



EUROPE UNDER THREAT

BALANCE & STRATEGY

A COMMENTARY

BY

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**THE EUROPEAN IDENTITY IS NOTHING LESS THAN DARING
OPENING UP TO OTHER IDENTITIES. «**

**L'IDENTITÉ EUROPÉENNE, CONSISTE ESSENTIELLEMENT À
S'OUVRIRE AUX AUTRES IDENTITÉS » (JEAN MARC FERRY)**

"THE EUROPEAN DREAM IS UNDER THREAT"

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The European project can no longer continue in elite modus.” (JH)

Jürgen Habermas is angry, he simply has no desire to see Europe consigned to the dustbin of world history.

The Observer's view on the crisis in Europe is that beyond Brexit, from Catalonia to the Czech Republic, the European dream is under threat.

Across Europe everywhere, or so it seems, newly minted or reviving political forces, sometimes benign, more frequently not, are attempting to fill the vacuum. Polls in the Czech Republic suggest the ruling, pro-EU Social Democrats face defeat by the upstart populist, Eurosceptic, anti-immigrant Action of Dissatisfied Citizens led by a pro-Russia billionaire. In prospect is a coalition with the rightwing Freedom and Direct Democracy party, which wants to quit the EU.

Events in Prague recall in turn Austrian elections, which brought victory for the youthful conservative People's party leader, Sebastian Kurz, whose cynical tactic was to ape the extremist, xenophobic outlook of the far-right Freedom party. Kurz now looks set to form a governing alliance with a party whose neo-Nazi origins and ideology led the EU to boycott Austria in 2000, when the Freedom party first entered government. (...) More than half the Austrian electorate backed parties fiercely opposed to immigration, integration and multiculturalism. Muslim and Jewish citizens are understandably alarmed.

Now switch focus to northern Italy and, again, anger over political failings at the centre can be seen combining, negatively and corrosively, with fears about personal and regional identity. Recent referendums on increased autonomy for Lombardy and the Veneto have at their heart distrust of the Rome government and resentment (and there are echoes of Catalonia here) at the way the poorer south is supposedly subsidised by wealthy, industrialized Milan. But in its tribalism, micro-nationalism and sociocultural exclusivity, the biggest regional party, the Northern League, nurtures many of the unsavoury prejudices displayed by similar groups across the continent.

It would be easy, but facile, to dismiss these phenomena as little local difficulties without bearing on the bigger picture. So what if fringe minorities in the Basque country, Flanders, Transylvania, Corsica or Bavaria are unhappy with their lot? All situations are different. And Europe, in any case, is ultimately an enriching patchwork of like-minded peoples immutably linked by shared values and beliefs. Or is it?

As recent votes in France, Germany and Britain show, the crisis of legitimacy and identity extends deep into the heartlands of Europe's big powers. Emmanuel Macron's triumph in this year's French presidential election was taken, for example, as proof that Europe's nationalist, populist tide was on the turn. It was nothing of the sort. The Front National performed better than ever before. Marine Le Pen stands poised to strike the killer blow next time around, if Macron fails.

Who is going to save Europe from this fatal fragmentation, this pernicious, creeping dissolution of its ideological, democratic and territorial unity? That is indeed the key issue. But what would actually be the answer to that basic question? Possibly Eyes of Europe?

Europe is slipping ever deeper into an existential crisis all of its own.

DIE EUROPÄISCHE KRISE GEHT TIEFER, ALS VIELE DENKEN.

Georg Diez (Spiegel Online)

Und selbst Europa ist zu einem Kofferwort geworden, leer und ohne Inhalt.

Was sich an der katalonischen Krise in jedem Fall zeigt, ist, dass die EU als Wirtschafts- und Währungsunion an ihr Ende gekommen ist. Sie war eine Konzeption des Kalten Krieges, die in der Zeit nach 1989 ins Stocken gekommen ist und nie radikal reformiert, das heißt demokratisiert wurde.

Einige der Staaten, die nach dem Fall der Mauer etwas voreilig aufgenommen wurden, erweisen sich als reaktionärer Haufen.

De facto wird die Demokratie in Europa allerdings seit einer Weile schon von der EU selbst ausgehöhlt. (...) Während sie sich explizit weigert, auch nur einigermaßen aggressiv gegen Ungarn und Polen vorzugehen. Tschechien wird bald dazu kommen, wo fundamentale Menschenrechte missachtet werden und Hass gegen Minderheiten geschürt wird, gegen Juden und Muslime speziell.

Das Problem der EU ist, dass sie im Grunde immer ein Beispiel für einen undemokratischen oder jedenfalls wenig demokratisch legitimierten gehalten wird.

Ideell fehlt Europa, wie der Historiker Brendan Simms feststellte, überhaupt ein intellektueller Rahmen oder Plan.

EMMANUEL MACRON IST ZURZEIT DER "LAST MAN STANDING" IN EUROPA.

Jürgen Habermas hat Macron gerade im SPIEGEL als einzigen Akteur in diesem Spiel identifiziert, bei dem es um ein Projekt geht, das allein ermöglichen wird, mit den Fragen der Zukunft - von Migration und Klimawandel bis zur Welt ohne Arbeit und der Digitalisierung - offen, menschlich und emanzipatorisch umzugehen.

*Und so bleibt eigentlich nur zu hoffen, dass Angela Merkel ihre Vorsicht überwindet und erkennt. (...) Sie kann tatsächlich mit Emmanuel Macron zusammen **dieses EUROPA, das sich in sich selbst verlaufen hat, NEU DENKEN.***

Jetzt wäre der Augenblick für große Ideen. Jetzt wäre der Augenblick für konkrete Initiativen. Jetzt wäre der Augenblick, aus dem Phlegma zu entfliehen und sich nicht dem europäischen Ennui zu ergeben, wie es Stefan Zweig in seinen autobiografischen Erinnerungen "Die Welt von Gestern" beschrieben hat.

Macron hat da die Richtung vorgegeben. Es geht um Brücken und Bewegung, es geht darum, neue soziale Zusammenhänge zu erfinden, indem die alten aufgebrochen werden. **Es geht um Lernen** und ein offensives Verhältnis zu den digitalen Informationsgiganten.

ES GIBT SO VIEL, WAS VON EUROPA ERWARTET UND ERHOFFT WIRD, ALS LABOR UNSERER ZEIT, ANGEREICHERT MIT DEM WISSEN DER VERGANGENHEIT.

Das regionale oder städtisch organisierte Europa, das jemand wie Varoufakis sich vorstellt, gab es ja schon einmal, es knüpft an die Zeit der Renaissance an, wo die Stadtstaaten **Orte des Schutzes und des Wissens wurden.**

Aus der Krise, die tiefer ist, als sie empfunden wird, kann also etwas Gutes und Neues entstehen.

Es sei Zeit für demokratische Helden, hat Macron neulich im SPIEGEL-Gespräch gesagt. Es ist Zeit für Mut, Weitsicht und demokratische Helden.

GEORG DIEZ: A PHILOSOPHER'S MISSION TO SAVE THE EU

Jürgen is doing all he can to call attention to what he sees as the demise of the European ideal. He hopes he can help save it — from inept politicians and the dark forces of the market. (Der Spiegel 11/25/2011).

Jürgen Habermas is angry, **he simply has no desire to see Europe consigned to the dustbin of world history.** "I'm speaking here as a citizen," The European project can no longer continue in elite modus."

Europe is his project. It is the project of his generation. "I condemn the political parties. **Our politicians have long been incapable of aspiring to anything whatsoever other than being re-elected. They have no political substance whatsoever, no convictions.**"

WHAT IS THERE TO BE DONE TO SAVE EUROPE AS A CONCEPT?

Not only has Europe run out of fuel and enthusiasm but it is now being threatened by diverse centrifugal nationalist and totalitarian forces that undermine its cohesion. If no daring initiatives are taken swiftly, if nothing bold is undertaken, Europe will soon wreck to the great hardship of all Europeans.

"I'm speaking here as a citizen: the European project can no longer continue in elite modus." Habermas

We desperately need enthusiasm, creativity and critical media and education to enlighten young citizens.

In other words and put bluntly, we badly need something like Eyes of Europe.

For decades, Habermas has been desperately pleading **political participation** where all citizens, young and old, would actually take *part in the political process in Europe*: **Europe in progress**. This would necessarily imply developing the political conscience of young European students and pupils across Europe. (In the line and spirit of the Erasmus Programs that are so dear to Emmanuel Macron's heart)

Habermas wishes all European issues and challenges to be debated publicly and *not secretly inside cabinets* but "*in a most informal way, in a clash of opinions, in the noise and the fury of a public exchange of enthusiastic European citizens*

This again is pure E.o.E. a democratic agora where all young Europeans debate and dialogue in English and in real time.

WHAT SHOULD THOSE YOUNG ENTHUSIASTIC EUROPEAN CITIZENS BE LIKE AND MORE IMPORTANTLY, HOW SHOULD THEY BE EDUCATED?

The European identity is nothing less than daring opening up to other identities. « *L'identité européenne, consiste essentiellement à s'ouvrir aux autres identités* » Jean Marc Ferry

In his masterwork, *Europe, la voie kantienne. essai sur l'identité postnationale*, Jean-Marc Ferry brings up a central issue : ***How to imagine a possible link that might actually establish a real political union? ("comment peut-on penser le lien capable de fonder une véritable union politique européenne?)"***

The answer again is unquestionably Eyes of Europe.

Ferry's reflexion is built around a basic principle: *pooling the foundations of the European history.* (*la mise en commun de l'histoire européenne*). In this, he is both pleading for the transmission of a **common public culture** as well as in favour of **a shared historical memory.** (*une culture publique commune et une mémoire historique partagée*). Isn't that exactly what EoE wants to convey to all European young?

In J.M. Ferry's eyes, the European identity is not just an issue based upon geographic frontiers or a shared historical culture but it is *basically referring to a philosophical project*: the Kantian concept of *cosmopolitism* expressed in his famous *Project for a Perpetual Peace* (1795). (*Il s'agit d'une forme cosmopolitique d'intégration horizontale qui se fonde à la fois sur le respect du pluralisme des cultures et des traditions historiques, et sur une culture publique commune.*)

JM Ferry is standing for a European Community that ought to be *politically united, socially consistent and culturally pluralistic* (*une communauté qui soit à la fois politiquement unie,*

socialement consistante et culturellement pluraliste) Therefore, Jean-Marc Ferry is pragmatically pleading in favour of conveying to the young, a shared political culture. This is indeed Eyes of Europe pure.

Europe needs to become what he calls a **cosmopolitical union**. *L'Europe, la voie kantienne* is clearly referring to Kants *Project in favour of perpetual peace*. Kants's **cosmopolitan right** requires a new form of citizenship that is somehow linked to Habermas's concept of *constitutional patriotism*. This approach is definitely abolishing the traditional and archaic link between citizenship and national territory that is emerging again and gives rise, thanks to the cosmopolitan principle, to a brand-new form of European citizenship.

But therefore, says Ferry: *The media "must" help citizens understand the enormous extent to which the EU influences their lives.*

Again this is exactly what Eyes of Europe is aiming for.

The politicians "would" certainly understand the enormous pressure that would fall upon them if Europe failed. The EU "should" swiftly be democratized. (Habermas).

E.o.E. is indeed struggling and striving for more *democratization*.

EoE is indeed an auto active educational platform that urges young Europeans (a **global community of young citizens**) to exchange in English in real time on all vital issues (climate, immigration, terrorism, demography, A.I....). As such, Eyes of Europe wants to be seen as a virtual European participative agora for the young.

J.M. Ferry is offering a vision that only a constitutional theorist is capable of formulating: His **"global community"** will have to sort out major problems and there are indeed plenty of them. In the midst of the present crisis, he still sees *the European Union (a kind of constitutional cooperation between citizens and states) as the best way to build the "global community of citizens*.

PENSER L'EUROPE ; THINKING EUROPE

In Edgar Morin's eyes Europe is a kind of melting pot of complementary antagonisms between a diversity of cultural legacies: Greek, Roman, Jewish, Christian, Muslim. Europe's unity is not to be found in its unique cultural heritage but in the very diversity of its cultural legacies. Europe was not exactly forged by history but it can only be bound together by **a common destiny**.

L'Union européenne est une ; une unité qui émerge de la diversité, une communauté qui n'est pas liée par l'histoire mais par un destin commun.

Ni multiculturelle ni uniculturelle, l'Union européenne doit devenir interculturelle : se nourrir de la diversité pour engendrer une culture commune qui ne soit pas une culture unique : « La nouvelle identité est l'identité pluraliste de l'unitas multiplex »

Europe's genius lies not only in its plurality, in its constant change, but basically in a permanent interaction of these differences that actually produce change.

Neither mono-cultural nor poly-cultural, Europe needs to become intercultural if not transcultural, another word for cosmopolitan if it wants to survive. The new European identity is necessarily pluralistic: unitas multiplex

(Le génie européen n'est pas seulement dans la pluralité et dans le changement, il est dans le dialogue des pluralités qui produit le changement](Monique Genelot, *Synthèse de réflexions et propositions de l'association « Europe 99 »*, Paris, Europe 99, 1992)

That is precisely what Eyes of Europe is yearning for: *Boosting an intercultural dialogue among the young in order to stimulate the rise of a new style of European citizens in a participative democracy.*

(favoriser un dialogue interculturel pour créer une démocratie européenne participative)

But neither for Morin, nor for Eyes of Europe needs this be an end in itself. Europe is definitely not an end in itself but a process (*Europe in progress*) towards a **world society** (**Europa weltfähig machen**) (Pour Morin, l'Europe n'est pas une fin, c'est un processus qui participe à l'avènement d'une société monde).

What is actually at stake is the future of the planet and the survival of humanity (L'enjeu aujourd'hui est planétaire et c'est la survie de l'humanité)

The real challenge is therefore a collective step towards greater.

Communities such as the European community (**Edgar Morin, 2002**)

And again, it is Edgar Morin's endeavour to urge every young Europeans **to act as a man of thought and think as a man of action**, in the line of the French philosopher

Henri Bergson (1859-1941)

It is indeed Eyes of Europe's wish to urge all young European citizens to **link citizenship action and thought**.

Eyes of Europe wishes to be in line with the spirit of Hannah Arendt when she urged us to **Think without guardrails. (Denken ohne Geländer)**.

Jetzt wäre der Augenblick für große Ideen. Jetzt wäre der Augenblick für konkrete Initiativen. Jetzt wäre der Augenblick, aus dem Phlegma zu entfliehen.

The European dream is under threat. It is indeed time for a new start.
Eyes of Europe really wants to be the new start for Europe.

MARC GUIOT

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