

RELAUNCHING THE EUROPEAN UNION

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The Treaty of Rome signed 60 years ago initiated the process towards the current European Union. Such process has implied not only the overcoming of a long-lasting historical period of warfare between the Europeans, but also established the most democratic and forward-thinking space all over the planet in political, economic and social terms. During almost seven decades, we the Europeans altogether have been implementing consecutively the instruments for our union, namely the European Coal and Steel Community, the Customs Union after the Treaty of Rome, then the internal market after the Single European Act, the euro from the Treaty of Maastricht, and lately the establishment of the European Union after the Treaty of Lisbon.

Nowadays we are facing an increasing concern for the actual situation that the Union is going through. In the context of globalization and accelerating technological revolution, the tough economic crisis, as well as the deficiency to deal with it, have caused old and new contradictions that put the Union to a hard test even about its own existence. The most severe breaking is the social discontent among a large part of the European citizens which is interpreted in a disregard for the European project in its current incarnation. The result of the Britain referendum (Brexit) along with the positions of the new American administration has also demonstrated a powerful warning sign that Europe is going badly, because it is not only about the UK itself. The eurosceptic groups, or clearly the opposing sides to the EU, are rising in several countries, varying from populisms in one or another sign, nationalisms of new and old forms, to insolent attacks to the Union existence. All of them settle under the common denominator of rejecting the policies which would conduct to a more united Europe, are also questioning the validity of the euro and showing the ambition of returning to the old models of State-nation. Those efforts, once carried out, would lead us to a path full of dangerous uncertainties and growing impotence, in a more interdependent world but more hegemonic as well by strong political and worldwide economic powers. We would move backwards to one-time conflicts with no warranty.

In the face of this situation to whose challenges we should face, taking into account the upcoming elections in France and Germany, there are different postures to be adopted in practice. Leaving apart the extremist side of breaking the euro and the Union itself, we would have other options. On the one hand, the tendency to make concessions with the increasing nationalisms through appeasement or pause can be made by sending out the message of that maybe we have gone too far. In our opinion, it would be a wrong road which would drive to a bigger standstill of undesirable consequences. The current nationalisms and/or populisms do not emerge as a result of too much Europe, but due to a lack of it. They appear when the Union has not achieved yet the necessary

instruments that would allow it to confront effectively the problems concerning its citizens. The insufficiency of Europe itself, therefore, is what gives rise to the current crisis.

Given this reason, we are convinced of the idea that a clear project of relaunching the Union should be made in the next Rome Summit. With the substantial advances in the economic union and fiscal harmonization; initiatives towards the social Europe that would generate the necessary cohesion; right responses to the challenge of migrations and refugees; decisions in security and defense fields in front of terrorist threats and, finally, a vision of a future political union that would sow a new illusion and trust in a common project. We cannot allow that such a great enlightened and civilizing endeavor to sink, as a victim of old and new egoisms and blindness. Spain has made a wager in its External Action Strategic for a strong Europe by indicating that "the final destination of the process of the European construction is the political union, a federal Europe - the United States of Europe - not simply as a union of sovereign States". We believe that it is the journey to follow and Spain should support it firmly.