

POST-ELECTION EU: ASK FOR THE PROGRAMME!

Jacques Delors | *founding president of Notre Europe – Jacques Delors Institute*

António Vitorino | *president of Notre Europe – Jacques Delors Institute*

While numerous debates are focused on the identity of the main European decision-makers for the 2014-2019 period, it is essential to specify the political directions that the EU is called upon to pursue after the European elections of 22-25 May. Jacques Delors and António Vitorino take a stand.

This Tribune was also published on the websites of the [Huffington Post](#) and of [EurActiv.com](#), in [Corriere della sera](#) and in a shorter version in [Handelsblatt](#).

While numerous debates are focused on the identity of the main European decision-makers for the 2014-2019 period, it is essential to specify the political directions that the EU is called upon to pursue after the European elections of 22-25 May. Such clarification of its programme is all the more necessary as the [appointment of the president of the Commission](#) must receive the support of a qualified majority of European Council members and the approval of a majority coalition at the European Parliament. In this regard, three main political directions seem to have emerged, based on the [partisan balance of power](#) established by European voters, and they share a common point, that of promoting EU action that is both clearer and capable of producing conclusive results, both at the EU and euro area levels.

1. From Europe of the Troika to [Europe of the triptych](#): “competition that stimulates, cooperation that strengthens, solidarity that unites”

The “Growth Pact” adopted in June 2012 laid the foundations for the “Great Bargain” that needs to be strengthened, and that combines national structural reforms, the opening up of national and European markets, but also financial interventions by the EU.

The EU of the upcoming semesters is capable of extending the rebalancing between “stringency and growth” made possible by the adjustment efforts and reforms achieved over the past years: “stringency for the states, growth for Europe” as advised by Tommaso Padoa-Schioppa! This implies an intelligent application of the “Fiscal Compact”, in line with the economic cycle and preserving spending in the future. This also implies increasing European funding earmarked for research, training and innovation, as well

as for pan-European infrastructure in the fields of energy, the environment and communication. The EU budget, the European Investment Bank, project bonds, national and joint funding: all these available tools must now be mobilised on a massive scale in order to illustrate more clearly concrete European support towards reviving economies and therefore towards growth and employment.

Other symbolic initiatives should also be implemented, starting with banking union, which will better prevent the excesses of the financial sector and bolster the funding of the real economy, especially for SMEs. The EU should also intensify its efforts to fight tax evasion and fraud, without which the austerity efforts of states and citizens appear to be intolerable. Lastly, the EU should complete Economic and Monetary Union, particularly by [clarifying the sharing of responsibilities between Brussels and member states](#), by creating a “Convergence Fund” providing states with financial support for structural reforms and an [insurance mechanism](#) to prevent cyclical differences within the euro area, and by encouraging the issuance of eurobonds.

2. From introverted Europe to the EU within globalisation

The EU is emerging from a parliamentary term marked by the euro area crisis, which highlighted the dissent between member states and citizens but also mobilised all the energy of its decision-maker, to the detriment of the challenges of the “Greater Europe”. The Russia-Ukraine and Syrian crises alone recall the need for Europeans to [commit further at international level](#), in order to meet the numerous challenges

against which “union is strength”, as most people already know.

Implementing a genuine “European Energy Community” to address climate change and external energy dependency; implementing a more efficient strategy with greater solidarity to address illegal immigration, for example through the creation of European border guards, while at the same time making more use of legal immigration, as Europe is aging; asserting our trade and normative power in response to the development of continent-states such as China, Russia or Brazil, including *by negotiating offensively with the United States*; continuing efforts to control “mad finance”, especially through the entry into force of the financial transaction tax; providing a more coordinated response to terrorist threats in the Sahel, in Syria or elsewhere, at a time when the United States are turning towards Asia...

All of these external political priorities should feature at the top of the European political agenda and lead to significant progress over the coming years, in order to give European integration its full meaning once again.

3. From intrusive Europe to embodied Europe

Even though it *does not produce 80% of national laws in force (closer to 20%)*, “Europe” has appeared to be rather intrusive these past few years, particularly in the “countries under programmes” but also because it adopts norms that are very detailed, badly explained and often met with a hostile reception by citizens. While the Troika has already left Ireland and Portugal, there is no doubt that it is necessary to send the same political signals concerning the level of detail of EU rules and interventions between now and 2019, by retaining

a limited number of priority actions, even if this does not mean that the EU should do less in all fields.

This is mainly because EU action would be better embodied if it were clearer in the future. Embodied by great objectives such as the promotion of balanced economic, social and environmental development or the assertion of the interests and values of Europeans within globalisation; embodied by symbolic projects to be promoted in all their dimensions, such as “banking union” or the “European Energy Community”; embodied by the faces of those who decide in its name, which implies increasing the transparency of its operations but also choosing political leaders capable of establishing direct and intense dialogue with member states and citizens and, lastly, embodied by the Europeans themselves, who must retain the right to move about within an *area of free movement that is both open and safe*, but also to be able to embrace democratic tools more easily, such as the right of citizens’ initiative, for example.

Such political directions should naturally be subject to deeper discussion between the candidate for Commission president, members of the European Council and the majority political groups of the European Parliament. Such a “trialogue” would be all the more useful if it led to the adoption of an inter-institutional agreement formalising a “contract for the parliamentary term” that would provide the EU and its citizens with the internal and international direction they need more than ever between now and 2019, both at the EU28 and at the euro area levels.

Managing Editor: Yves Bertoncini • The document may be reproduced in part or in full on the dual condition that its meaning is not distorted and that the source is mentioned • The views expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect those of the publisher • *Notre Europe - Jacques Delors Institute* cannot be held responsible for the use which any third party may make of the document • Translation from French: Vicki Mc Nulty • © *Notre Europe - Jacques Delors Institute*

