



A United Europe for a United World – Young Ideas Change Europe.
Some reflections by youth

1 Fraternity and economic crisis:

The current economic crisis is severely affecting Europe and putting a strain on many citizens, affecting also the functioning of what had been achieved by the process of economic and monetary integration.

In response to these problems, with the adoption of the Europe 2020 program, the EU is trying to offer long term objectives and is now looking for intelligent, sustainable and inclusive growth. Since its beginnings, however, the process of European integration has been driven by definitely strong idealism that aimed to make Europe a 'political union and a union of citizens, but often by a simple economic calculation according to which a greater economic integration at the European level would have brought greater wealth and profit. If the thirst for affluence (see for example also the reasons underlying the recent enlargement to Eastern Europe) has so far been a very powerful engine that has pushed the current European Monetary Union, the current situation economic crisis shows us how such a purely utilitarian vision of economic processes, may not be sufficient to preserve Europe from lacerations also quite serious. As long as European leaders will remain with such a vision, the same European Union will be confined to be a "means" by which it will get richer, easily "exhaustible" if there were no more interests to keep it running.

Just as it is true that happiness does not come only from money, so we believe that the union of the European continent has a meaning and a validity that goes beyond mere economic convenience. We therefore, propose to Europe, a new economic paradigm based on the proposal that the *Youth for a United World* (Y4UW) have launched in Sao Paulo (Brazil) in 2011(<http://www.edc-online.org/it/home/speciale-brasile-2011.html>) to the whole world. In this document, the *Youth for a United World* have done just as had been proposed by the Project of the Economy of Communion in Freedom, launched by Chiara Lubich (Human Rights Award from the Council of Europe, 1998). They, therefore, proposed to global economic operators to adopt, in addition to the principles of liberty and equality, the third 'pillar' of brotherhood brought about by the French Revolution.

In doing so, the economy will contribute to fulfill the dignity of the human person and of every people. In this way, it will be possible to respond to the questions of meaning and happiness hidden in the hearts of every woman and every man.

We, therefore, join the young people of San Paolo in asking Europe also to:

- Involve the civil society in development policies starting from the family, valuing part-time work and that of those responsible for childcare and assistance to the elderly or disabled.



- Fiscally facilitate employed work, families with dependent children, and environmental protection;
- Discourage, even with fiscal structures, highly speculative financial transactions;
- Combat fiscal evasion, eliminate “fiscal paradises” and reduce military spending unnecessary to the sole protection of populations;
- Abolish customs barriers for products from no-EU countries that respect work and the environment.
- Give concrete space to the needs of fraternity among persons and peoples, favoring with their own choices of consumption and savings those businesses that are ethically oriented and which invest a significant part of their profits in the common good. The EdC (<http://www.edc-online.org/>) tells us, in fact, that business profits have a social nature and vocation.

Just as the important "Europe 2020" document shows, we also agree on the need to invest in the training of new generations so as to be more formed. Not only that, but taking into account what has been proposed by the document "From San Paolo and to the World" (<http://www.edc-online.org/it/home/speciale-brasile-2011/1651-edc-ritorno-al-futuro.html>), we support the formation of "new men and new women" and for this we ask:

- That primary and secondary school curricula include courses in care for the environment, legality, education to fraternity and to globalism, favoring integration, peace, communion and unity among peoples, and therefore reduce the risk of future wars and destruction on the planet.
- That efforts by universities in countries with great financial and cultural resources give life, with reciprocal respect, to professor exchanges with other universities in the world, as there is no future for youth without high quality formation.
- That in economics departments and political and social sciences departments there it be a recognized right of citizens to learn about economic visions and that are different than those that dominate today.

If Europe wants to aspire to becoming "great", it cannot disregard a new economic vision, which will have as the center of its action not any more the gain, but the well-being (not only economic) of all the members of society.



2 Fraternity and dialogue:

Just as we can all see, the European society is increasingly moving towards multiculturalism and internationalism. If a pretty important part of the European society believes that the solution to these processes, fruit of globalization now pervasive, should be the "closure" of its civilization in order to preserve intact the native culture and spirit, we young people participating in the project "*A united Europe for a united world*" had the opportunity to meet thousands of young people from all over the world and experience that when building a fraternal society not only it is not a utopia, but it becomes even necessary to cope with the current developments of the society in which we live.

"Building bridges" between cultures was the main theme of the project in which we took part and the climate of fraternal friendship that has developed among us in those few days in Budapest, was a testimony that surprised us, as well as the city that hosted us. The differences, if supported by an open dialogue and a selfless love, can become an enriching experience rather than an obstacle.

We find ourselves in complete harmony with the modus operandi of the EU in that what is common to all decision-making procedures of the EU is the foundation of inter-institutional cooperation and dialogue supported only by the will of each institution to contribute to the final result which ensures the smooth operation of procedures.

On the other hand, the very motto of the European Union "United in diversity" is the fruit of great inspiration for us and reflects what we experienced during the *final event in Budapest, Let's bridge-Genfest 2012*, when the huge multicultural assembly present there, was not a cause of discord, but indeed a harbinger of mutual enrichment, joy and general enthusiasm. What especially struck us was the spontaneous carousel that has been created on the occasion of the opening concert of the event. Without any kind of preparation whatsoever, these young people spontaneously made a long





line like a snake thus forming a chain with flags from all over the world that moved to the dancing arena.

We are now, more determined than ever to be create living cells in the reality we live in by spreading the importance of dialogue and by being the first to build it in situations where it is most needed.

Also at the event in Budapest, a major initiative was launched: the *United World Project*. With it, the *Youth for a United World* are working in three directions:

- To launch a worldwide campaign by being builders of fraternity in the world. Through a collection of symbolic signatures, youth offer to those who are in contact with them, the possibility to commit themselves to live the "golden rule" in every culture and religion: "*Do unto others as you would have them do unto you*".

- To collect "fragments of fraternity" made every day around the world showing how the path to universal brotherhood is alive and real. The fragments will gradually be collected in a file and firstly be presented to the UNESCO on the occasion of the next meeting of the General Conference in October, asking the cooperation of the UNESCO and other international organizations to actively support the project and the construction of universal brotherhood.

- to highlight the many "best practices" that take place every day in the world through the daily work of many people by living more or less consciously for universal brotherhood.

Moreover, the dialogue at all levels is at the heart of the Y4UW and the Focolare Movement from where it all started.

3 Fraternity and development

We keep as a reference one of the main long-term planning documents that the European Union has recently given, the "Europe 2020" document which amongst one of the seven priorities auspices that of the creation of a "European platform against poverty to ensure social and territorial





cohesion so that the benefits of growth and jobs are widely shared and people experiencing poverty and social exclusion to live in dignity and take an active part in society". This is clearly a measure to establish a mechanism of internal redistribution of wealth in which the Community framework is still largely lacking. Generally speaking, the EU seems to point in this document to "a partnership approach (which) should be extended (...) to the civil society, so that everyone get involved to fulfill such targets.

The numerous testimonies, experiences and activities that the project "*A united Europe for a united world*" made possible certainly encourages us to be part of the mechanism of reciprocity that Europe intends to establish not only at an institutional level but also on a social one. We are more than ever convinced that the fundamental values of solidarity and reciprocity are the basis of the construction of a European society that go beyond egalitarian development because they lead you directly to the ideal of fraternal sharing.

4 Fraternity and the Future of Europe

If the EU wants to successfully pursue the path of integration, it cannot only focus on economic integration. It must also continue trusting towards new policies aiming at the development of the human person. With a view to greater democratization of the EU, in the future one will have to think of a union that does not aim only to enrich economic states (and consequently citizens) but also directly individuals; an enrichment that goes far beyond the mere economic welfare, fulfilling the human person intellectually, spiritually and morally.

We are therefore, in complete harmony with the words expressed by JM Barroso, President of the European Commission, when commenting the Europe 2020 program: "to achieve a sustainable future, we must henceforth look beyond the short term. Europe needs to get back on track and should no longer lose it. (...) Europe is able to promote intelligent, sustainable and inclusive growth, to find ways to create new jobs and provide guidance to our society. "

What are the guidelines according to us, we need to offer and which is the right way to follow?





In the light of the experience of the project "*A united Europe for a united world*" here are some points on the way we, young Europeans who participated, feel can give our contribution from our concrete commitment to support their implementation:

- The building together of a common European identity: all the more the EU aims to develop participatory mechanisms aimed at strengthening, especially in the young their common European identity.

- We appreciate and approve of the enormous effort and investment that the European Union is promoting towards the construction of a common European identity among young people. Just spreading a mentality 'open' to dialogue and mutual encounter can in fact tackle dangerous and anachronistic tendencies to parochialism and cultural closure.

Another reason to be grateful to the European institutions for what has been done up till now, and also because the project "*A united Europe for a united world*" probably would not have been possible to be carried out without the substantial EU funding!

Once again, the direction taken by the European Union is appreciated by what many of the participants in the project have experienced. Especially those *Youth for a United World* who over the years have taken part in many 'work-shops of brotherhood' that take place every year in the 'Y4UW training' promoted by the Focolare Movement and spread all over Europe. It is all about deep experiences of exchange and the sharing of life experiences of young people from different countries, religions and cultures and the development of friendships marked by the principles of peaceful fraternal coexistence.

- **An active citizenship and cooperation with institutions:** more and more, the EU aims to develop a Europe not of states, but of citizens, in which even the individual is given the right to express his opinions and interact with a multi-level context which is being developed within the EU's institutional landscape.

- As stated also by the Europe 2020 project, we believe that the formation of active and aware citizens is a key to the future development of a European integration process going beyond the simple inter-state cooperation. Now one year into the project "*A united Europe for a united world*" we feel that the desire to engage concretely in the realities of society in which we live in has grown in us.



In this sense, the experience that Y4UW promotes after *Let's bridge-Genfest 2012* with the *United World Project* can be of considerable interest, since (as seen above), the project aims to interact with leading local and international institutions in order to disseminate and promote 'fragments of fraternity' at every level (personal, relational, social, institutional, ...)

- **Peace:** The reasons that this year led the committee of the Noble Foundation, to award its most prestigious prize to the EU have convinced us. The process of European integration, in fact, received the Nobel Prize for Peace 2012 not only for bringing peace in Europe, but also as a model for the whole world to show that peaceful coexistence is possible (and affordable) beyond any secular conflict (see the issue between France and Germany) or barrier (see the influence that a united Europe has had in bringing about the fall of the Berlin Wall and in the current phase of democratization and economic development of the whole area of Eastern Europe), accounting for more than six decades (citing the reason for the award) "the advancement of peace and reconciliation, democracy and human rights in Europe."

More than as recognition of the history of this institution, we believe, however, that this important recognition is to be considered an encouragement to continue toward the path of peace, respect for human rights and increased cooperation between European countries.

On the other hand, even the values that are at the basis of the Movement of the *Youth for a United World* are committed in building a world of peace.

However to participate in the project "*A united Europe for a united world*" has meant to so many of us to understand with greater clarity that the proposal of peace, democracy and respect for human rights for which Europe was a harbinger for the good and progress for all humanity, should soon be spread throughout the world. As was the case in several occasions in its history (most notably the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, signed in Helsinki in 1975), the European Union can play a significant role in promoting these values. On the other hand, by its very existence, it is a clear concrete demonstration that living together in a fraternal way can result as "convenient" in comparison with any division and historic rivalry that can divide people on earth.

- **Fraternity:** If the European society goes out from the modern era and enters the contemporaneous one with the ideals of the French Revolution in its hands, this is due to the fact





that the events in France of the late eighteenth century were able to completely revolutionize not only the political pre-existing regimes on the European scene, but also the same scale ethics, morals and values of the society of *l'ancien régime* was founded.

- As you know, behind this massive social revolution there are the three ideals of freedom, equality and fraternity.

- Various changes (almost always made up of enthusiastic young people) in Europe have struggled to assert the first two ("free Europe", liberals, communists, ...). With the same enthusiasm and the same drive, the *Youth for a United World* commit themselves to promote and 'fight' for the recognition of the unique principle still unfulfilled, that of brotherhood.

- If the "Europe 2020" program ends by celebrating, among other things, "strong European values" the "cultural diversity" of our continent and the hope that Europe acts "collectively, as a union," at the end of this great project, that in a year has involved thousands of young Europeans and those who took part clearly felt more than ever the certainty that it is truly the principle of fraternity, summarized by the rule "do unto others as you would have to you", the true value, and the cultural paradigm capable of leading the European and global society to an ever more profound and 'rightful' unity.

By the *International Youth Commission of the project*

