequently repeated credo. Repeated at least as often is the claim that, contrary to the belief that women favour voting for women, they in fact are resistant for a woman. Women’s preference for voting for women is a frequently repeated credo. Repeated at least as often is the claim that, contrary to the belief that women favour voting for women, they in fact are resistant for a woman. Women’s preference for voting for women is a frequently repeated credo. Repeated at least as often is the claim that, contrary to the belief that women favour voting for women, they in fact are resistant for a woman. Women’s preference for voting for women is a frequently repeated credo. Repeated at least as often is the claim that, contrary to the belief that women favour voting for women, they in fact are resistant for a woman. Women’s preference for voting for women is a frequently repeated credo. Repeated at least as often is the claim that, contrary to the belief that women favou

There is some research that shows bias against women candidates to be a factor in voting preference - for example that undertaken by Fox and Smith who compared college students in Wyoming and California. It is not accidental that much of the research cited so far is from the USA. In American politics individual candidates have a far higher profile than they do in Europe, where party dominates candidacy and policy at elections, so in the US individual characteristics, including sex, loom larger than they do elsewhere.

The introduction of women-only short-lists by the Labour Party in the UK in 1997 offered an opportunity for looking at voter responses to female candidates. From their research into this election Studlar and McAllister conclude that: ‘voters did not discriminate to any extent between men and women candidates’, further, ‘within the Labour party, candidates from women-only shortlists did substantially better in attracting votes than their male counterparts’.

Would Improving the Gender Balance Benefit Social Democracy?

Beyond the claim that the election of women in more or less equal numbers with men is democratically desirable, is the suggestion that women’s equal participation in politics will generate policies that benefit women. A further suggestion is that a critical mass of women in political institutions would also initiate change in broader policies of development and international relations - for example, by developing policies of peace and non-violent conflict resolution, access to and protection of the full body of human right, sustainable and socially just development and placing people above profits and [...] would transform the very nature of power and the practice of politics through the values of cooperation and collaboration [...] that women would play politics differently and practise power accountably. (Srilatha Bhatiwal, 2006)

This is the most difficult argument of the many around women’s political participation both to defend in the abstract and to demonstrate from research. As an abstract argument it runs the risk of descending into sex essentialism and claims that women are essentially something while men are essentially something else, rather than making the less controversial claim that as outsiders with different sorts of experiences from the insiders, women might bring different insights and habits to the political arena - if given a chance to do so.

The values described above are clearly social democr}-
ic, even if social democratic parties have rather lost sight of them.

Research by the Inter-Parliamentary Union found that 89 per cent of the female representatives surveyed, from sixty-five countries, believed that they had a special responsibility to represent women's needs and interests. Research in the UK, the Nordic Countries, and the USA found similar responses from elected women. Looking at what people do, rather than what they say they want to do, there is some evidence that women in office do support such policies a little more than their male equivalents, and that increased numbers of elected women leads to the adoption of policies more beneficial to women. Barbara Burrell's research in the US Congress, Manon Tremblay's in the Canadian Parliament, and the work of Marian Sawyer on the Australian Senate all found that female representatives were more likely to raise issues of particular relevance to women than man were.

There is also some research that suggests that elected women are slightly more inclined to support more general liberal issues than their male counterparts. For example, looking at the US Congress, Barbara Burrell found that as early as the 1960s, more female representatives in the USA supported the Civil Rights Act and the Equal Rights Amendment that their male counterparts. Moreover, in terms of voting patterns, she found that Democrat women were the most liberal group and Republican men the least.

Conclusion

To conclude, social democracy objectively benefits women as a group by countering gendered differences in interests. These include gendered differences in wages, opportunities and family life as well as concerns about the environment and military conflict. Social democratic politics does this through egalitarian, environmental and welfare legislation and provision. Women respond to this by voting for social democratic parties in slightly higher proportions than men. There is a growing interest in enhancing that tendency by making parties appearance more women-friendly via the inclusion of more elected women alongside men who espouse feminist policies. Some research and a lot of rather unsubstantiated (but appealing) rhetoric on the part of both politicians and prominent women support this. A further consideration derives from the assertion that women in office will encourage the creation of women-friendly policies and a way of doing politics that is more appealing to women. Again, there is some research that supports this, but not much since the presence of women is a new and still growing phenomenon and therefore hard to test. If this is the case then a virtuous circle is formed: the election of more women leads to better policies that attract more women voters. It is a tenuous contention at present, but it would seem that there is nothing to be lost from getting

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The Future of Europe

by Giuliano Amato
Former Italian Prime Minister, Senior Vice President of the PES and Vice-Chairman of the European Convention

For those who are mindful not of the past but of the future of Europe, old and outdated issues, nowadays, much more ideological than real, should not be a matter of further concern. The duel between the European federalists and the strenuous opponents of the European Superstate has nothing to do with the challenges ahead of us. More and more the European Union is taking the shape of what I call the hermaphrodite of the new times. In other words the shape of those organisations that have been blurring the border between international agencies and constitutional ones by adopting the organisational patterns of both. Such hermaphrodite responds to the needs and the demands of the globalised world, by definition a world where not just states, but also individual persons are active supranational actors. For reasons due to our peculiar history, our Union happens to be the frontrunner of these new patterns. And in this context it has to be read, not in the context and with the eyes of the past. Since its early years, Europe has always been marked by this double nature. Even though conceived as an international organisation, as such creating rights and obligations of the undersigning member states, it was given the power to adopt regulations directly affecting individual citizens. And already in the early 1960’s the European Court of Justice read the clauses of the Treaty as the sources of individual rights on the basis of which citizens could challenge actions or omissions of their nation states. The mixed nature of Europe was therefore visible even in these initial features.

It became more and more so with the direct election of the European Parliament, which had previously been an assembly of representatives of our national parliaments, only empowered to give its advice to the ministers of the member states, sitting in council and deciding upon the binding acts of the Community. Once directly elected, the European Parliament had the same expectations as the national parliaments with which it shared the same democratic legitimacy. On the one side it gradually passed from advice to co-decision in the legislative process. On the other side it more and more looked at the Commission as the 'executive', politically responsible towards Parliament itself. At that point the Commission became a hybrid institution, for it retained its original nature as a technical agency at the service of the member states, but it also became that kind of 'executive' subject to a (political) vote of confidence of the Parliament both to initiate its activity and to remain in power.

I could quote several other aspects of the European Community that offer further evidence of it being a continuous hybridisation of principles of international and constitutional law: the primacy of community law, which is based on the Treaty, but also on the constitutions (or on the parliamentary acts) of our national legal systems; or the discipline of the 'own resources', that despite their being 'own' are decided upon not only by the Council, but separately by our member states, which 'ratify' the acts of the Council (as if they were international agreements). However, it is in the developments which occurred after Maastricht that the hermaphrodite nature of our common architecture became mostly evident. In Maastricht the decision was taken that new missions should be jointly pursued by our member states, missions that were even more political than those directly connected with market integra-

The European Union is taking the Shape of what I call the Hermaphrodite of the New Times
ferring new and further regulatory competences to the European Community (according to the Community method), or by keeping such competences at the national level and by using the European level only to coordinate their exercise (according to the intergovernmental - cooperative method)?

The decision was not to transfer competences and to develop, instead, sophisticated instruments (common indicators, benchmarks, peer review, recommendations to the states) without any binding force and exclusively and entirely 'cooperative'. Upon this background a new cooperative Europe has grown up in parallel to the communitarian one, but also with bridges and overlaps, generally suggested by the issues to be tackled. In foreign and security policy political declarations of the Council have been supported through the use of Community instruments, namely economic sanctions towards third states, while in the field of immigration some of the cooperative missions have become communitarian (in other words, instead of coordinating their national competences, our member states have passed them onto the Community). Due also to these bridges and overlaps, the overall construction has turned out as hermaphroditic and the proposal of a double hatted Foreign Minister (exercising the functions both of the High Representative of our Common Foreign and Security Policy and of the member of the Commission in charge of the Community’s external relationships) is an eloquent image of it.

One might argue that this is much more a monster than a hermaphrodite, that hermaphrodites themselves cannot go very far and it would be much better for us to go back to the purity of the old models, eventually making our choice: a European international organisation, a European federation or a European Superstate. But here comes my point. In our times there is nothing exceptional nor anomalous in having a hermaphroditic organisation, for it responds to the needs and the patterns of a globalised world where the border between internal and international matters is not so clear cut or continuous as it used to be. Europe has to be rightly guarded of equal rights for all. Do we think that social Europe has grown up in parallel to the communitarian one, but also with bridges and overlaps, generally suggested by the issues to be tackled. In foreign and security policy political declarations of the Council have been supported through the use of Community instruments, namely economic sanctions towards third states, while in the field of immigration some of the cooperative missions have become communitarian (in other words, instead of coordinating their national competences, our member states have passed them onto the Community). Due also to these bridges and overlaps, the overall construction has turned out as hermaphroditic and the proposal of a double hatted Foreign Minister (exercising the functions both of the High Representative of our Common Foreign and Security Policy and of the member of the Commission in charge of the Community’s external relationships) is an eloquent image of it.

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The real underlying Debate in Europe is not the EU Constitution but, rather, the Future of Capitalism

by Jeremy Rifkin
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Washington, D.C.
Author of ‘The European Dream: How Europe’s Vision of the Future is Quietly Eclipsing the American Dream’

Europe has plunged into a crisis of meaning in the wake of the repudiation of the EU Constitution by voters in France and the Netherlands. At the root of the crisis is a deep angst over the dire state of domestic and European economic affairs. The neo-conservatives argue that the only way out of the current economic malaise facing Europe is to deconstruct decades of social entitlements, benefits, and programs that have come to define the European notion of quality of life in a socially responsible society, and unfetter the market place so that competition can run free. If Europe does this, say the neo-conservatives, the economy will grow and the people will prosper.

The socialists argue, on the other hand, that the unrestrained Anglo-American liberal market model, with its emphasis on winner-take-all, rewards the rich at the expense of begging the working class and results in a meaner and more bereft social order.

In a curious way, what is really on trial in the recent constitutional fray in Europe is not the EU Constitution, but, rather, the future of capitalism itself, not only in Europe, but throughout the rest of the world. An increasing number of Europeans are asking themselves whether the liberal market model or the social market economy model is the best approach to charting the economic future.

The unfolding events of the past weeks remind me of events that occurred just twenty years ago when Russian Premier Mikhail Gorbachev, responding to grassroots discontent across the Soviet Union and the satellite countries of Eastern and Central Europe, initiated his famous Perestroika.

Mr. Gorbachev hoped that Perestroika would stimulate a soul-searching re-evaluation of the shortcomings and failures of communism. His intent was to save the vision of socialism by reforming the toxic practices that had made a mockery of Marxist ideology from the very beginning of the Soviet experiment. His reforms came too late for a moribund system, and the entire communist house collapsed. On the 20th anniversary of Perestroika, former Russian Premier Mikhail Gorbachev, hosted the World Political Forum in Turin, Italy. The event brought together current and former world leaders for a kind of celebration and post-mortem. Mr. Gorbachev asked me to deliver a keynote address on the state of Europe and the world two decades after launching the famous reform initiative which signaled the beginning of the downfall of communism in Russia and Central and Eastern Europe. Here is what I said...

‘With the fall of the Berlin wall and the death of the USSR, capitalism has enjoyed an unchallenged global playing field to impose its will on the world.’ I suggested that ‘perhaps it was now time for the capitalist camp to engage in the same kind of internal soul-searching debate about the world it has shaped and molded in the interim years.’ The reality is grim.

Today, while corporate profits are soaring around the world, eighty-nine countries find themselves worse off economically than they were in the early 1990s. Capitalism promised to bring the world’s poor into the high-tech global village. The promise has not been kept. Two-thirds of the human race has never made a single phone call and one-third of the human race has no access to electricity, leaving them marginalised and isolated in global commerce and trade.

The champions of capitalism pledged to promote sustainable economic development and to conserve and preserve the fragile biosphere upon which all life on Earth depends. Yet, we continue to squander our remaining fossil fuel reserves, spewing increasing amounts of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, destroying the world’s ecosystems and habitats, threatening the survival of our fellow creatures, and adding to the worrisome threat of global warming and the prospect of catastrophic climate change in the coming century.

We were told that globalisation, under the watchful eyes of capitalist ideologues promised to connect the unconnected, bringing the world’s poor into the high-tech global village. Yet, we continue to squander our remaining fossil fuel reserves, spewing increasing amounts of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, destroying the world’s ecosystems and habitats, threatening the survival of our fellow creatures, and adding to the worrisome threat of global warming and the prospect of catastrophic climate change in the coming century.

Our business leaders decry the deep corruption that permeated the old centralised communist regimes, while many engaged in equally egregious corporate corruption, bringing down some of the world’s ‘most trusted’ companies, sending CEOs and senior executives to prison.
The Strength of Capitalism is, paradoxically, also its Weakness

Neo-conservatives attacked the centralised power exercised at the top of giant state-run communist bureaucracies only to see them replaced by equally centralised power concentrated at the top of 500 or so global corporations who now rule much of the world.

Why have the two dominant ideologies of the Industrial Age so utterly failed? Because the central tenet of each was not sufficiently tempered by the antidote of the other, to create the appropriate checks and balances necessary to make a more livable world for everybody. The central tenet of communism is best expressed in the oft-heard aphorism ‘from each according to his ability, to each according to his need.’ A noble principle, to be sure. In practice, however, communism stifled personal incentive and created a form of paternalistic governance that robbed the individual of any semblance of autonomy, making everyone a virtual ward of an all-powerful state. In the end, no one was held personally responsible for their individual fate and everyone was subject to the dictates of impersonal state-run bureaucracies.

On the other hand, the central tenet of capitalism is found in the words of the Scottish Enlightenment economist, Adam Smith. In ‘An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations’, Smith writes: ‘Every individual is continually exorting himself to find out the most advantageous employment for whatever capital he can command. It is his own advantage, indeed, and not that of society which he has in view. But the study of his own advantage naturally, or rather necessarily, leads him to prefer that employment which is most advantageous to the society.’

Smith believed that an invisible hand ruled over the market place, guaranteeing that everyone would eventually benefit, if only the market mechanism were left unencumbered.

Neo-conservative economists and politicians still believe this.

In reality, the invisible hand has turned out to be invisible in fact. Left to its own internal logic, the unfettered market leads not to a bigger share of the economic pie for all, but, rather a ‘winner take all’ end game. How else do we account for the fact that America’s unbridled market model has resulted in a dramatic widening of the gap between rich and poor, in direct proportion to the loosening up of external controls over its commercial practices. Today, American corporate profits are at near record highs, productivity gains are unprecedented, and yet, the U.S. has sank to 24th among the industrialised nations of the world in income disparity - that is, the gap between the small number of very rich families at the top and the millions of working poor families at the bottom. Only Mexico and Russia rank lower. Meanwhile, America, which practices the purest form of market capitalism of any country in the world, enjoys the negative distinction of having the most severe poverty of any of the advanced industrialised nations. One out of four American children are currently living below the poverty line. The U.S. also sports the highest crime rate in the industrialised world. Indeed, twenty-five percent of all the prisoners in the world are currently incarcerated in the U.S. Two percent of the adult male workforce in America is behind prison bars.

Is capitalism salvageable? Yes, but only if we are willing to have a frank and open discussion about what capitalism does well and what it does poorly. The strength of capitalism is, paradoxically, also its weakness. The market caters to the pursuit of individual self-interest, and is, therefore, almost pathologically innovative. Individual risk-taking, the entrepreneurial spirit, technological innovation, and productivity advances exceed any other economic system ever devised. This point, I believe, is generally agreed to by all.

But then, the more troubling question has to be asked, what does capitalism not do well? It does not fairly distribute the fruits of economic progress. That is because the logic in the boardroom is to always cut production costs in order to maximise profits and shareholder value. This means reducing, whenever possible, the share of the gains that go to workers, as well as cutting the expense of preserving the natural environment upon which all future economic activity depends. The result is a world increasingly divided between haves and have-nots and a biosphere seriously weakened at the hands of self-interest devoid of a sense of collective responsibility.

What is the answer? In a globally connected world, where we are all increasingly vulnerable to the behavior of others and equally dependent on each other’s good will if we are to survive, the hope for humanity rests on creating an Aristotelian balance that encourages and stimulates the entrepreneurial spirit of the market, while simultaneously tempering its inherent propensity to run wild and concentrate more and more power at the top of global corporate pyramids. Countervailing forces, in the form of a strong trade union movement, a diverse and healthy civil society, and engaged and vigilant political parties need to continually reign in the potential abuses and exploitation of capitalist practices, by ensuring a just redistribution of the benefits of the market with the appropriate social programs and adequate social net, without, however, stifling market incentives. This is, indeed, a tricky balancing act. Ironically, as it turns out, rather than being at odds, we ought to consider capitalism and socialism as complementary ‘visible hands’ that continually balance individual self-interest in the market with a collective sense of responsibility for each other’s welfare in society. If individual material self-interest is not tempered with a sense of social responsibility, society risks narcissistic fragmentation and the exploitation of the many by the few. If a sense of collective responsibility does not make room for individual self-interest, we lose personal accountability and risk a reign of paternalistic terror at the hands of an all-powerful state.

The social market economy model practiced across the member states of the European Union comes closest to the ‘visible hand’ mechanism I have described. Unfortunately, the current economic debate in Europe threatens to polarise public opinion to the extremes — pitting unrestrained market forces against the bureaucratic dictates of a welfare state. The difficult task at hand is pursuing an intelligent and sophisticated course that maintains a balanced tension between the entrepreneurial spirit of capitalism and the social
solidarity of socialism without either vision vanquishing the spirit of the other. We are, after all, each and every one of us, an embodiment of both spirits. We desire to pursue our own self-interests while mindful of our responsibilities to our fellow human beings. A reformed European social economy that allows both aspects of human behavior to flourish is a model for the rest of the world to follow.

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Present and Future of the European Union

by Alfred Gusenbauer
Leader of the Austrian Social Democratic Party SPÖ

In 1945, in the wake of the disasters of fascism and national socialism, it was certainly a wise decision that Europe, or some European states, resolved to agree on a common political goal, which consisted in the resolution not to wage war ever again, and to replace this most horrific of wars with peaceful coexistence and cooperation. I emphasise this fact, because I have the impression that, sometimes, the objectives of the European project become blurred, considering that the main goal was to end war and to build peace in Europe. Economic interests and economic cooperation have never been more than instruments in achieving and maintaining peace in Europe. They never were the true objective of the integration process. Actually the approach was much more comprehensive, since the conclusion drawn from the terrible war experience was to make prosperity as well as social and personal welfare of the people living on our continent the principal goal. This has, to this day, remained the core objective of European integration, and I believe that when shaping European policies and European institutions we should keep this core objective in mind.

For quite some time, I had the impression that the European Union had come to understand that the liberalisation of markets and trade alone would not suffice to reach the goal of bringing prosperity to as many people in Europe as possible. As a consequence, social and employment policies figured more prominently on the European agenda, especially in the second half of the 1990s, and with Austria as a notable lobbyist. One might say that this change of mind found its most widely known expression in the adoption of the Lisbon goals. However, in the past couple of years, the Lisbon process has got bogged down, and the mid-term review revealed that in many respects we are currently further away from reaching the set objectives than we were at some earlier point in time.

As the effective implementation of social and employment policies in Europe was slowing down, or as a consequence thereof, the European Union's political decision-making capacity went into serious crisis which manifests itself in different areas. There are the well-known frictions over the question of which position to take on the Iraq war; there were widely diverging views in the Constitutional Convention on the future institutional development of Europe; there is disagreement on the deepening of the EU; and apparently there is no common ground when it comes to defining the policy priorities in setting Europe’s medium-term course.

Against this background the rising popularity of political groups whose main interest is the removal of trade barriers and who have little or no interest in the European Union playing a major role in shaping the future of Europe, is hardly surprising.

I believe that the development we have witnessed in recent years, which has been marked by restricted political decision-making capacity coupled with the displacement of social and employment policies as well as with a displacement of the specific continental-European economic and social model, has been the source of the severe social crisis we are currently facing in Europe. Luckily this crisis does not manifest itself as explosively throughout Europe as it did during the youth riots in the banlieus of Paris, in the autumn of 2005. However, it is uncontested that Europe is facing a social crisis. And all those who interpret the events in the suburbs of Paris first and foremost from a security or crime perspective, should ask themselves the following question: does anyone believe that these riots would have taken place, if all of those young people had jobs?

I believe that anyone asking this question will soon come to the conclusion that at the core of this overall crisis there is a social crisis as well as a crisis of the economy, which offers a growing number of individuals an ever decreasing range of life perspectives and hopes. I therefore believe that a firm commitment to an economic and social model which, in contrast to a radically neo-liberal model, offers a reasonable balance between competition and solidarity, must be put at the top of the social democratic political agenda. This has become a question of survival also for political integration, and we must, therefore, bring about a change in the social and economic conditions in Europe.

Jürgen Habermas made a wise statement, when he said that governments that pursue interventionist rather than neo-liberal policies can only realise their visions of a prosperous European society if they are able to rely on a healthy European Union, capable of speaking with one voice at the international level. In other words, it will be much easier to resolve the social crisis Europe is currently facing, given the economic conditions prevailing at the international level, if Europe is highly integrated rather than restricted to the present dimensions of the Single European Market. Thus strengthened, Europe would be the response to rather than the expression of globalisation. Nowadays many people get the impression that events at large, that is to say globalisation on an international scale, will inevitably hit Europe like acts of God, with one-dimensional consequences, and that current European Union policies provide no answers to globalisation. If
we can agree that Europe is not supposed to be an expression of globalisation, but a tentative response to it, the subsequent consensus might be the starting point for a common strategy of social democratic or centre-left parties in Europe.

Incidentally, these ideas are not limited to social democratic thinking. The Christian Democratic Prime Minister of Luxembourg, Jean-Claude Juncker, for example, repeatedly stated that workers’ interests deserve greater consideration in the European Union, and that Europe is not the Europe of Ministers of Finance and bankers, the Europe of bureaucrats and foreign ministers. Europe must also be a Europe of the people, people who have a right to feel at home on this continent, because they can enjoy the benefits of a social model which corresponds to their aspirations and views of a good life.

In the given context I consider this the most crucial issue. The European model is unthinkable without a social dimension. Vladimir Spiška, the EU Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, and Equal Opportunities, expressed this thought very accurately when he said: ‘The European social model is based on a set of common values. These values are shared among all member states. Among these fundamental values are the commitment to democracy, the rejection of all forms of discrimination, universal access to education, accessible and good quality health care, gender equality, solidarity and equity, the recognition of the role of the social partners, and of social dialogue. These values are constitutive for Europe. In other words, Europe ends where these values are not shared.’ To my mind, this is an excellent description of the constitutive character of the social dimension for both European identity and the European civilisation model. Consequently, the purpose of European integration is to remove frictions, not only as regards interstate conflicts, which in the past gave rise to wars, but also when it comes to remedying the gap between rich and poor, between those who are accepted and respected in their communities, and those who are excluded, between those who have a share in economic progress and those who have not.

I am of the opinion that the admission of the Central and Eastern European countries to the European Union has taken us a big stride forward towards this goal, since the historical interstate demarcation lines have been overcome. However, this does not relieve us from the task to work on the implementation of policies designed to overcome the demarcation lines dividing the societies of our day. Still, we need to ask ourselves whether, subsequent to this historic enlargement by the Central and Eastern European countries, continued high-speed enlargement may not impair the European Union’s decision-making capacity when it comes to intrastate conflicts. To put it frankly, I am less concerned about potential member states fulfilling the admission criteria, than about the absorption capacity of the Union itself. Currently we experience how, even under prevailing conditions, it is extremely difficult to reach agreement on the funding of EU policies, and how the principle of solidarity – a fundamental principle of Community action – is quite obviously twisted and abused by individual member states in a highly selfish manner. Solidarity depends on reciprocally; it applies to everyone, also to the new member states, and does not permit any kind of discounts. Nor can I personally understand, how it can be justified that new member states benefiting from the principle of solidarity and availing themselves of European funds, just like older member states that face structural difficulties, use these benefits to finance tax and in particular profit tax dumping, which puts the overall financing of the European welfare state at risk.

I believe that prevailing conditions call for a fundamental re-definition of the concept of solidarity, which needs to be made fairer. To maintain currently claimed and exercised entitlements holds the danger that new challenges will not be addressed, that special interests are shored up and that the integration project will fall victim to them.

Even before the failure of the referenda in France and the Netherlands, I felt that the European Union was in trouble. Signs of crisis had been noticeable for quite some time. Europe needs to enter into a dialogue with its citizens, especially on one key issue: how can the population tangibly benefit from European integration in their daily lives? Personally, I believe that the people of Europe cannot be blamed for being dissatisfied with current results of European political decision-making. In the light of weak growth rates, persistently high unemployment rates, the growing gap between rich and poor, they cannot be blamed for questioning the purpose served by Europe? While it is our obligation to highlight the European Union’s role in maintaining peace, I feel that this argument alone is no longer sufficient in ascertaining people’s loyalty to the European project.

This is why I would consider it perfectly reasonable as well as at the time to address this dissatisfaction with the present state of Europe, which is being articulated by citizens all around Europe. Such confrontation with people’s concerns will inevitably lead to the question of what should be the nature of policy change in Europe? What needs to be done differently in order to increase the practical benefits people can draw from Union membership?

I believe that practical benefits will increase, once we succeed in effectively combating unemployment in Europe, which might be achieved to a limited extent at the national level, but would certainly be more successful, if agreed at the international level. If Austria decided today to implement an expansive economic policy, the situation would be improved, though part of the up-beat effects would evaporate, unless at least our neighbouring countries, or the countries in the Eurozone, adopted a similar or the same economic policy. This implies that, apart from the many tasks to be performed at the national level, effectively combating unemployment is a key task of the European Union, if the European project is to be taken forward in the best interests of Europe’s citizens.

Another thing: one may disagree with some of Tony Blair’s policies; however, I agree with him when he says that traditional agricultural subsidies which – and I am saying that within parentheses – first and foremost benefit large agricultural enterprises rather than small and organic farmers, are too high and that a Europe which
looks to the future and intends to present a response to
globalisation must be a Europe that invests much more
into science, research and universities. Taking this
stance as a starting point, he concludes that the
European Union's traditional agricultural subsidies
must decrease in favour of increased spending on sci-
ence and research. I believe that this approach is much
better suited to meet the challenges currently faced by
Europe than the preservation of vested interests.

Tony Blair is right when he says: 'If we want our
economy to meet the future challenges, at some point
we have got to make sure that the budget is aligned
with the economic priorities of our citizens, of our
businesses, and of our workforce.'

Consequently it would have been necessary to re-
align Europe's political priorities also in the context of
the negotiations on the Community budget. It is a pity
that these negotiations ended in a lukewarm compro-
mise, with policy and expenditure structures being pre-
served up to the year 2013. The vague declaration of
intention to evaluate the budget development again in
2008 does not really help. In fact, the same, misguided
budgetary policy has been prolonged until the year
2013. This means to perpetuate excessive funding of
agricultural structures, which, inter alia, causes large
swaths of land in Europe to become wasteland and
ruins farmers in developing countries, thus running
counter to any kind of solidarity-based development
approach. This will be the consequence of zero change
up to 2013. I think it would have been wiser to go on
negotiating and haggling than to perpetuate misguided
policies for years to come. No extra money for research
and development until the year 2013 clearly disadvan-
tages a Europe that competes for knowledge, competes
for the best brains, competes in the development of
goods and services that prove successful on the world
market. I believe that Europe needs to set new priori-
ties, focussing on research and development, on pro-
moting growth and infrastructure, better coordination
of tax policies, and - a particularly pressing issue - on
aligning migration policies.

Hans Rauscher, a renowned Austrian columnist,
very accurately analysed the dilemma we are facing
today: a cheap, low-skilled workforce is being lured
from different parts of the world, to perform hard,
dirty and dangerous jobs for little pay - Mr. Rauscher
calls this type of work 'donkeywork'. Meanwhile, how-
ever, there is not enough of this type of work available.
As a result, the young, mostly second-generation immi-
grants, are out of 'donkeywork', for which their parents
had been originally hired, and as a result suffer from a
particular type of disorientation and hopelessness.

There is only one possible response to this situation,
namely to invest enormous amounts into establishing
an educational system that provides equal opportunities
for all students. The member states in the centre of
Europe, most notably Austria and Germany, need to
point the finger of blame at themselves, since their
educational systems are designed to perpetuate ethnic
and social differences. An educational system that
serves integration and overcomes differences of ethnic
and social origin, will be much better suited to provide
life perspectives to migrants and their children. To
reform our educational systems to this effect seems to
be a key task when it comes to tackling the existing
challenges.

Europe is having a hard time because its mecha-
nisms of legitimisation are immensely complex. What
am I trying to say? Anybody dissatisfied with Austrian
domestic policies will not right away question the legit-
imacy of the Austrian nation, but rather come to the
more logical conclusion that the malperforming admin-
istration will have to be replaced at the next elections.
It is different with Europe. If people are, for various
reasons, dissatisfied with European policies, they tend
to question the European Union's very right of exis-
tence, for the simple reason that its mechanism of legit-
imisation is different. There is no such thing as an
ingrained European identity. Europe needs to justify its
right of existence ever anew, through political decision-
making and performance. The European Union is thus
exposed to much higher pressure to perform than its
member states. The absence of adequate mechanisms
for getting rid of unloved politicians, adds to the prob-
lem. In a nation state, it is easy. There are elections to
the national parliament and the unpopular government
is voted out of power and replaced with another one,
which is given the opportunity to prove its superiority.
But how to vote someone out of power at European
level, considering the complex system of institutions –
Parliament, Council, Commission – and the fact that
most citizens have no idea what their powers to decide
on which issues are? As an ordinary citizen I simply do
not have the power to vote those responsible out of
power. Such power, however, is a fundamental precon-
dition of democracy: it is the requirement that those
subjected to standards, i.e. the citizens, may choose to
rid themselves of their rulers. This is the difference
between democracies and non-democratic systems of
government. Of course there are other differences, but
the core difference is: how do I get rid of my rulers? At
the European Union level people see no way of voting
those whose policies they disapprove of out of power,
not even with a differently composed European
Parliament, which would naturally make a difference.

This is why I have for quite some time been of the
opinion that, if we wish to strengthen Europe, we must
have direct elections of the agents of government. One
option would be for the president of the EU
Commission to be determined by the result of the elec-
tions to the European Parliament. Another option
would be the direct election of a European President,
even if it does not correspond to the constitutional tra-
dition of the majority of member states. So, there are
various options, but to my mind we must inevitably
move in this direction, if we wish to make the interplay
between government and opposition, between satisfac-
tion and dissatisfaction visible to European citizens. I
think this would be important and therefore regret that
the draft Constitution has, so far, failed to be adopted,
as it would have brought considerable improvement,
especially in the given context. Also as regards the
rights of the European Parliament, the Constitution
would have marked considerable progress. There is a
danger that in the event of the European Constitution
not being adopted, any further democratisation of the
Union will be seriously delayed, adding to the above-
discussed problem rather than rectifying it.

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It must also be pointed out that political parties, as major actors in democratic systems at least at national level, have to this day failed to establish proper European structures, comparable to the structures at national level. I am not excluding the European social democratic parties from this criticism. We still have more of an association or federation of different national parties than a European Social Democratic Party, and the same is true for other political groups.

I do believe that without establishing political parties at the European level, there will never be sufficient public awareness in and of Europe, and there will never be that badly needed European political space, without which the above-outlined objectives of integration cannot be reached.

So we find ourselves in a paradoxical situation. On the one hand, the citizens of Europe have high expectations of Europe, on the other hand, there is little willingness to provide the European Union with the tools it needs to achieve these goals. Frequently, petty interest-driven disputes arise, which are not only harmful to European creativity, European visions and the European Dream, but what is much worse, are in many instances harmful to the best interests of the European population.

I am in favour of implementing all measures that are feasible in the absence of a consensus on a great vision for Europe. I am in favour of doing what is feasible and serves the prosperity and wellbeing of the European people. I agree with Timothy Garton Ash, a truly eminent expert on European affairs, who wrote in The Guardian at the end of October 2005: ‘Europe should be like a great experimental laboratory, with countries constantly looking over each others’ shoulders and stealing each others’ best ideas. We agree on the goals, higher growth and productivity, more innovation, less unemployment, reduced poverty. We don’t need to get there by the same route.’ I find that this is a pragmatic approach to tackling some of the most pressing social and economic issues in Europe, and thereby regain sufficient momentum, so that people will not think of Europe in sceptical terms only, and that our vision of deeper integration may be eventually realised.

This text is an updated version of A. Gusenbauer’s keynote address at the opening of the conference ‘The EU, a Global Player?’ organised by the Forum ‘Scholars for European Social Democracy’ in Vienna, November 2005.
For years now, many French men and women have felt that Europe, which had succeeded in bringing about peace on a European continent that had been wounded by wars and authoritarian regimes, no longer protects them.

Our citizens have an increasing feeling that Europe is even a threat to their daily lives, in view of some facts such as persistent unemployment, lay-offs for financial reasons, delocalisation, etc. These fears were voiced more forcefully during the campaign for the referendum on the European Constitution. Without going back to this campaign, it is unfortunately quite obvious that Europe's political crisis and stagnation have worsened since the French 'No' and that no other alternative has been put forward by those who so vigorously had attacked the draft Constitution.

The feeling that Europe no longer protects us is also increased by the fact that public services in France are being questioned: post offices close down in small municipalities, 'unprofitable' railway lines are closed, and gas and electricity as public services are under pressure. There is a general lack of understanding of the ideological brainwashing coming from Brussels, and more precisely from the Commission, that seems to say that the only solution to all our problems is competition between all our sectors of activity!

In a context in which those legitimate fears are being used in a demagogic way, it is difficult to reassure the population as long as there is no sign of a true political will to defend public services.

The Constitution provided an indisputable legal basis for the drafting of a framework directive on services of general economic interest. However, without a Constitution, it is still possible to move forward. In a recent meeting of the Party of European Socialists (PES) in Brussels, we discussed the possible architecture of this future directive. This is an unhoped-for step forward, which would have been thought impossible not so long ago.

If this text was adopted, it would be a major political event for Europe, because it deals with the core of our willingness to live together and would show a new political will. It could become a new guideline for a social Europe with:

- a fair distribution between community action and the principle of subsidiarity,
- true tools in order to guarantee greater equality in education, health, culture, social protection and the access to essential services such as water, electricity, gas and telecommunications.

In a globalised and liberal environment, which puts workers and regions in competition to one another, it is indispensable that Europe has the tools to better safeguard the general interest, beyond economic profits. Such a text is also legally necessary because of the many 'grey areas' between purely commercial interests and the general interest.

In the beginning, the idea of a framework directive on public services came mainly from France. But after a few months, the discussion in the Party of European Socialists (PES) allowed us to find a consensus on the need to have such a directive and on its main principles.

What is it about? It is about asserting that you cannot only count on the action of market forces to fight against exclusion, and reinforce economic, social and territorial cohesion.

What would be the object of the directive? To guarantee that there is a foundation of regulations related to public services (or services of general interest, to use the more common terminology in Europe).

Of course, the concrete definition, planning, organisation and financing of services of general interest must remain the responsibility of the member states. The directive would aim at guaranteeing common principles such as their universality, continuity, quality, equal access, and consumer protection. Information, consultation and the participation of workers' representatives and stakeholders from the 'tertiary sector' would also be prerequisites for a successful modernisation of the European social model.

Something we need to follow up... with great attention.
The defeat of the referendum on the Constitution in France and in the Netherlands may have surprised some, but since it is unlikely that the Constitution would have been approved in Britain, Denmark, or Sweden and since a constitution must be endorsed by all, it was doomed from the start.

Napoleon once said that constitutions should be short and obscure. The aborted Euro-Constitution passed half the Napoleonic test. It was obscure, but it was also far too long. Ambiguity is a double-edged sword. It can unite those who want to be united and find something positive in the text - and divide those determined to unearth a negative verdict.

This is what happened with the proposed constitution. In France and the Netherlands it united a disparate majority for whom the constitution was either unimportant or undesirable. If unimportant the vote could be use for other purposes – such as protest against one's government. If undesirable, there could be no loss in voting against it. Some wanted a more social Europe than what was on offer; others wanted to keep Turkish workers or Polish plumbers out; others wanted to warn their national leaders; and others were afraid of ceding more powers to what they regard as an unaccountable bureaucracy.

Did people want an ever closer Union? Probably not. Did people want an even more ‘market-oriented’ Europe? Probably not. Do people want a ‘social’ Europe, certainly yes - and unsurprisingly so since no-one wants lower pensions, expensive health care, long working hours, and lack of provisions for young families.

Yet there is no denying that the driving ethos of the Constitution was ‘market’ Europe rather than ‘social’ Europe. Like all such documents the Constitution was, inevitably, a compromise. But the compromise reflected a political reality, a determinate balance of forces and the balance, today, shows social Europe on the defensive and market Europe on the advance.

The winning idea, expressed by virtually all conservatives and also by many (perhaps a majority) of those of the Left is that the main impediments to economic progress in Europe are labour market rigidities and excessive social provisions and that de-regulation and privatisation, within limits, widen opportunities and resolve problems.

Thus the neo-liberal view is firmly at the centre of economic discourse. It is the central global narrative of our age. In one form or other it is at the centre of political debates in China (under the ruling Communist Party) whose growth rates are astonishing (and worrying) the world. It is at the centre of politics in Brazil too where the President, Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, leader of the Workers’ Party, Lula, initiated a pension reform bill cutting benefits for retiring public sector workers and raised the retirement age amidst the plaudits of the IMF which approved a new $14.8 billion loan for Brazil. Not everyone is a paid up member of the global neo-liberal belief, there is some feeble resistance in London, Paris and Berlin, but no-one can ignore it. It sets the agenda forcing its opponents on the defensive.

There are variants of this discourse. The parties of the Left are less enthusiastic about demolishing social Europe and deny that this may be inevitable. They seek to find a half-way – I hesitate to say ‘a Third Way’ since this expression is no longer heralded with the fanfare of yesterday - between outright resistance to the constraints of globalisation and a supine attitude towards it. The parties of the Right are aware that it is difficult to win elections by undertaking to wipe out the social gains of the last fifty years. Hence the relative convergence between left and right.

There is nothing new about such convergence. It has been part of West European history since 1945. The difference is that the agenda in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s – full employment and the welfare state - was far closer to the aspirations of the Left.

The debacle on the European Constitution provides an opportunity to re-examine what might constitute European identity. But first it is necessary to be clear about at least one thing: European identity, just like German identity or French or British, is not something that is intrinsically good. It is either something which already exists and one is born into. Or it is something one constructs for a particular purpose. Either way is, inevitably, a changing and artificial concept. Identity is no indication of behaviour.

The difficulties facing social Europe are central to the problem of constituting a European identity. Even though everyone is reluctant to face it, identities are established – not exclusively but also - against other alternatives. ‘The Other’ is a necessary requirement for the formation of identities. It does not follow that ‘the Other’ must be wiped out, gassed out, cleansed out or locked up. One can perfectly well tolerate ‘the Other’ or even be pleased of its existence. But one cannot be a Muslim, or a German, or a Jew unless one is aware that, in so being, one distinguishes oneself from non-Muslims, non-Germans or non-Jews.
Thus identities do not have only a positive sign, they must also contain a negation. Feeling ‘European’, whatever that is (and there is no agreement) necessarily includes an awareness of difference. The problem is that European identity is weak compared to national or regional identity. There are some good reasons for it. A commitment to a European identity bears the stigma of past feelings of superiority, of racism, of carrying a mission civilisatrice or the ‘white man’s burden’. Historically Europe is not just the continent of the Declaration of the Rights of Man. It is also the continent of colonialism, the slave trade, Auschwitz and the Gulag. To keep the good bits and reject the embarrassing ones would send us back to the ideological building of nation-states.

European identity cannot be constructed without postulating a difference with other models. And who is to be ‘the Other’, for Europeans? The xenophobic parties have already chosen the ‘clash of civilisations’ model. They are on strong ground. The Islamic world is an easy target: torn asunder by its own divisions, faced by a wave of extremism, and weakened by a chronic inability to formulate a framework for the coexistence of religious commitment and secularism, it lacks universalist appeal.

In 2002 Robert Kagan suggested a new ‘mission civilisatrice’ for Europeans, contrasting the general European ‘indirect’ approach to so-called ‘rogue’ states, moving from confrontation to rapprochement, beginning with cooperation in the economic sphere — and then moving on to peaceful integration (see www.policyreview.org/JUN02/kagan.html ). This was an extension of the tired notion of Europeans being from Venus and Americans from Mars – a sound-bite turned into a book; but it contains a grain of truth, namely that what Europe does is to distinguish itself from America; it shows a different way; it has a different mission.

Given the power of the United States as a positive model, above all the image of modernity it has offered for so long, it is difficult to imagine a stronger European identity being built without a clear demarcation made between Europe and the United States. I am not suggesting that anti-Americanism is the necessary and inevitable basis for the development of a European identity. In an interdependent world anti-Americanism serves no purpose whatsoever. But one can be different without being antagonistic. The price that a hegemonic country pays – such as the USA - for being hegemonic is that it constitutes both a model and an anti-model.

What would be the basis for a non-American European identity?

It cannot be found in military and power politics competition. The military gap is evident to all and need not detain us here. The European Union has sought to establish a common position on foreign policy and at times it has even succeeded, notably over the former Yugoslavia (the Kosovo war) – but this was not a distinctive position since it suppor-

There is no European Venus to counterpoise to the American Mars

ted an American initiative which was undertaken under the aegis of NATO and not the United Nations, that is under that politico-military organisation that links the United States with Europe.

In matters such as the Middle East and notably the Israel-Palestine issue, there is a common European position, but this is barely articulated and quite ineffectual. The relative equidistance between Israeli and Palestinian aspirations maintained by the European Union has no significant effect on Israel – who enjoys the near unconditional support of the United States - and is of minimal comfort to the Palestinians.

The Iraq war constituted a particularly dramatic instance of the difficulty of establishing a common European position. The two countries which are regarded as the central axis of European integration, France and Germany, failed to aggregate the majority of European countries, even though opinion polls regularly demonstrated that a majority or a significant minority of European public opinion was against the war. Besides, eventually, all of Europe recognised and accepted, through the United Nations, the legitimacy and necessity of US presence in Iraq. Those who were against the war were not necessarily against the occupation: there have been no massive protests and demonstrations in Europe against the presence of coalition troops in Iraq.

The majority of European states supported the USA. Some remained neutral and few signalled their disagreement. Donald Rumsfeld, the US Defence Secretary, was quite right when he provocatively listed the members of the European coalition which supported Washington. This included, many members of ‘old’ Europe (i.e. Western Europe): Denmark, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Great Britain, Portugal, and Spain as well as those he quaintly called ‘new’ Europe, virtually the whole of what was the communist bloc: Albania, Bosnia, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Ukraine, Hungary, and Moldova.

When it comes to the main issues in international affairs there is no single European voice, there is no European Venus to counterpoise to the American Mars. The only effective opponent to the American occupation of Iraq have been the largely Sunni-based local resistance. Europeans either despair (Blair and co.), or gloat (Chirac and co.). There is no European position, no European initiative, no European solution. No-one turns to Europe for advice. International affairs offer few elements for the construction of a European identity.

What of culture? There are, after all, plenty of EU programmes aimed at favouring a common culture; there are exchange programmes, funding for research. Europeans are ‘proud’ of their culture, but when they think of European culture, they think of national cultures. In any case Europeans do not consume ‘European’ culture. They consu-
me their home-made national culture and they consume American culture. The High Culture of the past is largely European, but what of the culture of today? Take popular music. Each country prefers their own songs... and American songs (and the odd British ones). Thus in Italy in the best-selling albums of 2002 there were by four Italian artists (Vasco Rossi, Ligabue, Celentano, and Giorgia) the rest were British or American: Queen, U2 (The Best Of 1990-2000), and the Red Hot Chilli Peppers (By The Way). In April 2005 the best selling single in Finland was ‘Taivas Iyo Tulta’ by Terasbetoni; in Hungary it was ‘Elment az en Rozsám’ by Balkan Fanatik; in Italy it was ‘I bambini fanno oh’ by Povia; and in France it was ‘Un Monde Parfait’ by Ilona Metrecey. Everyone seems to like their home-grown singers, but hardly anyone else does. French songs do not make it in Hungary, German songs are unheard of in Spain. The Europe of popular songs is united by the sound of American music.

If one takes books or films, the story is the same. A few French or Italian films are seen in the rest of Europe but it is the Americans who speak to the Europeans while the French speak to the French, the Germans to the Germans and the Italians to the Italians. There is, of course, nothing intrinsically wrong with this – except that the goal of a common European culture recedes constantly from the horizon.

Social Inequalities between the different Member States remain a constitutive Part of the European Union

The one country every European national knows better than all the others is the USA. Films, novels, songs contribute to this. But the media too play their parts. Elections in European countries are barely covered by the media in the others, though the French and the British get some attention. American elections, on the other hand, are systematically examined, discussed, dissected, and commented. Such degree of attention is largely justified: who is the President of the USA matters more to most of us, and for obvious reasons, than who is the Prime Minister of any other EU member countries.

We are on stronger grounds when we look at social Europe in its wider sense. What is ‘social’ in the European nations and makes them different from the other two main models of advanced capitalism – the United States and Japan - are relatively strong trade unions and social-democratic parties; but their powers and ambitions have been much reduced. Besides much of this social Europe is anchored to the nation state – by far the main source of identity. The European Union is not seen and cannot be seen as the foundation of social Europe. On the contrary it is seen as embracing the market above the social.

That the dominant ethos should be market-oriented cannot surprise any observer of the history of European integration. Its driving force has always been the abolition of intra-economic barriers and the creation of a single market with a single currency. Welfare legislation has always remained solidly in the hands of nation states. And so has taxation, the main instrument of economic decision making and welfare provisions.

There are, of course, important ‘social’ elements in today’s European Union. These have had the positive function of enabling many of the social democratic left to accept integration and give up their narrow and futile vision of building socialism or rather, as one should say today, social capitalism in one country.

The social elements of the Union, however, were always meant to be functional to competition. Their purpose was to establish a level-playing field inside the European markets, reducing the worst forms of social dumping such as the equalisation of the length of the working day or ensuring a minimum wage (though not the same throughout the Union).

The electorates of states with advanced welfare states do not wish (and how could we blame them?) to reduce social provisions. Their health care arrangements are better than those in the United States and so are their levels of environmental protection. However, the countries with limited welfare states – this includes most of the new members - know that their unique competitive advantage lies in low wages, low taxes and low social provisions. They are forced into policies of further tax cuts and more privatisation. Social inequalities between the different member states thus remain a constitutive part of the European Union.

One day, it is said, when the economic gap between the more advanced countries and the laggard will have narrowed, and only then, there can be a more balanced social Europe. Which means there is little that is social now in the European Union.

There is plenty of the ‘social’ in Europe but this is to be found in each of the member states, especially the older member states. It rests within the domain of national politics. It strengthens Swedish identity or Danish or French or German. It does little for European identity. Thus social Europe is on the defensive while Europe remains divided by German. It does little for European identity. Thus social Europe. Which means there is little that is social now in the European Union.

For most commentators the rejection of the constitution (and, may I add, the case with which this rejection, the biggest defeat for the cause of European integration in fifty years, was digested) was the clear signal that Europeans lacked a ‘European identity’. ‘European Identity’ – like many nebulous concepts whose meaning is almost impossible to define - are warm, comforting words. Most people can be European and something else. Only a few strident nationa-
Can one construct a European identity? Should one construct it? What would it entail? The only model we have for this is the construction of national identity. This takes us back to the nineteenth century, when history, then barely established in the academy, was becoming important. The romantic revolution had re-cen-tred it as the master narrative where the people could read their own biography. Heroes could still be Kings and Queens but only because they represented the ‘genius’ of one’s nation. Historians, for centuries the lackeys of sovereigns, the chroniclers of lies, now acquired a ‘democratic’ role and, with this, an important market. The British historians of the nineteenth century presented a rosy and entirely comforting view of the development of British history. It was the history of a succession of intelligent reforms based on pragmatism. Even Cromwell and the little unpleasantness which befell Charles I’s head were drafted in a story of constant progress towards greater democracy and rights. An enlightened ruling class gave in to popular pressure just at the right time, before the masses turned to violent revolution. Unlike the rebellious French, the confused but well-meaning Italians, the militaristic Germans, the hopelessly romantic Poles, the British did everything right. The cliché still dominates the British view of themselves and has been successfully exported.

In France too history was used as the pre-eminent terrain where national identity could be forged. A people who did not know its own history, it was believed, would always be at the mercy of despots by whom they would be hoodwinked and cheated. The people had to be told the truth about themselves. This was the task of historians, the new priests of the secular order. On 18 May 1846, the French historian Michelet, reflecting on the kind of books the people should be offered, wrote in his diary: ‘What is needed for the masses?’ The popular book par excellence, he concluded, unsurprisingly for a historian, was a history text that would tell the history of France and, above all the history of the Revolution. Two years later, in the midst of the revolution which briefly re-established the Republic, Michelet wrote to his friend, the song writer Béranger, that, as the masses did not read, it was imperative that the Republic organised public reading of its bulletins, produced posters with easy-to-read characters with illustrations, and that patriotic songs should be sold by peddlers. In his 1848 valedictory lecture Michelet declared that the only way historians could speak to the people was by telling them their history, what they had achieved and what they could achieve.

What is a common European experience? A mythology of progress and civilising mission (ignoring the heavy borrowing from the Orient, above all from China, India and the Middle East) is one. Another is a bloody history of warfare and genocide. One could stress the positive and tone down the negative, but, fortunately, this is unlikely. Having conquered their professional freedom, historians are not likely to tailor their lessons and their books to the requirements of ‘a common European identity.’ This is not to say that it would not be a good thing if Europeans had a greater feeling of belonging together and sharing a common destiny – particularly as it happens to be true that the dissolution of the European Union would be a political and economic catastrophe. Indeed all the documents of the European Union are careful to add, whenever they mention the need for more coherence and identity to avoid fragmentation, chaos and conflict and to help achieve cohesion, solidarity, subsidiarity, concertation and cooperation, that it is also necessary to respect the existing national identities of the member states. Every minor ‘cultural’ proposal, such as that of providing access to European Union Institution Libraries (1995) claims that it is an important contribution to fostering the spirit of European cohesion and identity and that it will strengthen the sense of a common European identity amongst all the citizens of the Union.

I do not think a European identity can be taught. I do not think that one can make Europe a nation state of the nation states – which is not to say the slow and painful construction of the European Union is not the best thing that has ever happened in European history. What should be taught, and certainly taught more, is the history of other European countries. But let us not forget that most people’s idea of history is not based purely on what they were taught at schools and university. They learn their history partly from the distorted recollections of parents and grandparents, partly from the inchoate references to the past they glean from broadcast news, partly from newspapers, partly from books (above all from novels), and, above all, from television and films.

Right now the typical history taught in schools in most of Europe consists of a fundamental pillar: the history of one’s own country. To this pillar is added a smattering of Greek and Roman history, allegedly our common heritage – a notion invented in previous centuries, some major events (Black Death, French Revolution), some major landmarks such as the Renaissance and the Enlightenment (usually heavily geared to one’s own country). The first half of the twentieth
The peoples of the European nation states had not chosen their nation. They have had nationhood and nation-building thrust upon them. Eventually they became British, German, French, Italian, and Belgian. They may have felt Scottish or Cornish; Gascon or Bretons, Bavarians or Prussian or Austrian, Sicilian or Piedmontese. And many still do, but, eventually, thanks to a bureaucracy and an education system which gave them a common language, states which gave them common institutions, and thanks to wars, national anthems, sporting tournaments, Eurovision song contests, national broadcasting, and a host of other initiatives, Europeans have learned to identify with a particular set of political institutions we call 'nations'.

The European Union lacks such mechanisms and few would want the EU to have them. We shall not build European identity the way French or British or German identity was built. But while it is true that the nation-state is still the main focus of identity for Europeans, it is equally true that European electorates are angry with their politicians. They vote, increasingly, for ‘anti-system’ parties of the right. And they abstain more than ever before. At the 2005 elections in Britain Tony Blair won, for the third time, a parliamentary majority which would make most of his European colleagues green with envy, but the actual votes he obtained, 35.2 per cent were the lowest ever in the post-war history of the Labour Party and, since only sixty per cent of the electorate vote, one could argue that he is the least popular Prime Minister in post-war history, helped by the fact that the conservative opposition was even more unpopular than he was. But the situation is not much better in other countries. In Germany the CDU/CSU obtained 35.2 per cent and the SPD a little less, but at least the turnout (77.7 per cent) was better than the British. In Portugal the turnout was 65 per cent, far lower than the first democratic elections in 1975 when the turnout was 91 per cent. In the former communist countries, elections no longer attract a clear majority of the citizenry. In Poland only 40.57 per cent of voters bothered to vote. In most European countries few parties get more than 30 per cent. Everywhere else and for a number of years, various right-wing nationalist and xenophobic parties have obtained between one-fifth and one-third of the vote.

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The situation is even more worrying when we look at participation in the elections to the European Parliament. Here the distance between electorates and European institutions is abysmal. It is not just that few people vote, but that, at the election to the EP of 2004 fewer people than ever voted (voting is compulsory in Belgium, Cyprus and Luxembourg): In theory, and here is the paradox, one might have expected Europeans – disappointed with national politics - to look to the European Union for guidance and leadership, but their anger against their political class turned into opposition against the pan-European project of their national leaders.

But why are so many angry or, at the very least, disappointed? Europeans have never been richer. They have never experienced such a long period of prosperity and of peace. Of course many are unemployed, but unemployment (at most ten per cent) can hardly be a major cause for the disaffection of so many. Britain, in spite of its relatively low level of unemployment, shows a lower level of political participation than elsewhere.

The European Union is seen as an irrelevancy, a side issue or, for some, as an obstacle. Perhaps it is not surprising that the European project has failed to conquer the hearts and minds of so many: to become central to political life the European Union would need far more powers than it possesses at present. But to acquire more power it needs the backing of Europeans. It needs to conquer hearts and minds. And this is the vicious circle - the main impasse - in which the Union finds itself.

First ‘Europe’ was an opportunity to make peace between Germans and French. This is still regarded as the finest achievement of the European Union. As the years go by this is less and less credible in the sense that it is less and less credible that the Federal Republic of Germany and France would have gone to war again had it not been for the European Community.

Then ‘Europe’ became an economic zone, the Common Market. An identity was established. Being in Europe meant being on the side of economic prosperity. This is the vision of Europe that worked. This is what convinced the British (just) that they should be in rather than out. This is what convinced the Danes (because the British were in) and the Irish (for the same reasons).
By the 1980s much of the Left (and eventually even the British Left) had rallied round Europe. This was partly because the socialism in one country model which they all subscribed to had become untenable.

The EU has grown in size with successive waves of accessions. There was the accession of countries formerly under right-wing authoritarian rule but with market economies: Greece (1981), Spain and Portugal (1986). These continued to prosper and in the case of Spain spectacularly so. When Austria, Finland and Sweden joined in 1995, the EU was still a rich countries club. Norway and Switzerland chose to stay out. When Communism fell, it was impossible to keep anyone out, but the social model was more difficult to defend, in part because the new members were rapidly jettisoning their own social model (constructed under communism).

At this stage one could have opted for deepening or widening. The slogan of the 1990s was both deepening and widening. This proved unrealistic. The European Union was right to welcome the ten new countries in 2004 (Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia). And Bulgaria and Romania will follow soon. But for this enlargement to succeed it would have been necessary to give far greater powers to the centre than the citizens of ‘old’ Europe were prepared to concede.

Why is that?

Because the existing rhetoric of elections has become increasingly centred on taxation, education, health, law and order and jobs and these are still overwhelmingly national issues. Nor can these be turned into pan-European issues. It would involve an accelerated transfer of power of the centre – and this is something the electorates do not want. The construction of a common identity, above and beyond vague declarations to pollsters of the kind of ‘I feel European’ will remain firmly ensconced in the land of dreams and not in that of reality – at least as long as everyone, the Left included, will continue to subscribe to the idea that devolution and decentralisation is always good.
Reflections on the Meaning of Social and Liberal

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The search for a European social model, less optimistic now than it was a year ago, can nevertheless be seen as a rapprochement between economic and social integration after the decades of neoliberal deregulation, market integration and social fragmentation. The Lisbon strategy, full of compromise and conflict as it is, expressed the ambition of giving the social sphere a key role for the process of modernisation, and stressed that economic dynamism cannot be reached without a more coherent interplay between economic and social policy. Social policy, in the Lisbon agenda, is defined as a productive factor, as a prerequisite for making Europe the most competitive market economy by 2010 by investing in people, making work pay, and creating virtuous circles of economic dynamism and social cohesion. The idea of Social Europe stresses that the social is, in contrast to the American model, an integral part of economic integration and of European capitalism.

This contemporary debate falls back on a long standing European tradition of stressing the interplay between economic and social modernisation and linking social citizenship to economic progress and efficient markets. This attempt to bridge the gap between the economic and social is at the heart of European social policy discourses from their modern origins in the ‘Social Question’ in mid 19th century Germany. In fact, the historic meaning of the term welfare capitalism in the European tradition, in contrast to its American equivalence, which stresses corporate social responsibility, is precisely that capitalism requires social intervention in order to be efficient, and that unregulated market capitalism leads to fundamental social costs and inefficiencies. Historians have shown that the very notion of the ‘social’ as a specific sphere of intervention, rose in reaction to the idea of social crisis in mid 19th century Europe. The idea of the social was linked to the observation of the distorted effect on the social organisation of free competition and the elusion of social responsibility in industrial capitalism. Social reform was invented as a ‘prophylactic’, a preemptive intervention into the organisation of production to counteract the rising social costs that were equated with massive failure in efficiency. As prophylaxis, social policy was productive, an economic policy and not a philanthropic selfhelp mechanism. This was the tenet of the school of social economy or Sozialökonomie that in the mid 19th century was formulated by German economists in explicit critique of what was then known as ‘English economics’ or ‘Manchester liberalism’. The notion of the social was thus given an explicitly economic function, and the origin of modern social policies must be located in the tension between the dual challenge of creating a basic level of indivi-

ual security and laying the foundation for the efficient organisation of production through the allocation of social resources. The idea of social policy and social citizenship as in some way productive is therefore a tradition at the heart of the European project.

However, this notion of the productive effects of social intervention has taken very different forms in historic European discourses on social policy. The extension of the franchise and the breakthrough of organised labour saw the advent of rights based discourses of social citizenship, that broke with the conservative debates of the 19th century, in which social policy was strictly speaking economic policy, concerned with manpower and not with individual rights. To these new discourses, concerned with the transformative role of social citizenship in the capitalist world, the idea of social intervention as having productive effects became a strategic defence of social rights as well as a normative outlook on how the economic and the social world should be organised.

This duality in the historical origin of modern social policies between their economic and social motivations has some important implications for the way we think about social citizenship and the social contract. The tension between individual social security on the one hand, and the collective interest of economic efficiency, stressing productive participation, on the other, is often referred to as a Marshallian dichotomy between rights and responsibilities. Marshall saw the extension of social citizenship as in a possible state of tension with the market and market efficiency, a tension that must be resolved through the matching of rights and responsibilities. This argument resurfaced in the 1990s through Anthony Giddens and others, in a debate that focussed mainly on the revocation of the responsibility side, imported and translated from the economics of the supply side. Marshall’s distinction between rights and responsibilities can however be expressed in a slightly different manner, as a tension, in discourses on social citizenship across history and nations, between an outlook on the individual as a productive resource or as a rights bearing citizen. These two sides of the social contract are of course intrinsically linked, but the balance between them is historically specific and changes over time in the history of European welfare states, and acts as a line of demarcation between different and enduring European traditions on welfare. It is also a tension at the heart of the notion of the debate on what social model, which attempts to bridge and reconcile the very different interpretations of this relationship that coexist within the European tradition.

My ambition in the following pages is to consider what this means in terms of the ‘social’ and the ‘liberal’ and the current renegotiations of ideologies of welfare. Esping Andersen, in his famous typology of welfare states, argued that the crucial difference between the social democratic and Swedish welfare regime and its liberal or Anglo-Saxon oppo-
The question is of course to what extent such a distinction is valid today, after decades of convergence and integration, or indeed if it was ever valid. I argue in the following that it is valid, but the distinction between social and liberal is of course also to some extent a trope. In all fairness, Esping Andersen's 1990s definition of Sweden as the archetypical welfare state was a rather generous description to begin with. The productivist universalism of the Swedish model was also economic and disciplinary. The famous Rehn Meidner-model contained an explicit manpower or supply side orientation that identified individuals and groups as possible labour reserves and sought to bring them into the production. The Swedish model contained a work ethic, built into the policies and institutions of productive universalism, that had nothing to do with administering handouts. It is reflected in the duality that is at the core of the Swedish welfare model, between the strong social rights provided for in income related social insurances, based on labour market participation, and much more conditional entitlements, often means tested, for the groups in the margins of or outside of the labour market. In addition, it should be pointed out that the Swedish model has gone through a process of substantial change in the decades of retrenchment, and even if it has rather successfully emerged on the other side certainly some of its veneer has flaked. For instance, the conditionality and increased selectivity that have found their way into Swedish labour market policies in the 1990's were framed in those familiar – selectively liberal discourses of incentives that structured the process of welfare state modernisation in the last two decades all over but that are a change with the historical values of the Model. In Sweden just as in other European countries, this has meant that an old emphasis on the political responsibility for employment and labour market has been increasingly replaced by an emphasis on individual responsibility, nicely summed up in the Anglo-Saxon term 'employability', directly translated into Swedish as anställningsbarhet. Employability is a discourse that shies away from structural explanations of labour market problems or unemployment, and favours explanations that fall back on terms of individual dispositions and lack of skills. In passing, what are the effects of such a relocation of social responsibility from society to the individual on the solidarity and reciprocity that upholds the welfare state? Recent research by Bo Rothstein and Eric Uslaner shows that whereas there is a general and strong relationship between the institutions of the welfare state and trust levels in Swedish society, one institution is universally mistrusted by those who have come into contact with it, arbetsförmedlingen, the employment office. Why? Maybe because increased selectivity and conditioning leads to stigmatising and frustrating encounters with a bureaucracy that, in the absence of actual jobs, is mainly devoted to the shuffling and reshuffling of individuals between programmes of reschooling, incapacity benefit and early retirement. Active labour market policies, some observers suggest, has become passive labour market policies, slowly wearing individuals out.

The UK, on the other hand, has in the period from the late 1990s seen an ambitious reform agenda on poverty and unemployment and major institutional changes in social and labour market policies, to the point that observers suggest that it has developed a new model of Anglo-social welfare, drawing on the historical elements of liberalism but also on elements imported from Scandinavian style welfare arrangements. The supply-side oriented activation policies of the New Deal are thus suggested to be close in content to Scandinavian style ALMPs.

The central Influence of New Labour Welfare Policies was not Sweden, but the US

Whereas it is clear both that there have been important convergences on the policy level and that, on the normative level of discourse, the meaning of social and liberal today is floating, there are some important reflections to be made here. Importantly, governments in both Sweden and the UK have articulated modernisation strategies in the last decade that stress the positive interplay between economic modernisation and social citizenship, give a clear role to the state, and defend the role of social intervention as an integrated part of a particular model of capitalism. In Sweden, this is conceptualised in terms of an intimate link between economic growth and individual security, and in the UK it is defined as a process of reconciliation between efficiency and social justice. Both these strategies give a specific and clear role to social citizenship in the process of economic modernisation. However, the role that they give to social citizenship in the process of change is very different, and it is worth highlighting since this difference lies at the very heart of the tensions embedded in the notion of a European Social model. These differences can be expressed, somewhat stereotypically, as a distinction between an economic approach to the social or a social approach to the economy, a distinction that on the level of converging policies can seem academic but that in terms of the normative foundations of the social contract is crucial, because it translates to the differing conceptions of the individual as primarily a rights-bearing citizen or a productive resource in the process of change set out above.

While the Swedish and the British model may in many ways have become more similar in the last decades, the central influence of New Labour welfare policies was not Sweden, but the US. Policies such as the New Deal were based not on a Swedish interpretation of active labour market policies but
on the American micro policies developed by the Clinton administration, that are arguably closer to an American tradition of workfare. There is a fine line admittedly between what might be defined as workfare and what might be defined as active labour market policy in contemporary politics. But let us consider this distinction; workfare makes social rights conditional upon labour market participation, whereas active labour market policies are based on the notion that social rights are the necessary basis for productive participation. Active labour market policies aim to bring out the productive potential of all, whereas workfare sees rights as an outcome, something that is earned in the workplace, and consequently gives the improductive no or few rights. The productivism of the Swedish model was not a stress on responsibility or obligation, but a stress on the productive potential of all. Swedish discourse traditionally is not comfortable with the notion of responsibility but would speak, rather, of the right of all to be productive. Reciprocity, in this Swedish interpretation, was not about an exchange between rights and responsibilities, but about the recognition that individuals could find themselves in a time of need and that solidarity was a question of extending help with the knowledge that help would be reciprocated when necessary. The Swedish unwillingness to speak in terms of deserving or undeserving poor or indeed of welfare as a kind of contractual exchange relationship, reflects this idea of reciprocity based on the recognition of need, but also based on the presumption that everyone will participate after capacity in the production, given the help to do so.

In contrast, the British modernisation strategy in the last ten years has had an overall focus on strengthening the responsibility side of social citizenship, ultimately by ‘making work pay’, by strengthening the economic incentives that will induce individuals to work. The contemporary social investment discourse of New Labour differs substantially from Swedish productivism in that it focuses on individual obligation and responsibility, but does not emphasize the productive effects of the rights-side of social citizenship. It is strengthening the responsibility side that is understood as economically efficient and consequently as an investment. This strengthening of obligation, in many ways, has been the very meaning of the notion of modernisation in the British reform strategy since the mid 1990s. Arguably, it is even the prerequisite of the British emphasis on reconciliation between economic efficiency and social justice – the underlying meaning being that growth and social justice can be made coherent ends, through a process of modernisation that focuses on strengthening a work ethic, understood as originating in creating a culture of obligation.

Another important and prevailing difference between the social and the liberal model concerns the question of security. The Swedish Prime Minister Göran Persson insists that there can be no change without security, whereas the British chancellor Gordon Brown repeats that there can be no security without change. In Swedish discourse, security is seen as a precondition for successful change, and the only way of making sure that individuals cope with structural transformation and that ‘all come along’ as is the slogan of the 2006 election campaign [alla ska med]. Contemporary Swedish labour market policies have been organised around a notion of flexibility interpreted as security in change. This reflects the historic emphasis in the Swedish model that insecurity creates inefficiencies and hampers growth, whereas security creates courageous individuals who, in the words of the Swedish PM, ‘dare spend, be creative, criticise and have ideas in the workplace, study and raise a family’. Individual security, in this manner, is given a direct link to growth, productivity, and competitiveness, and insecurity is linked to laggardness, unruly competition and fundamental inefficiency. In the UK, this relationship is the opposite; security tends to be identified with what stands in the way of successful change, on a par with dynamism and opportunity, associated with reactionary vested interests and welfare dependency. In the British model, flexibility is about the individual willingness to constantly embrace change, and the capacity to adapt to changing demands for skill in the market place. Equipping workers for change by giving them the skills to keep up with a fiercely competitive world is at the core of the British ‘flexibility plus’, but it is a long way from the way that the notion of security in change, rhetorically at least, aspires to set individual needs and security at the heart of the process of modernisation, which, theoretically at least, also means that individual needs for security also set the limits of the pace of change. Similar patterns reflect in the shifting notions of responsibility between employers and employees. In the British model the predominant notion of responsibility is individual responsibility while Swedish politics have attempted to strengthen the responsibility of the corporate sphere, for instance in the debate on the work environment and work/life balance.

The differences I have pointed to above highlight the ongoing renegotiation of meaning of the terms ‘social’ and ‘liberal’, but they also point to out the extent to which the question of how the relationship between the economic and the social should be organised is a key source of divergence within social Europe. The social contract is, on the one hand, a question of the organisation of the balance between the economic and the social, it is of course also a question of the relationship between politics and the individual.

The prevailing distinction between a social or social democratic model and a liberal or AngloSaxon model that I have tried to outline in the previous pages is a distinction between two very different social contracts. One contains a social approach to the economic, which is about giving social citizenship a central role in the process of economic modernisation, ultimately also setting social limits to the process of economic change. The other, rather, is most accurately described as an attempt to reappraise the social in economic terms. In the Swedish model this translates to an emphasis on the role of politics to free individual productive potential by providing security, collective responsibility and strong social rights, whereas, in the UK, activating individuals is, predominantly, about strengthening the individual responsibility to grasp opportunity and using politics to ‘tap’ the productive potential of all. British politics, then, have so far been closer to an economistic appropriation of the social than they have been about setting in place a normative outlook on how the relationship between economy and society should be organised, which arguably is what the Swedish
model is all about. To that extent, if there is an anglo-social model of welfare, it has accommodated the social in a distinctly liberal way.

These differences between the social and the liberal are not carved in stone, nor are they in my view dictated by historical traditions or institutions in each country, even if they are indisputably structured by such institutional stickiness. They are of course influenced by a variety of factors in economic, social and political history that go beyond what I am trying to show here. What is important however is that these social contracts are also dynamic and the focal points of debate and discursive struggle in each country. In Sweden, the 2006 election will clearly involve a debate on the role of individual responsibility and activation policy, and in the UK, the idea of a progressive consensus has lead to a re-examining of the values of the British model. On the European level, social and liberal discourses coexist in a similar state of tension and renegotiation. What social Europe is or will be is a question for our future. For this future debate however, the historical reflection that I have offered here suggests a warning. A social model defined by the economy turns the worldview of the social economists, that the economy has to be controlled in order to recreate social efficiency, on its head. Rather it is economic efficiency that needs to be restored and the social is left to be fine-tuned, restructured, and rationalised. This is not social economy, but an economic approach to the social that defines the individual first and foremost as a productive resource. Arguably the notion of social Europe is still closer to this economising of the social than it is to a genuinely social model of capitalism, which would involve giving a constructive role to the rights-side of social citizenship and accepting the idea that this may mean setting individual social needs at the heart of the process of modernisation.

References


Europe's current impasse is of a different kind than previous deadlocks. The rejection of the Constitution in France and the Netherlands are symptomatic of the cultural and political insecurity in the enlargement and integration of the furthest form of polity from the people. The EU's legitimacy deficit and failure to connect with the people of Europe poses challenges with which the democratic left must engage. These challenges will not be resolved by tackling unemployment and economic underperformance alone and the danger is that the policy gap will be filled by neoliberal solutions if the pro-European left does not provide a coherent alternative.

Part of the reason for the 'no' votes and Europe's wider post-modern malaise, particularly in Western Europe, is a fear that the EU is part of the globalisation process, which has become perceived as a threat to identity, community and values. The crude reductionism of public political debate, limitation of European cultural exchange and lack of a clear EU message has led to enlargement being interpreted as a coup by new Europe over old Europe rather than a de facto win-win. The fear of Polish plumbers and eastern immigration, while in part economic, is also a cultural anxiety.

Broadcasting policy offers one means of engaging these concerns and position Europe as an enabler to globalisation rather than a cause of the process. Solidarity in diversity underpinned by a commonality of values and a shared cultural heritage must drive European broadcasting policy.

Globalisation challenges European cultural diversity in film, broadcasting, media and communications policy. Audiovisual policy cannot be viewed as simply another market sector to be liberalised. Given the economic specificity of the sector, a free market in broadcasting would lead to the dumping of American bundled products on European markets; the subsequent externality is likely to be that less people would watch free to air national channels whose budgets and high value national programming would come under increasing threat. It is clear from the ever increasing EU:US audiovisual trade deficit that a free market in film would lead to the almost total monopolisation and hegemony of American film and broadcasting.

Instead an international audiovisual policy which ensures the democratisation of communications, the balance of global information flows and protection against monopolies and consolidation of ownership underpinned by the principle of cultural diversity, would protect indigenous cultural heritage. Currently the trade deficit in television and film between the EU and the USA is over $8bn and over 70 per cent of all films screened on TV in the EU are from the USA. This imbalance needs to be redressed.

The EU recognises and supports cultural diversity as a 'dominant European characteristic and a fundamental political objective' and considers audiovisual and electronic communication to be the heart of a crucial sector for the transmission of the cultural, social and democratic values of Europe. While the Television Without Frontier directive (TVWF) has ensured terrestrial channels meet quotas of 51 per cent of European content in broadcasting, non-terrestrials generally fail to meet this quota. For example over 40 non-terrestrial UK licensed channels do not meet this requirement and make little or no contribution to national/EU audiovisual production and creativity.

The EU Media programme which supports training, production, development and distribution of film needs far greater resources to develop transfrontier broadcasting. ARTE the Franco-German channel carrying documentaries and films has a footprint from Scandinavia through North Africa to Israel also need greater support and promotion in member states.

The Commission's 'D Plan' for democracy, dialogue and debate and recent White Paper on communication policy while providing a sound basis for a more sustainable communications policy needs a more political dimension to overcome the EU's bureaucratic image. While the Commission must communicate a clear message there also needs to be greater European news coverage. For example EURONEWS based in Lyon which used to receive a small subsidy from the EU, again needs greater funding and coverage in order to enjoy a greater participation in a European media sphere.

European Cultural Diversity in Broadcasting

by Carole Tongue & Richard Daniels

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The EU faces two key challenges which it can address in part through broadcasting policy; Europe needs to bridge the legitimacy gap and to explain its raison d'être to younger citizens. It is clear that national political imperatives will challenge the EU's message and therefore there must be a broadcasting space which gives the various institutions a right of reply, in particularly the Parliament. This will show the Union to be more than a nebulous bureaucracy with a unified aim. Such a space would also provide the opportunity to engage wider groups and citizens into broader European debates and transnational exchange. The mantra that Europe is not Brussels must always apply.

The EU has to engage younger generations. Recent Eurobarometer polls have shown whether in terms of trust, image or assessment of EU membership, all the indicators have fallen. The perceived peace and prosperity secured by the EU is not accepted as relevant by younger citizens; social democrats need to demonstrate Europe's unique heritage, convergence of EU citizens views on social standards and welfare and that a shared albeit diverse culture unites Europe as a region of shared values and history as well as providing economic solutions and social protection to globalisation.

One welcome start for example is Eurokidnet, a new EU funded pan-European digital children's media channel whose content will be created entirely by children and will create a broadcasting medium for European cultural exchange for children. New digital children's channels should look to carry more film from across the EU and beyond. There also needs to be more co-production between European public service broadcasters to rival US blockbuster output for children. Why was the EU incapable of supporting Wallace and Gromit feature length films for example? The EU Media programme should set aside a proportion of its funds to be invested in children's film.

The EU has to communicate its successes and function to generations whose politics have been shaped by post modernity, post ideology and single issue politics. This positioning de facto gives the pro-European left a strong advantage. As national mass based parties struggle to maintain membership and engage younger voters, single issues which can only be solved through international cooperation offers the space for the left to provide transnational solutions to the emerging political consciousness. Indeed the failure to meet these challenges and the dangers of the re-emergence of nationalism and centre right politics, signs of which are clear in electoral results over the last decade, should act as a driver to mobilise the pro-European left.

With reference to the revised TVWF directive, in the interests of fair competition between linear broadcasting and non-linear broadcasting services, both pay TV channels and non-linear audiovisual media services should be required to make a financial contribution to the production and acquisition of European works. These new audiovisual media services should also be required to provide an appropriate share of European works in their catalogues. All EU member states should ratify the UNESCO convention on cultural diversity and devise programmes to fulfill its objectives. EU Culture Ministers must demand a greater budget for European news and other cultural channels. The 3rd MEDIA programme 2001-05 received only 0.06 per cent of the Union's budget which makes it impossible to compete with Hollywood. Although this budget will double between 2007-13 it is still relatively small, especially given we have ten new member states and there are financial challenges to SME's in the market and from digital technology. The Community's overall audiovisual budget still remains at only 0.1 per cent of the whole budget.

There also needs to be an increase in transfrontier TV channels carrying European productions, particularly films, dramas and documentaries. There should also be
more coverage of EU debates on national media channels with cross frontier participation. Euronews should be upgraded to a more significant news and documentary outlet across the EU. Co-productions between European channels also need to be increased.

In reflecting on the Constitution, it is imperative to retain its support for the active promotion of cultural and linguistic diversity and the inscription of culture as a fundamental goal as written into various parts of the Constitution and the Charter of Fundamental Rights. The EU must also maintain its WTO negotiating mandate in support of cultural diversity and maintain unanimity for the WTO negotiations and conclusions of agreements in the field. The EU should also work to ensure that bilateral agreements do not undermine the international principle of cultural diversity.

The EU should also look harder at how the European Investment Bank can increase funding support for the EU audiovisual industry to underpin new innovations in support of greater audiovisual cultural diversity available for all EU citizens.

Cultural diversity is at the heart of social Europe. It can act as a humanising agent to a political project communicated in economic terms. Europe’s current challenge and one of the guiding principles of the Convention was to bring Europe closer to the peoples of Europe. It is clear that only a broadcasting policy which protects cultural diversity while increasing cultural exchange and a sustainable communications policy will provide a mechanism to bring Europe closer to its citizens.

At this time of reflection we should not lose perspective, the European project has been hugely successful. It has delivered prosperity and contributed, with NATO, to peace across the region through cooperation and the pooling of national sovereignty. Reactionary forces continually work to ensure that obsolete arguments and narratives survive. The democratic left needs to present a clear message to the peoples of Europe: through cooperation and solidarity we can meet the challenges of the modern world. That message has to be carried in the most powerful medium of communication - the screen - to all generations of EU citizens.

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