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BEYOND DEMOCRACY

(part 1)

by

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V I R T U A L D E M O C R A C Y

Democracy and citizenship can only really exist if opinions emerge in a platform of debate and discussion, of argument and response (Luc Huyse)

The illusion that the individual can stand up to the power of politics and the economy must be eliminated once and for all. (Luc Huyse)

In many ways Eyes of Europe can be seen as a permanent virtual agora where everyone can interact with everyone. In this respect Eyes of Europe is the best lesson in direct and virtual democracy one can imagine: a real antidote to the arbitrary nature of illiberalism and a lesson in real time democracy.

EoE, September 2020





EOE BEYOND DEMOCRACY?

**Representative democracy is agonising.
May generation EOE democracy live**

1. « THE EXPIRY DATE FOR DEMOCRACY AS WE KNOW IT TODAY IS APPROACHING,

In his latest book, *“Beyond democracy”, (De democratie voorbij)* Luc Huyse (1937) honorary professor at the University of Louvain has analyzed social developments in Belgium over the past forty years with his keen sociological view.

« The expiry date for democracy as we know it today is approaching,” he warns.

Politics, population and economy are the three angles. State, market and population are not separate islands.

Without cross-connections, coexistence will not succeed.

An important mediating role is played by the **'civil society'**, which is the cement that makes up the possibility for a ménage à trois. The coordination between the corners of the triangle colours /determines the strength and credibility of parliamentary democracy.

Any society where one of the inhabitants of the social triangle colonises the other derails over time. (p. 196)

The thread running through his book is therefore the question of **whether parliamentary democracy in its present form still has a future.**

*No, definitely not, writes Huyse. The expiration date has been reached, because a democracy cannot survive in a state stripped down by the market. Huyse stresses that, **democracy and citizenship can only really exist if opinions emerge in a platform of debate and discussion, of argument and response.*** Strangely enough this sounds exactly like Eyes of Europe’ ambition.

Where marketing penetrates politics, there is no breeding ground for it.





Huyse's '*diagnosis*' states that *the centuries-old pillars of parliamentary democracy - the nation state, the exchange between voters and politicians, the pact between state and markets - are corroded. As a result, **parliamentary democracy is severely weakening efficiency and legitimacy.***

Huyse describes *how politics as an activity has broken into pieces and how this fragmentation is increasing. Continuous fragmentation also exists in the population, which is brought about by immigration, demographic trends, individualization and developments in the media.*

The author then discusses '*the derailed relations*', *the breaking of the fragile balance between market mechanisms and distributive justice in what he calls the 'democratic capitalism' of the welfare state created after the Second World War. The reason for this is the ever-increasing role of the markets.*

Markets no longer know borders like care for the elderly or education; everything comes into the hands of private consortia. In his view, this is a wicked evolution.

"A government must be strong to protect the heart of democracy. To fulfill that task, you need a critical amount of 'state', which is no longer there today.

For " Huyse, a democratic « reconquest of space on the markets is badly needed, but also a fundamental change in the division of roles between government and citizens.

"The defense of citizens' interests is extremely weak when it is set up from the position of mere individual or passive consumer". (p. 49)

According to him, **civil society should not only act as a mediator between citizen and government, but also as a pressure regulator that throws a bridge between population and politics.** » Isn't this precisely where Eyes of Europe comes in ?

In the second part '*Medication*', Huyse examines the attempts being made to '*streamline the triangular relationship*'. Following in the footsteps of German sociologist Ulrich Beck, he observes that *we are living in a **social transition period full of contradictions : a leap into the dark.***

Gramsci : *The crisis consists precisely in the fact that the old is dying and the new cannot be born; in this interregnum a great variety of morbid symptoms appear."*





Huyse holds out the prospect of ***citizen participation*** and transparency in decision-making.

Hopefully, politicians will make use of this. It will be essential, because *the expiry date of the parliamentary democracy in which they operate has almost been exceeded.*

Is democracy really over now and are we already living (unnoticed?) in a different social system? Or is there not enough democracy and does it need to be enriched with new ideas and techniques?

A democracy needs to be earned, deserved and worked on and for on a daily basis. It is a system that lives and develops, because standing still is going backwards.

Where the population as subject and object should be central, we feel the constant pressure of the 'political-economic complex' that threatens man as a citizen and consumer.

The indifference of the citizen is oil on the fire and a vacuum is always filled by others.

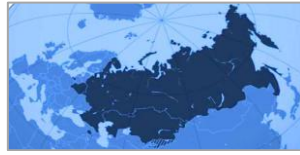
Hence the call to ***strengthen the link with politics as a 'vigilant citizen'; an opportunity for the much-needed civil society to claim its place as a fourth actor.***

The illusion that the individual can stand up to the power of politics and the economy must be forgotten once and for all.

This analysis of representative democracy in agony in the face of rising peril - which we will try to better define in this essay - reads like **a plea for civil society.**

If I am not mistaken, this *civil society* is a synonym for *public opinion*. However, this public opinion is generally essentially structured on a national scale. We know that the problems that are multiplying today can only be solved on a European scale. **Without a European public opinion** (of course there is such thing as a French, German, Polish, Hungarian, Italian, etc. public opinion) **there will never be such thing as a European democracy.** The European Parliament could, in theory, represent that European public opinion, but the members of the European Parliament react as representatives of their nation and not as full blood Europeans. What is missing is a real European agora that stimulates, implements and mobilizes a European public opinion.





In other words, what is missing is the self-active learning platform Eyes of Europe.

2. BELGIUM : «WHEN ELECTIONS ARE FEARED,DICTATORSHIP WAKES UP».

The only thing that still binds our Belgian politicians is a panic-stricken fear of new elections' *'We do not yet have a real “Trumpian” situation here, but the contempt for the citizen and democratic values is gradually reaching its peak in Belgium.* (JM De Decker in Knack').

We have held elections and there will be no new ones unless you kill me,' said Alexander Lukashenko, seething with rage against a mob of striking workers who booed him for falsifying the election results. We rightly call that Belarusian President a dictator. In fact, we might as well put these historic words in the mouths of our own Belgian political leaders.

Despite the fact that they have already failed to take account of the results of the ballot on 26 May 2019, the Belgian party chairmen and top politicians are still not in a position to form a government 450 days after those elections. The only thing that binds them together is a panic-stricken fear of new elections. Yet, we still call them democrats. Essentially, it is dictatorial flight and cold feet for loss of power. It is the attitude of African despots and Kleptocrats. *When elections are feared, the dictatorship beckons.* As soon as the support of the people wanes, almost all those in power begin to search autocratically for stability of power. For Donald Trump, this was in line with expectations. With the American presidential elections of three November in sight, he suffers from fear of failure. Trump is cynically destroying norms and values, as well as conventions and institutions or international treaties. This is a lot more dangerous than his vulgar taste, his narcissism, his rudeness and his reprehensible prejudice . Trump also constantly attacks independent institutions such as justice, science and the mainstream media.

He swings conspiracy theories, scatters fake news like confetti, invents his own history or appeals to a non-existent or false glorious past. He designs his own





universe of enemy images at will. His Republican party has meanwhile been capitulating to his absolute power.

As Hitler and all totalitarian rulers before him, as Erdogan or Putin, Trump is creating his own alternative reality. The desire to live in that alternative reality enchants his followers. But he who renounces the facts, renounces his freedom. Demagogues like Hitler or Erdogan or Orban and especially Bolsonaro use freedom of speech to abolish that freedom as soon as they have conquered power. Voters follow their idol and allow themselves to be reduced to fans, political fan clubs. The enemy of the arena is *us against them, the war of all* (Hobbes) against all to the limit of civil war.

In times of crisis, one always chooses a leader who is dominant.

Of course, we do not yet have a real “Trumpian” situation in Belgium, but the contempt for the citizen and democratic values is gradually reaching its peak. “De Tijd” of 19 August: *'The population is tired because of the exhausting corona measures, social isolation and the incoherence in the corona policy... It is tired because of uncertainty and fear about the survival of the world as we knew it, of companies and jobs... It is tired because in this fundamental crisis politics offers no prospects at all... Does everyone realize how close we are to the abyss of popular anger, populism and total ungovernability'?*

3. AMERICAN DEMOCRACY IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Both Republican and Democratic conventions are closed, and candidates are nominated with their running mates. Trump or Biden?

The most insane thing is that Donald Trump's re-election is once again conceivable. (Béatrice Delvaux Le Soir) Yes, this weird president who has ruined the health of his people and sacked democratic values, the Constitution, the economy of his country. Yes, this president who shows and, above all, makes us see and experience a country divided, radicalized, violent, in the grip of a civil war. A president who dared lies, transgressions, promises, arguments, seductions at the Republican convention. The man has nothing to lose, on the contrary, he has a compelling need to win, if only to guarantee his post-election fate.





All this has a heavy consequence for Europeans and the world: on 3 November, it is not only the American presidency that will be **at stake**, but **the maintenance of democracy in the United States**. The reality in this country, deeply divided between conservatives and progressives, blacks and whites, poor like Job and rich like Croesus, is no longer as important as the partisan divide. ***The future of democracy is at stake ; civil war is looming.***

4. GERMANY: "THE BROWN VIRUS MUST BE STOPPED"

The radicalization of the "*anti-mask*" movement in Germany is appalling with a spectacular attempt to siege and storm Parliament with 300 arrests, notably of extreme right-wing sympathizers, scandalized and worried the government. (AFP)

The German Interior Minister denounced Sunday 30 August as "*unacceptable*" the excesses observed in Berlin during a large demonstration against the restrictions linked to the Covid-19 pandemic, with dozens of arrests and an attempt to siege the national parliament.

Seehofer warned in "BILD" that it was "*unacceptable to see 'extremists and troublemakers' attempting to force their way into the Reichstag building, the seat of the Chamber of Deputies and the 'symbolic center of our democracy'.* The Reichstag, where German deputies meet in plenary session, has a strong symbolic significance in Germany. The building and its famous dome were burned down in 1933 by the Nazis in an act that was seen as intended to bring what was left of interwar German democracy to its knees.

"***The Brown Virus must be stopped,***" headlined Sunday's "BILD", Germany's most widely read newspaper. "*Nazi symbols and other flags of the Empire have no place in front of the Chamber of Deputies,*" denounced Vice-Chancellor and Finance Minister Olaf Scholz.

If the right to demonstrate must be defended, "*nobody should go so far as to march behind right-wing extremists*", he added. Among the demonstrators arrested outside the Russian embassy was one of the figures of the "*anti-mask*"





movement in Germany, Attila Hildmann, who became famous as a vegan cook and now a self-proclaimed member of the "ultra-right.

"Reich flags and far-right rudeness in front of the German Bundestag are an unbearable attack on the heart of our democracy," the head of state wrote in a statement published on Instagram. "We will never accept this," Steinmeier added, at a time when the radicalization of the "anti-mask" movement in the face of the Covid-19 pandemic, whose supporters demonstrated by the thousands on Saturday in the German capital, is scandalizing and worrying the government. "If someone is upset by the measures, or questions them, he can do so, even in public and during demonstrations," the president continued. "My understanding stops when demonstrators mingle with enemies of democracy and political agitators".

Justice Minister Christina Lambrecht called for "**defending ourselves against these enemies of our democracy**".

5. FRANCE: THE COLLAPSE OF FRENCH DEMOCRACY

Laurent Joffrin, director of "Libération" and Alain Duhamel

*The recent municipal elections have confirmed that **the democratic representative system is sick**, with a loss of legitimacy of leaders and a decline in participation.*

***The collapse of French democracy** on 28 June marked with a black stone what ends up resembling a disintegration: 59% abstention for the second round of municipal elections, the closest however to the daily concerns of the French. Of course, the pandemic accentuated the movement and the distance between the two rounds was dissuasive.*

The voters' turnout is steadily declining relentlessly. In the second round of the presidential election, a quarter of the voters abstained and more than 10% of the French voted blank or nil. As a matter of fact, the president-elect does not have half of the registered voters.





*In the legislative elections that followed, more than half of the citizens abstained. The decline in turnout has continued to worsen. **Representative democracy appears seriously ill.***

The French are convinced those who seek or exercise power are corrupt, incompetent and completely indifferent to the fate of their voters.

*On the other hand, we can clearly see the **forces that proclaim themselves to be "anti-system" growing stronger.** They thrive on social networks, now a favorite source of information for a quarter of the French. They demonstrate, they protest, they denounce, without proposing other voices, other solutions, other regimes, other societies.*

They criticize what they don't like - the world that is - but they don't know what they like - the world that is coming.

A new experience, that of the Citizens' Convention, (a kind of micro EoE) has just given birth to these 150 measures. They are expected to be translated without delay into a swarm of decrees, bills, perhaps referendums. Other such conventions are likely to be set up in the future. They would be very useful, for example on the relationship between the police, justice and citizens.

A new utopia, a kind of EoE in progress, the Citizens' Conventions are experimenting with a new method. In both cases, a semi-direct democracy is being reinvented by trial and error. Protheses in the face of the erasure of French democracy or a clay parapet in the face of the temptation of chauvinistic populism?

The "moral crisis" that France is going through - in the words of the President of the Republic himself - no doubt stems from the fact that this model of consumerist capitalism is in radical contradiction with everything that has made up French civilization.

***What many French people hope for** are elites capable of defending a model of civilization that does not transform men into slaves of the economic machine but elevates them through reason, knowledge, pleasure and beauty. **Elites capable of perpetuating democratic France.** Natacha Polony (Marianne)*





6. BACK TO THE 30'S? A POSSIBLE COME BACK OF FASCISM ?

According to Samir Guandesha (*Spectres of fascism, Theoretical and Contemporary perspectives*, Pluto), the most alarming of all developments is the recent election of former paratrooper, Jair Bolsonaro, on the basis of 55% of the) popular vote as the president of Brazil. The misogynistic, homophobic and racist Brazilian President-elect, has expressed admiration for the torturous methods of the Junta that ruled Brazil from 1964-85,

Are we witnessing the return of a specter that was thought to have been decisively exorcized last century? One obvious way is to suggest that out-of-joint times produce *Uncanny Repetitions of the same*.

In this case, it is the repetition of the so-called *Weimar moment*, i.e., the return of zombie democracy squeezed, morbidly, between what Gramsci described as “the old world that is dying and the new world that cannot be born.”

Focusing on the U.S. case, Holocaust historian, Christopher W. Browning, argues that one is witnessing several *continuities* . and one significant *discontinuity* with the Weimar period. Then, as now, the US is becoming increasingly isolationist. Then as now, we are observing **a vicious undermining of liberal democracy and its institutions**. The part of Paul von Hindenburg is played today by Mitch Mc. Connell. “Like Hitler’s conservative allies,” Browning argues, “McConnell and the Republicans have prided themselves on the early returns in their investment in Trump”.

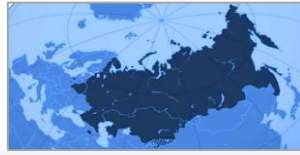
A key *discontinuity*, according to Browning, between Weimar and our current conjuncture has to do with the fact that it very unlikely that it will result in an organized, disciplined mass-based fascist movement. He is witnessing a strange case of “**suffocation democracy**,” the rise of “**illiberal democracy**”.

And if we look at the rise of other authoritarian regimes across the globe(from the US and Canada to Poland and Hungary) we are struck by the undermining of checks and balances on the executive branch of the state in particular by the judiciary, the press as well as political dissent per se. This is the manner in which **democracy is threatened not from without but from within**.

“Neo fascism » is a particular political response to the challenges in the management of capitalist society.

A most remarkable feature of fascism is that this particular response is a “**categorical rejection of democracy**”.





Fascism always replaces the general principles on which the theories and practices of modern democracies are based recognition of a diversity of opinions, recourse to electoral procedures to determine a majority, guaranty of the rights of the minority, etc. with the opposed values of the submission to the requirements of collective discipline and the authority of the supreme leader and his main agents.

Collective identities and cultural traditions are mobilized in such a way as to confront and indeed undermine formal democratic institutions undrule of law.

Fascism represents the application of forms of colonial techniques century fascism, it also entails the self-colonization of Europe.

7. NEXT GENERATION EU

« WE HAVE CHOSEN TO INVEST IN A COMMON FUTURE. » Ursula von der Leyen

'We must make the future of Europe resonate for the next generation', writes Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and European Commissioner Didier Reynders about the European Recovery Fund decided by the Member States.

We have chosen to invest in a common future. That is why we can call the decision taken by the leaders of the 27 Member States to approve the European Commission's recovery proposal historic.

Firstly, because of the amounts involved. Europe will have a recovery instrument of EUR 750 billion to support the people who have been hardest hit by this crisis.

*The instrument will be called the “**Next Generation EU**” and will invest in recovery for the benefit of a greener, more digital and more resilient Union for our children. To this will be added the EU budget for the next seven years, bringing the total package to **€ 1.8 trillion**.*

Secondly, it is historic because of the way Europe tackles it. For the first time on this scale, the European Commission - with the support of the 27 Member States - is using its strong credit rating to lend to “Next Generation EU” on the capital markets.





Europe's prosperity lies in its unity, its community and its single market.

We can only recover if we help each other.

Europe's prosperity lies in its unity, its community and its single market. That is why we must act urgently, decisively and together.

Our Union must always be judged on what it has to offer for the future. This vision of a common future has enabled us to take every courageous step in our history: uniting Europe after the Second World War or at the end of the Cold War, making our common market a reality and introducing our common currency. Today it is that same groundbreaking vision that enables us to take another historic step for our Union.

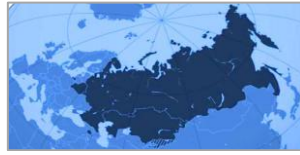
8. MACRON AND MERKEL IN BRÉGANÇON : EUROPE AT THE FOOT OF THE WALL

After le Nouvel Obs Brégançon: a summer residence under high surveillance. Two heads of state ready to sound the bugle to make Europe a great power. What is at stake at Brégançon? Historical, of course.

What is being played at Brégançon between Angela Merkel and Emmanuel Macron is historic.

Beyond the vicissitudes that the European Community has had to face since its creation, the two Heads of State are now acutely aware that the great question put to them is: ***do we finally want, yes or no, to make Europe a great power capable of really weighing on the international chessboard?*** Or does it intend to remain an extra, a mere platform where goods and people move, at the risk of falling apart until the lights go out? **The spectre of the 1930s is not so far away: the collapse of democracies and the League of Nations**, the conflicts over territory, which led to the devastating conflict of the Second World War. Today, the signals that reach us from the Aegean Sea, the Sahel, Lebanon, Belarus, are clear warnings of a world in turmoil. Highly dangerous, and no longer just because of Islamist terrorism or the Covid-19 crisis. Whether in Greek waters, where Turkey is openly seeking a military incident by launching oil exploration under the escort of a warrior armada, or in Mali, where a quarteron of high-ranking officers are





sweeping up a breathless regime without a blow, at the risk of provoking aftershocks in neighbouring states, France is in the front line, alone, always, heroic or imprudent depending on which side they are on.

Faced with the dictatorship, the loneliness of the Belarusians, this solo exercise looks like a dead-end street. **The Germans have understood that the need for a powerful Europe has become a vital imperative for their own economic interests.** Admittedly, nothing is simple for them. How can they resist Erdogan's hegemonic ambitions, on the Mediterranean rim, with the return of the myth of the Ottoman Caliphate, when three million Turkish immigrants contribute to the success of their economy? How to support the emancipation movements in Belarus without offending the Kremlin

The Merkel-Macron tandem knows that Europe is caught in a gigantic spider's web, where the stingy ones from the North, the cicadas from the South and the reluctant ones from the East coexist. And so many other forces that dream of its inexorable dissolution. At the head of the procession are Trump's United States, Xi Jinping's China and Putin's Russia. Does Europe have the ambition not to repeat the errors of history, that is to say not to remain weak, those errors that led it to chaos and tragedy, before the current nationalisms turn it into a vast mess?

The Brégançon meeting could prove to be as important as the meetings of Gaulle-Adenauer, Giscard-Schmidt and Mitterrand-Kohl. **Europe must assert itself as a great power if it is not to be condemned to decline.** Will the states be able to understand that their interest lies not in turning in on themselves, but in asserting the strength that they represent united? The case is not won. But at least these two, so different, have understood this. Emmanuel the impetuous and Angela the cautious play a game that goes beyond their personalities.

9. ŽIZEK : ACCEPTING THAT OUR LIVES ARE LIKELY TO CHANGE IN THE LONG TERM

According to philosopher Slavoj Žižek, with the Covid crisis ***our democratic societies have gone through the five phases that every person who has just learned that he or she is condemned to die soon goes through,*** according to Elisabeth Kübler-Ross in *The Last Moments of Life: denial, anger, negotiation, depression and acceptance.*





Technology is destined to take on more weight in our lives. Finally, the economic situation is expected to get worse, while ecological disaster looms.

To avoid "barbarism", we will have to rethink the organization of our societies. He believes that it is in Europe, where the crisis is likely to be felt most acutely. According to him, "the first thing that needs to be done is almost impossible: the strengthening of the operational unity of Europe, especially Franco-German coordination".

10. FOR A UNITED EUROPE, OPEN TO THE WORLD AND UNDERSTANDABLE BY CITIZENS

Thirty years after Helmut Kohl, her mentor, Angela Merkel intends to restore Berlin to its position as a leader in the European project. A project that no longer arouses much enthusiasm and which mobilizes against it both on the right and on the left.

Extremists and populists from all walks of life are on the lookout, ready to exploit the slightest misstep or loophole in order to provide Europe's citizens with simplistic solutions.

There is no denying it: the perils are manifold, the challenges immense. They require a radical change of political model. Europe - i.e. the Member States - must assume its responsibilities and work urgently to simplify its decision-making procedures and institutional functioning.

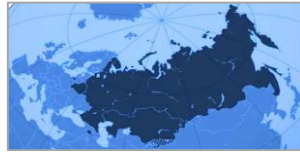
Restoring citizens' links and political confidence is at this price. It calls for prudence and clear-sightedness.

It calls for more ambition and creativity: ***less bureaucracy, more democracy. The European Union does not need new patches, but a coherent and credible vision of the future***, i.e. a political project capable of mobilizing beyond the small Brussels Eurocratic bubble and of generating public support.

Pitting Member States against each other, opposing the cancrs to the good guys, the cicadas to the ants, ignores the heart of the problem and the crucial issue at stake - namely the construction of a new balance.

We need to return to a Europe that is truly at the service of its citizens.





United Europe is at a crossroads and faces a dilemma. It is up to us to make - consciously and responsibly - the necessary choices so that tomorrow's Europe will be a beacon of peace, solidarity, justice and social progress, and a beacon of democracy and citizenship.

After Bernard Hayette, Visiting Professor at IHEC

11. A LESSON IN DEMOCRACY CALLED EOE

Clearly, the covid-19 pandemic has led to a political crisis that could eventually threaten the future of democracy.

Indeed, authoritarian regimes in Russia, Turkey, Hungary, Poland... are tempted to use the crisis to silence critical voices and tighten their political iron grip.

Some governments, although democratically elected, are fighting the pandemic by accumulating emergency powers that restrict human rights and strengthen state oversight in defiance of legal constraints, parliamentary rules and practices and respect for constitutional order. In some so-called illiberal democracies parliamentarians are sidelined, journalists are arrested and harassed, minorities are ostracized, and the most vulnerable sectors of the population face alarming new dangers as the economic recession threatens social cohesion all over.

Democracy is undoubtedly the most appropriate system of government to combat a crisis of the scale and complexity of Covid-19.

It is only through more democracy that societies can build and maintain trust, foster resilience through participation and through inclusive dialogue such as those proposed by the Eyes of Europe auto active learning platform.

It is mainly in democracies health data of the pandemic can be given credence. However, the democratic model does not ipso facto guarantee competent leadership and effective governance. While democratic states are among the countries that have acted most effectively to contain the virus, other democracies have reacted less well to the pandemic and have paid a very high price in terms of human lives and economic collapse.





These counter-performances weaken such democratic societies and open up an avenue for authoritarian movements.

The greatest strength of democracy lies in its capacity for self-correction through dialogue and the confrontation of views expressed by collective intelligence. The "fruitful disagreements" (Patrick Viveret) constitute the powerful engine of our democratic life. They must be allowed to express themselves freely in the public space, for example on the future EOE platform.

Democracy is a dynamic of living interaction that must be kept alive like a blazing embers' fire. Some people unfortunately tend to take democracy for granted.

Every epidemic is an eminently political moment that challenges scientific hierarchies and political legitimacy,

Decisions can only be taken democratically through and after deliberation, i.e. a contradictory debate, in which everyone, even the least reasonable citizens, can have access: if only to prove them wrong, because we no longer know why or how we are right if consensus reigns supreme.

We must listen to everyone, hear all points of view, those of the doctors but also those of the patients; those of the representatives of workers who have been rendered inactive or have been forced to continue their activities by telework during confinement. Those of small and medium sized enterprises hit hard by the crisis. Listen to social workers and psychologists who measure the dreadful effects of containment and deconfinement on people's psyches.

Listen to the teachers who have tried to maintain continuity in education and now have to welcome massive numbers of pupils despite the continuation of the pandemic. Listen to those whose conditions of confinement and deconfinement are difficult; listen to associations of people living with a disability or in a situation of dependency, listen to people living in rest homes. ***But above all, above all, we need to listen to the young Europeans.***

Not all of them will agree with each other, their experience will be invaluable to us. Some will only see what they assume to be their personal interest.





Others will say false things or make impractical proposals, but we will correct and refute them, and this will enable us to identify the problems more acutely. Others, no doubt, will make us all progress, sometimes even without being aware of it.

It stands to reason that the EoE self-active platform is the most effective way to solicit and collect the opinions and views of young European citizens across Europe old and new. In this respect ***Eyes of Europe is the natural and virtual extension of the Erasmus programs.***

In many ways Eyes of Europe can be seen as a permanent virtual agora where everyone can interact with everyone. In this respect Eyes of Europe is the best lesson in direct and virtual democracy one can imagine: a real antidote to the arbitrary nature of illiberalism and ***a lesson in real time democracy.***

12. "DISTANCE COURSES ARE NOT A WAY TO SAVE MONEY".

Philippe Raimbault (in AOC)

"Pedagogical continuity, student assessment, preparation for an uncertain start to the new school year... with the confinement, the university and secondary education have had to face unprecedented difficulties and find ways to adapt to them. But the means are precisely what is lacking. Yet the situation is not as catastrophic as is often said,

There would even be an historic opportunity to develop obsolete pedagogical practices.

. Philippe Raimbault was elected President of the Federal University of Toulouse-Midi-Pyrénées, which brings together the three Toulouse universities and the fifteen or so secondary schools in the region, just four years ago, on 1 July 2016, after having headed the IEP of Toulouse. He was therefore in the front line to observe and respond to

Faced with the effects of the health crisis, of confinement, on the different educational structures, the report is fairly positive, despite an inevitable period of improvisation: universities and secondary schools have held out.





Better still, they have taken a step towards new ways of teaching, known as "hybrids", mixing distance learning courses with presence in class or in the lecture theatre.

In universities, we were a little surprised at how quickly the measure to close public institutions came about when the announcement of confinement was made. It was necessary to urgently organize the arrangements for distance working.

What we have seen in general is a great mobilization of colleagues, starting with the teachers, to ensure "pedagogical continuity".

Practices, particularly for distance courses, which we had been trying to push for a number of years, sometimes in vain, have developed thanks to the emergency. The mobilization was so great that after a few weeks, the students let it be known that they found the pace a little too fast!

In general, what has happened appears to be extremely satisfactory and, given the circumstances, I think that the result we have achieved is not bad.

Would you say that in the "after-world" there is no longer just an injunction to adapt but an opportunity for pedagogical innovation?

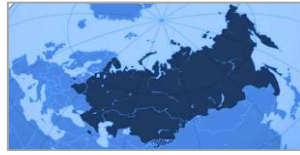
I think, indeed, that there is an opportunity, but a fear must first be defused. A certain number of teachers are convinced that the Ministry, or university presidents, want to use these achievements to digitalize at all costs, and take advantage of this to reduce the means.

Furthermore, if we move towards a form of hybridization, we will probably need to provide more individual support to students. We have had to deflate the fantasy that hybridization would serve to make savings, we could give serious thought to this, which is desirable because the amphitheatre is not the ultimate stage of pedagogy at the university.

We are talking about moving towards a form of hybridization, and not at all about making.

It will be a matter of putting arrangements in place. This may take the form of tutoring with students from higher years, a second or third year student following a first year student .





CONCLUSION : NEXT GENERATION EOE : A PLEA FOR CIVIL SOCIETY.

This means that distance learning and self/auto active-learning platforms such as Eyes of Europe have a bright future ahead of them « ***an opportunity for the much-needed civil society to claim its place as a fourth actor. Democracy and citizenship can only really exist if opinions emerge in a platform of debate and discussion, of argument and response (Luc Huyse)***

The illusion that the individual can stand up to the power of politics and the economy must be eliminated once and for all. (Luc Huyse)

Isn't Eyes of Europe precisely the virtual agora (a ***bridge between population and politics***) required for pan-European *civil society* that Europe is dramatically needing?

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