



THE AGE OF ANGER

AND HOW TO TACKLE IT

BY

MARC GUIOT

(AXEL JUERGENS (EDITOR)

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"cultural beacons" within the same galaxy stretching
from east to west and from north to south,
now seems to be at a crossroads.



Café as school - school as café (*Café als Schule - Schule als café*) was from the beginning the first ambition of Eyes of Europe, it remains so more than ever.

A worldwide co-operating
[“come together lab”](#)

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Because if climate change has to stop, then **we** must stop it.
But instead of talking about this, all our politicians go on about is economic growth, energy prices and shareholder value. What value is there in a future where hundreds of millions of people suffer...?”*

[Greta Thunberg, 15 years of age](#)

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As things are, Europe, that is made up of nation-stars that are "cultural beacons" within the same galaxy stretching from east to west and from north to south, now seems to be at a crossroads.

(Jean-Pierre De Rycke, art historian and former curator of the Musée des Beaux-Arts de Tournai.)

Fair enough, but Great Britain seems at a crossroad too and Italy and Germany as well, not to mention France faced with chaos triggered by the yellow vests and even *poor Belgium* which might soon vanish into thin air.

These last three countries have proved over the years to be three powerful allies in a fierce fight in favour of more Europe against nationalism that triumphs in Italy in Austria and Eastern Europe.

We are now witnessing a real descent into the hells of European democrats, comments Béatrice Delvaux.

Stephan Bannon and Marine Le Pen were in Brussels at the instigation of the radical Flemish nationalist party (*Vlaams Blok*) in the Flemish Parliament last Saturday to fuel popular resentment against the European Union, to create chaos and basically shake up the democratic fabric.

Europe is now hesitating between strengthening its integration or withdrawing into its constituent nations to face its own demons from the inside. (Jean-Pierre De Rycke.)

France proves irreformable, Italy ingouvernable, Great Britain eurosceptic and Germany fairly unpredictable. In London, Paris, Rome, Berlin or Brussels, yellow vests, brexiteres and anti-system parties reflect a feeling of abandonment of the middle and working classes by the political elites, while in all major cities, protest movements waltz through governments or paralyse any desire for reform. European nations prove to be increasingly difficult to govern.

Everywhere arises a general demand for more proximity. New forms of protest are flourishing especially on the Internet where they assert new as well as old identities, challenging our worn out traditional democratic systems. A wave of protest is shaking liberal democracies across the world. *This movement of protest is now nibbling at the democratic fabric from within. This collective erasure, hopefully temporary, does not augur well for Europe's ability to find solutions to the political challenges and threats that are accumulating. (Le Figaro)*

To avoid collapse and disaster, a new form of democracy with more proximity and solidarity is required between the different nation-cultures especially between "old Europe" and "new Europe." (The Visegrad Group also known as the "Visegrad Four" or simply "V4" reflects the efforts of the countries of the Central European region to work together in a number of fields of common interest within the all-European integration. Czechia, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia (the Visegrad group) have always been part of a single civilization sharing cultural and intellectual values and common roots in diverse religious traditions, which they wish to preserve and further strengthen.

To this end, we are tired of writing it, Europe desperately needs an intercultural incubator in the form of an interactive platform, a virtual **agora** that functions like a sort of melting pot of European values, men and women, young and old. Only in this way and no other way will especially young European citizens be trained and educated and consequently will a real European public opinion eventually be made up.

As long as we do not understand this, as long as we do not want it, there will be no such thing as a *European people*.

The question remains which driving force might eventually be capable of setting in motion a dynamic of intercultural interaction powerful enough to create

some kind of genuine European citizenship that is missing so badly.

Unquestionably Eyes of Europe seems to be the most valid alternative to tackle such a daunting challenge.

Francis Briquemont, a former lieutenant-general of the Belgian army and notorious geopolitical specialist suggests:

If we Earthlings are willing to overcome the challenges we will encounter in the coming decades (the climate challenge, the demographic issue, rapid urbanization, overexploitation of natural resources, globalization of finance) we will have to follow the

"five paths of humanity", i.e. eradicating poverty; provide finance for the economy, a new governance in a multipolar world; wisdom in the exploitation of our natural resources and last but not least raising our cultures to the challenge.

This daring, bold and reckless approach seems all the more ambitious as the EU is no longer thought capable dreaming such a dream, let alone accomplish it.

More alarming still: there seems no more to be such thing as a European dream. On the contrary, new populist nationalist small potentates appear here and there, in a delicate and fairly conflictual relationship with human rights and the elites in power, i. e. the representatives of the establishment, political, financial as well as cultural.

Withdrawal can by no means be seen as the solution.

Europe must assume its heritage and traditions, rather than hiding them as it tends to. Europe is not just a border but a political and cultural space that must be reflected on and boldly implemented.

Both heritage and project, Europe is in the first place a challenge that is as much a cultural as it is a political challenge.

"NOTRE HÉRITAGE N'EST PRÉCÉDÉ D'AUCUN TESTAMENT"

(René Char.)

"Our heritage is not preceded by any will. »

Hannah Arendt twice cites this famous aphorism. In her eyes, René Char speaks here as a man of the resistance: both an actor and a heir to a non-transferable freedom.

"The past no longer illuminating the future, writes Tocqueville, the spirit walks in darkness. "

To Arendt, this darkness defines the crisis of the modern world, its political horizon.

At a time of live global entertainment, information and instantaneous broadcasting on the virtual global network, the transmission provided by modern technology is contemporary with the collapse of the traditional form of transmission that shaped the Western world until then.

René Char: *"At all meals taken together, we invite freedom to sit down. The square remains empty, but the cover remains set".*

One thing is for certain we definitely need to resist the dark forces that are threatening both our cultural heritage and our liberty.

Resisting is the core business of Eyes of Europe.

CHRISTINE LAGARDE FEARS THE ADVENT OF AN "AGE OF ANGER"

IMF boss Christine Lagarde has recently made a strong call in favour of a renewal of international cooperation, fearing the advent of a *"age of anger"* resulting from mounting inequalities.

Without *"re-imagined international cooperation"*, the IMF official fears that by 2040, *"inequalities may surpass what they were during the golden age of capitalism"*.

"The gap between aspirations and realities risks feeding anger and bitterness all over Europe" This is precisely what we are witnessing in France now.

However, Mrs Lagarde, who cultivates *optimism of will*, ensures that an *"age of inventiveness"* is possible.

This confirms the need and urgency to launch EOE to create a horizontal structure for citizen participation in order to tackle the major 2025-2050 challenges and to cope with them in real time in the form of a **horizontal dialogue of all with all**: all young eastern Europeans with all young western Europeans. In English and in real time.

Looking at recent developments in Europe, history professor David Engels sounds even more pessimistic than Lagarde as he is suggesting that *"we have no chance of avoiding a civil war"*.

He observes throughout Europe growing poverty that our leaders refuse to face and above all a general and whidespread *loss of confidence in democracy*.

The crisis was triggered in France by the revolt of the yellow vests these forgotten people of the system who across France fight against the expensive life and revolt against the *tax rage* of the Republic. It was the same kind of people who proved the brexiteres or those who brought Trump to power: the white Americans in the deindustrialized American Rustbelt. But, very few are aware that there is similar rumbling in Russia and growing anger against Putin.

Citizens and experts warn against bloodshed. (Boris Reitschuster Der Spiegel) *"There will be a civil war," says Ihor the taxi driver in Moscow. "(...)"Fewer and fewer believe that the West is to blame for everything. Most are angry at the president. Very angry."*

A survey of 1600 Russians in 52 regions shows growing dissatisfaction. The survey was conducted by the Lewada Center in Moscow, the last independent opinion research institute in the country. 61 percent of Russians believe that President Putin bears full responsibility for the problems in the country: this is the highest value ever determined on this issue.

Like Mikhail Gorbachev and Boris Yeltsin, who turned from folk heroes into bogeymen because the economy of the people got worse and worse, the gold from the Tsar's throne is crumbling under Vladimir Putin - for the same reason.

"We are dealing with a major crisis, a systemic crisis," warns Gennady Gudkov, former intelligence colonel and vice-chairman of the Duma's Security Committee. He is one of Russia's best-known opposition politicians.

The Kremlin is perplexed just as perplexed as the President of French Republic.

Gudkov: "We are in a phase of stagnation and frustration. Clever people understand that our country is approaching an abyss, that massive shocks are imminent, but nobody knows how to stop them".

.Because there are no reforms and no outlet for peaceful protest, there could be dramatic developments "including bloodshed and civil war," warns the former head of the Security Committee.

It looks as if a feeling of frustration were spreading throughout the Western world. However, this movement must not hide the fact that, paradoxically, a counter-current is emerging precisely in the East.

A NEW WAVE OF DISSIDENTS IN THE EAST CAN TURN BACK EUROPE'S
POPULIST TIDE [Natalie Nougayrède](#)

Turn your gaze a bit further east, and there is good news to be found. In central Europe, grassroots democratic movements seem to be gaining ground. In some ways they are much more valiant and persistent than those found in western European countries. They could reshape the EU in ways few people care to anticipate.

The young people are particularly motivated: they have vivid family memories of an authoritarian system. I've just travelled to Slovakia, where I saw thousands demonstrate on Bratislava's central square against corruption and for a "decent" country. The Slovak protests are organised every Friday evening not far from an improvised memorial, made of pictures, flowers and candles, honouring Ján Kuciak, a 27-year-old investigative reporter who was [brutally murdered in February](#) alongside his fiancée. Things haven't been the same since that double murder, with an outpouring of anger and larger street demonstrations than those of the 1989 revolution in what was then Czechoslovakia.

A new generation of central Europeans are mobilising to salvage democratic values they feel are under threat. The young people involved are extremely focused and motivated – because they have vivid family memories of what it is like to live in an authoritarian system. In Bratislava last weekend, activists and intellectuals from Hungary, Romania, the [Czech Republic](#) and Poland met to discuss their struggles and their ideals at a conference titled "Let's demand the impossible" – a nod to the slogans of the Paris 1968 student uprising.

Meanwhile in Prague, protests were under way against the scandal-ridden, oligarchic Czech prime minister Andrej Babiš, who [stands accused of fraud](#). Calls for him to step down are intensifying, with a possible vote of no confidence in

parliament later this week. Babis is defiant and says he will “never resign”, but it is striking that people took to the streets on 17 November, the anniversary of the 1989 Velvet revolution.

Recent developments in Poland are also interesting: the opposition to the nationalist “Kaczyński regime” [made some important gains](#) a few weeks ago in local elections, taking almost all of the larger cities – a vote that underscored how divided the country is. The ruling Law and Justice party may struggle to win in next year’s European parliament election, and in national elections beyond that. If so, this would be a momentous shift, not least because Poland is a large EU country. “Poland will be back,” one Polish writer and leftwing intellectual confidently told me while in Bratislava. He meant a democratic, pro-EU Poland.

In Romania, civil society is also buzzing with energy after massive street protests were held in August against government plans to [dismantle anti-corruption measures](#). While in Bratislava, a Romanian activist from the town of Sibiu, in Transylvania, described how crowds continued to hold daily “silent” protests in front of the ruling party’s local offices. “We stand there, on the public square, reading poetry and texts by [Henry David Thoreau on civil disobedience](#)”, he smiled.

Even Hungary’s strongman Viktor Orbán may not be as secure as he thinks – at least in his EU-wide ambitions. It’s true he was comfortably re-elected earlier this year, but the man who casts himself as the ideologue of “illiberal democracy”, and a champion of “Christian”, anti-immigration sentiment, has now come under strong criticism from within the continental political bloc he belongs to, the European People’s party. Central European sources tell me [Orbán will get kicked out of that group](#) after the May 2019 EU elections. Whether this happens or not, he was [very publicly lambasted](#) for his illiberalism earlier this month at the European People’s party congress held in Helsinki. And his image has been further tarnished by the so-called Gruevski scandal – a case of political asylum given in Hungary to [Macedonia’s convicted former prime minister](#). The joke in Budapest now, one Hungarian pro-democracy activist tells me, is that “Orbán no longer seems to have a problem with criminal migrants”.

For all the talk about central Europe having fallen prey to mind-numbing populism in recent years, some nuances and signs of change are worth paying closer attention to. Across the region, civil society activists are pushing back hard against the cynics in power. We should beware of caving in to a simplistic

narrative about the east of [Europe](#) being a homogeneous hotbed of authoritarianism with little effort put into holding it in check.

There is resistance.

Populism is not the whole story – European politics is rewiring itself.

If the political tide in central Europe does shift in the coming year, an entirely different picture could emerge on the continent. The children of those who successfully fought for democracy in 1989 will have demonstrated that “truth” and “decency” (key slogans they use) can yet again be victorious. The oft-mentioned [east-west gap](#) would then need to be revisited altogether.

I’m not saying populism is over in central Europe. I’m saying the spirit of dissidence is alive and well, and “westerners” should take more notice.

Europe’s salvation might possibly come from the east.

It might also come from the young all over and not only in the east.

In Sweden, Greta Thunberg a 15 year old teenager is leading a school strike and sits outside of the Swedish Parliament, in an effort to force politicians to act on climate change. *Every Friday, I miss classes to sit outside my country’s parliament. I will continue to do so until leaders come into line with the Paris agreement.*

I first learnt about climate change when I was eight years old. I learnt that this was something humans had created. I was told to turn off the lights to save energy and recycle paper to save resources.

I remember thinking it was very strange that we were capable of changing the entire face of the Earth and the precious thin layer of atmosphere that makes it our home.

"WE CAN NO LONGER SAVE THE WORLD BY PLAYING BY THE RULES BECAUSE THE RULES HAVE TO BE CHANGED."

Countries like Sweden need to start reducing our emissions by at least 15 per cent every year if we consider the aspect of equality or climate justice – a principle that is clearly stated everywhere in the Paris Agreement. And that is just so we can stay below 2 degrees, which we now know will still create misery for so many people and ecosystems around the world.

If I live to be 100, I will be alive in 2103. Adults often don't think beyond the year 2050. But by then, I will, in the best case, not have lived half of my life. What we do or don't do right now will affect my entire life and the lives of my friends, our children and their grandchildren.

So I decided to walk out of school and sit on the ground outside the Swedish parliament to demand our politicians treat climate change for what it is: the biggest issue we have ever faced.

Because if climate change has to stop, then we must stop it.

But instead of talking about this, all our politicians go on about is economic growth, energy prices and shareholder value. What value is there in a future where hundreds of millions of people suffer?

And it has to start today. As a student, one way I can push for urgent change is to go on strike from school. I'll be sitting outside the Swedish parliament every Friday from now until my country is in line with the Paris agreement.

I urge other students to join me: Sit outside your parliament or local government wherever you are and demand that they get on track to keep the world below 1.5 degrees.

The adults have failed us. And since most of them, including the press and the politicians, keep ignoring the situation, we must take action into our own hands, starting today.

It clearly appears that in the face of indifference or even apathy from the political authorities, the salvation could well come from Europe's teenagers. This is basically in line with EoE's deep conviction that there is an urgent necessity to seek their critical opinion on current burning issues, especially the climate issue.

Let us therefore highlight that in France, in the middle of the yellow vest crisis, several high schools were blocked at the call of the National High School Union. "The general anger that rumbles is shared by high school students." Louis Boyard

The gatherings organized around the establishments mobilized nearly 3000 participants in total, according to a police source.

How to interpret this movement? *Will high school students also wear yellow vests?* (Libération) Louis Boyard, a young leader already very comfortable in political communication: *"Why should we put colours on angers? What matters is not the colour of the vest, but the mass of the movement. Secondary school pupils also have reasons to be angry. Our daily lives are not going well. There are 35 of us per class, there is selection at the university entrance... The first to be affected are young people from rural and suburban high schools. Today, our message is: go ahead, go out on the street too and make your anger heard."*

IS THE "YELLOW VEST" MOVEMENT PART OF A REVOLT OR IS IT HERALDING A MORE RADICAL REVOLUTION?

Just as the 1965 student movement that started from American campuses in revolt against Vietnamese war spread throughout the West as a trail of powder in 1968, so too the of yellow vests jacquery is spreading like an oil stain throughout Europe. Revolt or beginning of a revolution?

A revolution is not just a successful revolt. It occurs when a revolt is guided by the objective of overthrowing an oppressive power that has mobilized the vast majority of society. We are not there yet.

It is first of all an explosion of anger, possibly the beginning of an ***age of anger*** that brings to the surface what has long been suffered in silence: the feeling of not counting for anything, of leading a narrowed existence, of living in a deeply unfair world.

Throughout France populist sensibility has developed with all kinds of excesses. For the Deputy Director General of the Ipsos polling firm, Brice Teinturier, *the current movement has its roots in a strong sense of social injustice.*

The "yellow vests" say: *"Look at us, we are here, we exist."* And it works. Suddenly, isolated individuals discover and celebrate themselves as a collective in joy, almost in jubilation. But this *"Look at us"* is coupled with a *"Listen to us, take us into account, respect us, respect who we are, what we say and what we want. And, more precisely, what we refuse."*

Pikety the notorious French marxist economist believes that the *"yellow vest" crisis poses a central question for France and Europe: that of tax justice.*"

Like the students of May 68, like the Swedish Greta Thunberg, like Australian youths the demonstrating high school students of France, feel an urgent need to express themselves on the problem issues that are disrupting our societies and threatening them in their foundations.

Since 1997 Eyes of Europe has been insisting on the need and urgency to listen to our European youths and on the importance of letting them express in real time their expectations, their dreams as well as their their frustrations regarding the great challenges of our time. Eyes of Europe is a virtual agora, a self-active educative platform where young people exchange in real time.

THE COLLAPSE OF CIVILISATION AND THE NATURAL WORLD IS ON THE HORIZON,

Sir David Attenborough has told the [UN climate change summit](#) in Poland recently.

"Right now we are facing a manmade disaster of global scale, our greatest threat in thousands of years: climate change," he said. "If we don't take action, the collapse of our civilisations and the extinction of much of the natural world is on the horizon." "we are last generation that can stop a climate change"

"Do you not see what is going on around you?" asked one young man in a [video message](#) played as part of a montage to the delegates. "We are already seeing increased impacts of climate change in China," says a young woman. Another woman, standing outside a building burned down by a wildfire, says: "This used to be my home."

Needless to repeat it is indeed basically a EoE issue as we repeatedly pointed out in our Twelve Steps Program.

Lisa Herzog writes in Le Monde: *"We must now engage in a **moral revolution**" Changing our way of life is crucial to saving the planet. But it is very difficult to impose this transformation from above, says Lisa Herzog, professor of philosophy, in a forum to the "World".*

"Ecological" issues are political issues, but also individual issues - lifestyle issues"

The summer of 2018 seemed endless in Europe. All these weeks of radiant sunshine during which the Rhine has descended to historically low levels raise burning questions: if this is the climate change that has been announced to us for so long, now that it is here, very concrete, at my door, what should I do at my level? Although the theories on the subject have long been known, the warmth of this summer gives them a new dimension in the eyes of all of us. But what can and should be done as an individual?

ECOLOGICAL ISSUES ARE POLITICAL ISSUES, but also individual issues - lifestyle issues. Political decisions, for example on the use of renewable energies, can change many things. But individual decisions can also lead to a considerable reduction in CO2 emissions. These decisions include, for example, food, including meat consumption, or holidays - do I fly to spend a few days away or do I stay close to home?

As individuals too, we have a moral duty to adopt a way of life that harms the climate as little as possible. And the arguments in favour of this idea are strong. It is not just a matter of a few minor inconveniences that we would inflict on others simply because we are unconscious or driven by the stubborn desire to "please ourselves", while our quality of life would hardly be affected if we behaved differently.

A GREAT ETHICAL BREAKTHROUGH is therefore required. Above all, it is increasingly clear that it has become urgent both locally and globally...

But how to influence public opinion to bring about this change.

Individual and global awareness is needed.

*And since we have to start somewhere, let us start with a European awareness. It can only be implemented through **a profound and radical pedagogical reform.***

Mahatma Gandhi once said: "You must be the change you want to see in the world"

This ethical injunction must concern us all.

We must create a "**collective ethical us**" to counter the mad individualism that threatens the planet and destroys us all collectively and individually. But how can this be achieved?

Eyes of Europe as an auto active platform is definitely part of the solution as it intends to participate in real time in the development with young people in a world that is changing faster and faster. EoE wants to be both a sysmographer and an actor in this change.

Why in real time? Because the present has become an injunction: you must not only be of your time, but work and live in the present, fully. Never at rest, always flexible, mobile, constantly innovate.

Information technologies have brought, disseminated and multiplied the possibilities. Eyes of Europe is about experiencing change in "*real time*". The future, initially perceived as closed or closing (our children will live less well than we do), has increasingly turned into a threatening future (the time of disasters).

There is an urgent need for a "**collective ethical us**" to counter the mad individualism that is destroying the planet and is destroying us all collectively and individually.

But how can this be achieved?

Once again, the Eyes of Europe auto active platform is part of the solution.

" LAUNCHING A MORAL REVOLUTION" WITH E.O.E.

In his latest book *Les Enfants du Vide* Raphaël Glücksmann opens up new avenues: He observes that *we live in fear of losing what we have. What we have created what we are. (p. 23) that individualism has so far won all cultural battles, that imagination has become more individualized. (p. 37)*

He comes to wonder whether *Homo economicus in all aspects of social life is compatible with democracy. (p. 39)* And he insists that *post-war Western societies had forged a homo democraticus (p. 44) by recalling with Spinoza underlines how much our lives and virtues are influenced by the institutions and cultural atmosphere of our cities (p. 45)*

However, *there can be no democracy without the ability to regard the other as an alter ego. Empathy is an ethical prerequisite for citizenship. (p.54)*

Yet, it must be said that *cultural and ideological separatism is progressing dramatically* (p. 58) *with the disastrous consequence that social and civic ties are gradually broken down, so that society's capacity for integration is eroded.* (p. 60) *The consequence of this consequence is that where collective structures are erased, individuals gather in communities of origin, faith and skin colour.* (p.61)

However, contrary to this, *cosmopolitanism seeks to build a united political body based on different social, ethnic or religious origins. Cosmopolitanism gives politics its highest mission: to form a civic people from a multiple and recognized civil body.* (p.65)

Eyes of Europe is in essence and by commitment cosmopolitan.

The first cause of the separation of social classes results from the explosion of inequalities. (p. 69) *But more worrying than anything else is The gap between the financial, cultural, political and other elites is widening, undermining democratic consensus* (p. 73) *The political, economic and media elites produce a biased public debate.* (p.81) that is precisely what Eyes of Europe is willing to deconstruct because it is more and more necessary, even vital to oppose, to resist, to rebel. Why? because: *We observe the degeneration of democracy into an oligarchy, the corruption of public space and the privatization of the common good.* (p. 82)

Facebook, which has become an essential place for contemporary public debate, happens to be a commercial enterprise. Can an agora be private property? (p. 86) Eyes of Europe, on the contrary, aims to be a critical agora at the service of young Europeans. Indeed: *The public space supposes the chance of encounters and the confrontation of divergent opinions. Our new so called public spaces, which are in reality private spaces, give the illusion of the common, but cultivate separate living.* (ibid) *It is urgent and necessary to rebuild social cohesion* (p. 92) *in order to make a new "us "* (p. 95) *To this end, a real mental revolution is necessary.* (p. 100). *It is time to regain control over our destiny.* (p. 115), *to become citizens* (p. 117) *Every man is called to become a citizen.* (p121)

Thanks to EoE, we finally have the means, the appropriate media to conduct a truly democratic debate since all citizens-especially the young- can participate in real time in a *virtual agora.* (p. 131) *which opens up the possibility of a*

*common quest and collective deliberation on the foundations of the city.
(p;131)*

Every citizen needs to rebuild his city at regular intervals. This re-foundation cannot be thought of and produced from a private place, only the public square can accommodate it (p. 137).

*In ancient tradition, being free required the company of other men whose situation was the same and required **a common public space** where they could meet, where each of the free men could be inserted by word and action. It is essential to reconquer this common public space. (p.139)*

- It is essential to redefine one common "us " without excluding the other (p. 140)*
- We are missing something to make the civic epiphany last. (p. 141)*
- Only a mental revolution can break the individualistic deadlock (p. 149)*
- There is a need for continued citizen engagement and a **new civic social contract** (p. 170)*
- We can, we must all participate in collective deliberation. (p. 171)*
- Deciding on the common future requires a change of attitude on the part of each of us. (p. 172)*
- Society has forged individuals for decades, so forming citizens will not happen with the snap of a finger (p. 174)*
- Democracy is an attractive word, but a tedious process. Participation is a long time process. (p. 174)*
- It is a question of realising the democracy of participation, the continuous action of the citizen. (p. 176)*
- Civic tech and new technologies must be put at the service of democracy. (p. 178)*
- The aim is to restore public control over public debate as an essential step in restoring democratic consensus (p. 194).*
- Changing our way of life is crucial. But imposing this transformation from above will be difficult, says philosopher Lisa Herzog in her article published in Le Monde.*

RIC, A REFERENDUM ON A CITIZENS' INITIATIVE, A SOLUTION TO THE "YELLOW VEST" CRISIS?

The "yellow vests" movement is not only calling for social measures against the high cost of living, but also and above all for a better political expression of citizens.

Denouncing a political class that would no longer represent them, the "yellow vests" demand, in particular, the creation of a *citizens' initiative referendum* (RIC). Banners with "RIC" were seen in processions and on many roundabouts.

In the testimonies collected in the demonstrations, the mention appears regularly.

Above all, if we had implemented Eyes of Europe 20 years ago or even 10 years ago, we would not be there. Indeed, Eyes of Europe intends to function as a self-active platform that constantly, i.e. in real time, probes the opinions of young citizens across Europe and encourages them to express their opinions on Europe's major challenges. In this way, they are a way of stimulating participation and also discussion. The essentially consultative approach could, if necessary and if we really want it to take on a political, deliberative character, i.e. decision-making.

It is not too late to turn the tide.

More and more people, especially the young are getting concerned with the threats that artificial intelligence (AI) will pose to humanity in the near future.

Isn't the best antidote against artificial intelligence in a the deliberate mobilization of collective intelligence? Indeed, and this is exactly what Eyes of Europe's is about: channelling the collective intelligence of young people, soliciting them in real time and enabling them to express themselves on all issues that concern their future, i.e. their fate.

Here we have something of the dynamics of the yellow vests that, throughout France, have transformed many roundabouts into democratic agoras of a radically new kind.

ARE THE ROUNDABOUTS OCCUPIED BY THE YELLOW VESTS THE NEW
DEMOCRATIC AGORAS?

Sociability has developed on the roundabouts of France where yellow vests exchange in perfect conviviality. In a climate of *freedom, equality and above all*

fraternity, they dialogue, tell their lives, manifest, contest, claim and weave social bonds in the common hatred of the executive symbolized by the person of Macron

It is the *café du commerce* reinvented, transformed into a convivial pub. **Pub** stands for *public place*, a spontaneous mini local parliament where everyone socialises and can express themselves. The pub (public house) is part of the English democratic institution, ancestor of the masonic lodges and even of the English Parliament. It is the perfect space for social participation and socialization, just like the famous citizen cafés during the French Revolution. We observe here a collective and spontaneous reconquest of the democratic **the agora**. The Agora was, during Antiquity, the main square of the city of Athens, a meeting place for strollers and the main market square: it was used for trade and meetings. The Plenary Assembly met there to represent the "*whole people*": ατδῆμος πληθύων

These improvised *roundabouts citizen cafés* are spontaneous forums that arise in villages where the central square was dying in most territories of de-industrialized and increasingly abandoned rural France.

It all results in the discovery of a kind of **collective intelligence**.

But it is also causing a resurgence of a form of radicalism that regards violence as a last resort that some yellow vests have no hesitation in implementing.

A GROWING DEMAND FOR YELLOW VESTS, THE CITIZENS' INITIATIVE REFERENDUM (RIC) AIMS TO FACILITATE CONSULTATION WITH THE PEOPLE

RIC. (Referendums d'Initiative Citoyenne, Citizens' Initiative Referendums) These three letters have become the main war slogan for the yellow vests. Representatives of the yellow vests called for the introduction such citizen referendums, in order to "*restore the people's sovereign role*". Demonstrators holding up "RIC" signs, are reiterating a request made on Thursday in front of the Salle du Jeu de Paume in Versailles, the Mecca of the 1789 Revolution. A highly symbolical gesture.

Introducing the RICs in all sorts of issues, would give the people the right to draft or revoke a law or even to dismiss elected officials and even the president.

Yellow vests distinguish between legislative referendums (like the practices of the Swiss for centuries) and others that are revocatory.

Overall, it seems that the big problem with yellow vests and the vast majority of protesters who demonstrate in the streets and on roundabouts is that unlike the elites they hate and question, they are not exactly "educated", that is, trained in dialectics and rhetoric.

Café as school, school as café (*Café als Schule, Schule als café*) was from the beginning the first ambition of Eyes of Europe, it remains so more than ever.

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