

The Future of Europe

DECLARATION ADOPTED BY THE ASSEMBLY OF THE EUROPEAN MOVEMENT IN ITALY

The war unleashed by Russia on February 24, 2022, has dramatically reopened the issue of the organisation of the European continent to guarantee peace, security and cooperation. At the same time, we must ensure the respect for the rights that were at the heart of the 1975 Helsinki agreements, in a political dimension that makes the strategic autonomy of the European Union urgent. This goes far beyond the emergency financial instruments adopted to face the consequences of the pandemic, such as the *Next Generation* EU. The Next Generation EU has a provisional European debt that will have to be repaid by the States from 2026 if the European Union is not equipped with an autonomous fiscal capacity based on true own resources.

"Strategic autonomy" in the framework of European sovereignty concerns the external security and defence dimension but also cyber-attacks, information manipulation, the fight against climate change and *last but not least* energy independence, as well as the launch of a genuine European industrial policy and more determined action in support of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises.

In this context, it is essential for the European Union to adopt policies that guarantee the diversification of energy sources and are consistent with the objectives of ecological transition and sustainable development by giving the European institutions the powers to coordinate and intervene, as has happened in the fight against the pandemic and in the vaccination campaign.

The invasion of Ukraine has hit the Conference on the Future of Europe and the unjustified Russian aggression has strengthened solidarity between the members of the European Union and in support of the Ukrainian people.

We do not know today how and when the military conflict will end, but the hybrid organisation of the European Union between the confederal dimension of the European Council and the Community dimension of the Commission will have to be radically changed, as will the division of competences. The European budget will have to be expanded giving priority to the fields of defence, energy and European infrastructures.

Regarding defence, the steps forward announced with the 'strategic compass' are not enough unless they are aimed at real coordination between European countries. Coordination must be achieved by creating economies of scale, unifying information and intelligence systems, participating in joint projects that privilege European military industries, adopting unified rules for the control of arms sales to third countries, laying the foundations for effective European *peace enforcement*, *peace-keeping* and *peace-building* missions within the framework of the United Nations and the OSCE.

As far as foreign and security policy is concerned, the European debate is only focusing on the idea of extending the areas where the European Council and the Council can decide by qualified majority by eliminating the right of veto or to make the inapplicable 'bridging

EUROPEAN MOVEMENT ITALIAN COUNCIL

clause' work, which would allow the European Council – unanimously – to authorise the Council to vote by majority.

The (governmental) responsibility of the European Commission has been recognised in the fight against the pandemic and in the management of financial resources to deal with its economic consequences, starting with the European public debt. The same path must be taken in order to achieve a single foreign and security policy exercised by the European Commission and a common defence coordinated by the Commission itself within the Political and Security Committee and an Inter-force Command.

If the prospect that emerges from the '*change in history*' imposed by the invasion of Ukraine is to lay the foundations of a 'federal community', we must make it clear that there are no federal systems in the world in which responsibility for external relations is attributed to the members of the Federations. The idea of a hybrid system of government or a double executive exercised partly by the European Commission and partly by the European Council of Heads of State and Government would be a harbinger of ineffectiveness, confusion and permanent interinstitutional conflicts.

The first step must be to give the European Union exclusive competences in development cooperation and in migration and asylum policies by increasing the overall European financial commitments and by unifying the offices of President of the Commission and President of the European Council from the next expiry of the mandate of the President of the European Council.

As regards the financial resilience of the European Union, resources are urgently needed in energy, industrial, and defence policies.

These resources must also be devoted to strengthening the social dimension - along the lines of the SURE programme and in the context of the legislative implementation of the action plan adopted in Porto. The plan will be made more effective by dialogue with the economic and social partners - to guarantee the common goods of prosperity, the fight against unemployment and security through the European Union's autonomous fiscal capacity.

The Conference on the Future of Europe will end on May 9th. It was unable or unsuccessful in opening a public debate on the European consequences of the conflict in Ukraine and left open questions of method and substance relating to the role of participatory democracy.

The Spinelli Group in the European Parliament has recently opened a significant window of opportunity on the "constituent perspective" as did the new German government. This is consistent with the original initiative of the European Parliament during the first legislature that led on February 14, 1984, to the approval of the "Spinelli project" and the Ventotene Manifesto of 1941.

The political groups are moving towards the adoption of a resolution at the beginning of May 2022 which will call for the convening of interparliamentary assemblies to strengthen representative democracy and the introduction of transnational lists linked to the *Spitzenkandidaten* method. This will open the way to some amendments to the

EUROPEAN MOVEMENT ITALIAN COUNCIL

Treaties within the framework and limits of Article 48 of the Treaty on the European Union which will require a proposal from the European Parliament (and/or from the Commission and/or from one or more governments), an interinstitutional convention, an intergovernmental conference, and the unanimity of national ratifications which in many cases will require some confirmatory or consultative referendums at national level.

The approach of Article 48 is based on the principle that governments are 'the owners of the Treaties', as has been stated several times by the European Council, and the objective of governments is to maintain substantially unchanged the balance (or to be precise, the imbalance) between the institutions and between the European Union and the Member States.

The political groups and the European Parliament – in addition to calling for the launch of a convention to adopt limited amendments to the Treaty of Lisbon by the end of the current parliamentary term and, where necessary, through enhanced cooperation - should add an appeal to European political parties and civil society organisations to give the European Parliament that will be elected in 2024 a substantially constituent role. The European Parliament would then go beyond the Treaty of Lisbon by creating a political unit capable of exerting a decisive influence on the organisation of the continent and on the governance of the world.

In this context, it will be necessary to strengthen the relationship between the dimension of participatory democracy - through a constant dialogue between the representative organisations of civil society and the European Parliament - and the dimension of representative democracy - through cooperation between the European Parliament and the national parliaments. Reactivating the model of "interparliamentary assemblies" that preceded the Maastricht Treaty is one of the paths to be pursued. The transition from Union to a federal community between the States and peoples that will want to be part of it according to the principle of differentiated integration shall be the focal point of this process.

Rome, April 8, 2022