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FUTURE OF EUROPE: COLLAPSE OR REVIVAL

Abstract

Crisis in the eurozone has reignited discussions on the adequacy of the European integration model today. In particular – how to revive, still valid, European values while sorting out from the economic quagmire. And how to ensure a foresight under the pressure of short term difficulties while averting understandable yet unfounded loss of trust in the future of the European endeavour among the elites and parts of the populace in the – mainly some older – member countries. And prevent disillusionment of the new EU member states, still very supportive of the European integration. Last but not least, how to enhance Europe's competitiveness and position, politically and economically, on the global scene in the post-American, or post-Western, world, with its uncertainty and rapid change.

A heavy test the European solidarity undergoes shows that EU has arrived at the cross-roads: towards renaissance – or bankruptcy. Will though weakening of Europe (and euro) be in the interest of either the West with its civilization of democracy, human rights and free markets, or the world as a whole? A strong united Europe is needed to maintain a sound balance on that scene. Amid growing interdependence under globalization, avoiding a destructive rivalry among main country groups is a pre-condition of peaceful future and well-being of the planet. And joint solving of global problems encountered. Rejuvenated Europe should take part of responsibility towards its citizens and the international society deepening integration and

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reaffirming its values which brought, and keep, European nations together, and strengthening the European identity.

Key words: European Union, integration, future, world system

INTRODUCTION

The crisis in the eurozone and the on-going events in Ukraine including the annexation of Crimea by Russia and a “covert war” in the east and south of Ukraine prove that frontiers and peace in Europe cannot be anymore taken for granted. Europe, especially Eastern and Central, ceased to be an oasis of stability. Faith in the rules-based European order has been badly shaken, and deep concern reigns as of now as to the economic and social repercussions as well of what has become Kiev authorities’ ordeal. This, and earlier signs of increasing euro-skepticism instigated by such political parties as UKIP, as well as lacunae in the European solidarity e.g. in energy matters (an effective “disunion” related to the gas supply skillfully used by Gazprom to blackmail and divide its gas hungry – and dependent – EU *clientele*) prompted us to write this article. Another motivation was our conviction that we witness dangerous although much less visible moral crisis that consists in indifference (integration fatigue?), and erosion of the value system which used to be fundamental when first bricks were laid to construct the European house was in the postwar Europe.

1. THE EUROPEAN INTEGRATION MODEL CHALLENGED

Crisis in the eurozone as well as economic and social tensions amid of EU member states gave rise to intensified disputes on the concept of the – still far from complete – European integration model. On one hand, difficult times do call for a concerted action to withstand weakening growth and resulting deterioration of living standards of the populace especially the middle class, on the other – strengthen the centrifugal tendencies and dormant nationalisms (country- and region-wise) let alone protectionist inclinations. Original European values serving the original Six to get together, helped by the powerful stimulus from the United States under the Marshall Plan and one of its executors – OEEC taking care of the complementary nature of economic development of the war-ravaged Europe and preserve its political stability, start to be forgotten, or underestimated at best. Roots of the European Project begin to fade. Pressing challenges of “Its Majesty

Short Term” and competition from other regions with different value systems, in conjunction with rather vague relationship with unpredictable and still poorly understood Russia, have prevented, until recently, serious contemplation of strategic issues confronting the EU, and the long term goals of the European co-operative effort in the first place. Sadly, the EU needed a desperate and internally motivated endeavour by the British Prime Minister David Cameron to revert to meaningful discussions of what the European integration stands for.

We should bear in mind that Europe of today happens to be much different place from what it was some 60 years ago when the EU founding members were slowly making their first steps on the road towards European integration. West European countries had plenty of time to adapt politically, economically, socially and even mentally to the challenges of working together. Unlike “new” member countries which, once admitted to EU after queuing almost 15 years in its antechamber, had no time to waste, nor the chance to go through the evolutionary process of the European consciousness-building. They had to catch-up.

The enlargement of EU was of vital significance for Poland and other Central European countries (which does not mean it was neutral or negative for the Union!). Quite on the contrary. Rejoining Europe was a unique civilisation opportunity for them, and benefits there from proved to be eventually of long term character. If the Central European countries had not joined Europe, they would have been marginalized by now even further, with all negative political, economic and social consequences for the entire European continent. Not just for them. Without that membership some of the candidate countries (including Poland) could have had much more difficulties in confronting the challenges of the technological revolution and – increasingly global – competition. Politically, should Poland be squeezed between the (not enlarged) EU and Russia, its sovereignty and economy would be in serious jeopardy. Refusing or not being able to join Europe would have meant for Poland to be left in the European periphery forever.

Last but not least, it was a unique possibility for Poland to modernise its economy as well as societal patterns, to alter mentality and to enhance the civilisation standards like the introduction of better ecological norms, better protection of consumers, higher quality of goods. However, significant progress achieved in all these domains thanks to the EU support did not prevent Poland and other new member countries, though to a varying extent, from all the consequences of the all-European crisis of today.

One cannot find in the discussions going on in and out of Brussels any convincing, let alone binding, reply how Europe might fare in the global geopolitical and “goeconomic” competition in the decades to come. Nor what strategy would

serve best its objective to attain an influential position in the course against the clock *vis à vis* other old and new powers, or megaspaces. In fact, recent months, or even years brought many quarrels how to ensure survival of the Union and Euroland. Instead of focusing on optimum strategies to regain not just economic growth but sustained development on the scale of the organisation. Especially now, when many political question marks disappeared as a result of the reelection in the United States, perpetuation of the “double dynasty” in Russia, and the change of guard that took place in China.

In the circumstances, the recent Peace Nobel Award for EU could not be more timely. It did serve as a powerful reminder of the half-forgotten European project’s contribution to peace in our continent – and world-wide. For what has been achieved within the 27 – soon 28 – member-states’ organisation including between former foes constitutes an example of peace-building to be copied elsewhere, be it Asia, Latin America or a number of ex-Soviet republics. At the same time, which is an irony of history, this crucial part of the *acquis* is almost neglected. Signs of disintegration reappear time and again. Antoni Kukliński suggests that four trajectories seem to exist for the future course of this unique intergovernmental institution: (a) success, (b) crisis, (c) global marginalisation, (d) renaissance [Kukliński, 2012b], We may try to reduce them to just two: collapse or revival.

Whatever the underlying cause of the present problems facing EU as the succession of generations, lacunae in the integration effort (e.g. missing political union and common economic policy), low standard of governing elites (with rather few exceptions), undermined solidarity, virtually no strategic thinking, blown up Brussels bureaucracy and excessive focus on procedures – signs of erosion and flaws continue to plague the European construction. Not only so-called several speeds start to take root, but even the rationale for integration as such gets questioned. A suggestion to recur to referendum whether to stay in the Union has just been made. European solidarity so well expressed in the EU cohesion policy stands heavy test amid shameful 2014–2020 budgetary discussions (and – in the future – may take another test when discussing a separate Euroland’s budget). Although European integration has been – it’s true – developing from crisis to crisis, no doubt now it approaches the crossroads: either towards gradual disintegration and resulting shrinkage of the role the EU otherwise deserves to play on the global scene – or towards the renaissance, i.e. consolidation of its political and geo-strategic, geo-economic and cultural impact (take much envied lifestyles!), benefitting from its attractiveness for the world elites, middle class and ordinary people especially the young. Unfortunately, young Europeans – no

wonder, perhaps, as a part of the consumption-focused society, – largely ignore the roots of the European integration they profit so much from; they take free Schengen travelling or Erasmus fellowships for granted. Especially young people in the “old” EU countries: those from the “new” ones certainly appreciate privileges they derive from the EU membership. Calls for European political unity and solidarity therefore remain thus unanswered. Nationalistic attitudes, including reluctance to treat immigrants also from other, poorer EU member states, as equals, let alone recent calls for a referendum prove that the Union has reached a point of no return. Quite on the contrary: in a dramatic diagnosis in the contribution to the III Wrocław Conference Antoni Kukliński [2012a] rightly opines that the EU faces two basic options: renaissance – or bankruptcy.

Pertaining to the dynamics of the rapidly evolving global scene, one may ask indeed in whose interest – among aspirants to the big world power status from outside of Europe – would be its weakening. Certainly not the U.S. and – similarly – most of the BRICS, especially China for whom the EU is the main trade partner! Maybe, in a way, to Russia? Moreover: who dreams about fall of the euro and occupying the entire place by the shaky U.S. dollar? Who would possibly profit from the EU ‘s disintegration viz. eventual collapse, and imminent conflicts among or within its member states? The world has already enough hot spots and – on-going or potential – conflicts on a sub-regional scale. To be sure, Europe threatens nobody. But its fall would strongly – and negatively – affect the balance of political and economic power globally.

Such questions are of special pertinence now since we are facing irreversible changes on the global geopolitical, security and economic scene. We observe shrinking impact of the Western (Euro-Atlantic) civilisation and gradual shift of power and wealth towards the emerging economies: what is often called a “post-American world”. A stunning change is forecasted in global GDP (at PPP): notably the share of North America and Western Europe is to fall from 40% in 2010 to just 21% in 2050 while that of developing Asia – to almost double (China’s alone might move from 13.6% to 20%) [Megachange, 2012]. The total GDP of “OECD less U.S.” is expected to peak in the early 2030s already – to attain some 15% above the current level, and in 2052 the Chinese economy will be as big as the economies of all members of OECD taken together including the United States [Randers, 2012].

“Indeed, in some ways the Asian century has already arrived” – says Niall Ferguson – and asks somewhat rhetoric question: “does the shift of the world’s center of gravity from West to (new) East imply future conflict? [...] we are living through now the end of 500 years of Western predominance. This time the

Eastern challenger is for real, both economically and geopolitically [...] – and adds a consolation – (however) [...] we should not be fatalistic [...] Western modes are not in decline but are flourishing nearly everywhere [...] Western package still seems to offer human societies the best available set of economic, social and political institutions – the ones most likely to unleash the individual human creativity capable of solving the problems the twenty-first century world faces” [Ferguson, 2011: 307, 312, 322, 523, 524].

Another author, Kishore Mahbubani [2008], referring to the rise of the West that transformed the world, expects the rise of Asia to bring about an equally significant transformation and be good for the world, because: first, the Asian economies are not ready yet and have apparently no intention to displace the Western ones, despite of the major mistakes the latter had lately committed; secondly, Asians must get involved in new thinking to prepare themselves to a different world; thirdly, whether the XXI century will be seen as a moment of historical triumph of the West or a moment of its historical defeat is up to the West in the first place as it depends – according to Kishore Mahbubani [2008; XII, 1–2, 5–7, 43–50] – on how it reacts to the rise of Asia; Chinese and Indians want just to replicate, not dominate the West. Reluctance of key Western decision-makers (even intellectuals) to recognise the unsustainability of the desire to maintain Western global domination presents a great danger to the world – he asserts: “Western intellectual life continues to be dominated by those who continue to celebrate the supremacy of the West, not by those who say that the time has come to give up its global domination and share power gracefully... If the West tries to continue its domination, a backlash is inevitable... Humankind stands at the critical crossroads of history” [Mahbubani, 2008: 125–126], (looks like the return of history instead of its announced end? – J.W. and R.P.). One cannot ignore, he underlines, “5.6 billion people who live outside the West no longer believe in the innate or inherent superiority of Western civilization” [Mahbubani, 2008: 129].

We certainly accept many of these assessments, with two exceptions perhaps: (a) as to the alleged “triumph of the West” in the current century, we fear that such triumph pertains rather to the *passé récent*, namely to the period between the end of Cold War till the big crisis 2007–2008; and (b) as to the possible collision course of the West and the Rest. Although no one knows how things will evolve: towards eventual power-sharing – or a destructive rivalry. No one knows either whether we’ll witness growing interdependence, accompanied by peaceful relations and stability, or the opposite – a destructive rivalry [Woroniecki, 2012; 36–37, 41]. One thing is certain: whoever will try to weaken that interdependence (by internal and/or external actions), or withhold from action or reaction, will

in fact run against common and one's own interests. And will risk becoming – sooner or later – a loser in the international highly competitive environment. Whatever one's motivations – excessive fear of losing a piece of (too) much cared for sovereignty, for instance. This is what should be borne in mind by key politicians including those from EU; perhaps EU in the first place. As neither grouping would profit from following a “besieged fortress” policy stance. Neither Europe nor any European state should not therefore seek any splendid (?) isolation – through exiting the Union. The West generally can only benefit from a constructive approach towards the rise of Asia underway. This view of Kishore Mahbubani is also supported by OECD: the rise of the “Rest” does not, and doesn't have to, constitute any threat to the West [Perspectives of Global Development, 2010; 4, 23–25, 166].

Charles Kupchan thinks that “emerging powers will want to revise, not consolidate, the international order erected during the West's watch [...] The West [...] cannot presume that the coming global turn will coincide with the universalisation of the Western order [...] The West and the rising rest are poised to compete over principles, status, and geopolitical interests as the global turn proceeds” [Kupchan, 2012: 7–8, 10]. Not necessarily new hegemony and takeover from the U.S. aspirations attributed, wrongly we think, to China [Kupchan, 2012: 98–105]. Be as it may, we agree with Fareed Zakaria [2011: 2]: “we are living through the third great power shift of the modern era [...] the economic rupture of 2008 and 2009 could not halt or reverse this trend; in fact, the recession accelerated it”. The distribution of power is shifting, moving away from American dominance. “That does not mean we are entering an anti-American world” [Zakaria, 2011: 4] however. Or an anti-Western, or anti-European, for that matter. “We still think of a world in which a rising power must choose between two stark options: integrate into the Western order, or reject it. [...] In fact, rising powers appear to be following a third way: entering the Western order but doing so on their own terms = thus reshaping the system itself” [Zakaria, 2011: 38]. If so, in such a multipolar “no one's world” of tomorrow (using Kupchan's term), assuming that “the XXI century will belong to no one [...] (and) the emergent international system will be populated by numerous power center as well as multiple versions of modernity” [Kupchan, 2012: 3].

Europe should definitely make its best to strengthen itself as an entity; not as a loose grouping of nearly 30 states with independent national policies except for several spheres of the *politique communautaire*. What though must be done in, and by, Europe to follow such a far-sighted strategy instead of yielding to the temptation of political – and economic – nationalism? Charles Kupchan is

probably right when he warns against the danger of “renationalisation of political life across the EU” which has been sapping, in conjunction with the economic downturn, the West of its accumulated material and ideological strength” [Kupchan, 2012: 152–159]. Hence – he goes on – “the West must recover its economic and political vitality if it is to anchor the global turn” [Kupchan, 2012: 11]. And refrain at any rate – we would add – from inward-looking policies. In this context let us note a sober Kishore Mahbubani’s opinion on EU: almost all the energies its member-states tend to consume to keep the EU integration processes on track; “internal focus on short-term challenges has prevented leaders from taking the long view to see how Europe’s standing could be enhanced in different parts of the world [...] when most of their emerging challenges are coming from external sources [...] because the Europeans continue to dominate G-7, it has become progressively less relevant to the rest of the world” [Mahabubani, 2008: 227].

At the same time, “Europe should also be, like America, a natural candidate to lead the world [...] Now completely peaceful, Europe today is also a model of a rules-based society [...] (and yet) it has not been able to extend its benign influence outside its territory” [Mahbubani, 2008: 237]. This multifaceted opinion sounds quite relevant today – after more than six years have elapsed.

Now, what conclusions may be drawn by Europe from the afore-going analysis especially what concerns its future place on the global scene? How to exploit, instead of continuing to waste, its vast – albeit endangered – potential? First of all, to ensure a victory – or a come-back – of common sense and bring about much called for reintegration of Europeans, two – now largely missing – conditions must be met. *Primo*, understanding and acceptance that self-imposed limitation of sovereignty to pursue both the national and group interests appears to imply a reconfirmation, not a denial, of the much (too much?) treasured sovereignty. *Secundo*, societal support for policies and actions in favour of “more, not less, Europe” must be stimulated. It will not come by itself. A grand educational effort is urgently needed to promote a conviction that in the contemporary world even the biggest European states acting separately has no chance to prevail. That’s the XXI century, after all. Europe’s potential to utilise its dormant soft power and develop, as much as feasible, its military strength in parallel to modernising its economy must be put in motion as soon as possible. Dangers of selfish and nationalistic thinking must be clearly exposed to the population, and comparative advantages of working together for the common – and individual – good. Social achievements – and models, especially in the Northern Europe as well as transition success of the Central European EU member states, all this does deserve to be made better known. Same goes for workable democratic solutions developed and

maintained by individual European states. *The Economist's* concern for a “flaw in the EU itself: a project of European integration that lacks a strong democratic mandate”(How much closer a union? 2011: 24) seems, unfortunately, well-based as recent disputes of the euro-zone leaders show. How to eliminate that flaw? How to engage EU citizens? What could be done to restore faith in the European project, a grand collective endeavour that cannot be achieved without trust?

“The European civilisation – Antoni Kukliński [2011: 26] sounds a dramatic warning – is losing its 500 years long leader’s status and trying to find a proper place in the multidimensional global scene in the XXI century [...] This discontinuity is not only a decline in the global role of European civilization, it is a deep breakdown of the civilization”. Despite the fact that with its cultural diversity, tolerance and differing democratic models Europe has a lot to offer to the international community, and to the emerging economies and regions in particular. And show European solidarity (*hélas*, if preserved...) and merits of democracy combined with the promotion of socially responsible and ecologically sustainable development patterns (if unhurt in the wake of the crisis). Benefitting from the moral authority in the eyes of less developed countries, suspicious of globalisation and disappointed with the largely discredited Washington Consensus.

It is a pity – for Tony Judt [2010: 6, 59] – that “critics who have claimed that the European model is too expensive or economically inefficient have been allowed to pass unchallenged. And yet, the welfare state is as popular as ever with its beneficiaries [...] in continental Europe, centralized administrations had traditionally played a more active role in the provision of social services”. Timothy Garton Ash [2004: 63–71, 191], presents a brilliant analysis of the existing European strengths as compared to those of America just to conclude that: (a) one is better in some ways, and the other in others, and (b) Europeans are proud of their civilisational difference and moral superiority, even if it is not true. He even mentions “magnetic induction” propagated by the EU thanks to freedom and prosperity within the organisation. It is arguable whether “European dream” can and should be offered as a substitute for the American one, but one should not however count Europe out – we read in the in the foreword to the World Bank report written by Marek Belka and Philippe Le Hoérou¹.

Charles Kupchan may be right that the world is heading toward a global dissensus and that the Washington Consensus doesn’t have to be, and probably won’t be, replaced by any other single leading doctrine. If so, the question is then:

¹ **Indermit L.L., Raiser Martin**, Golden Growth. Restoring the lustre of the European economic model. Washington, D.C., World Bank, 2012; pp. I-II.

(a) which political and economic trajectory will show strong vitality, and (b) who – the West including Europe, or the Rest – is going to exert more impact on the principles on which their future collaboration will be based. Charles Kupchan is afraid the world is in fact heading to what he calls “a global dissensus” [Kupchan, 2012: 145–151]. As for the West and its constituent regions, the key determinant will be the level of regained cohesion as “the world needs a cohesive West as it navigates the global turn” [Kupchan, 2012: 150] towards the “no one’s world” of tomorrow. The West badly needs therefore to be cohesive – also for its own sake. Will however the U.S. and Europe stand up to the task? Will the West “generate the foresight to realize that the world is fast headed toward multiple versions of modernity” – as mentioned – and prove able to “revive their internal strength and self-confidence, thereby endowing itself with the political wherewithal to guide the coming transition”? [Kupchan, 2012: 205]

“Most Europeans say they want Europe to be a superpower, but when pollsters then ask if they are prepared to increase military spending to make it a superpower, half of them say no [...] Anyway, a multinational European community is most unlikely to achieve the unity of command, purpose and popular support needed to fight big wars [...] (and yet) the United States would be [...] stupid to believe that it can simply ignore Europe because of American military supremacy. Europe, with its economic, diplomatic and cultural power, can practice what has been called soft balancing” [Ash, 2004: 202]. Or a “soft power champion” [...] However, especially nowadays, can Europe become (remain?) superpower in any meaningful sense of the word? In spite of all the differences, occasional disputes, etc. – Euroatlanticism has healthy foundations. After all, it is founded on shared values, commonality of interests and strong mutual interdependence. In one word – on likemindedness. U.S. and Europe squabbling makes therefore no sense whatsoever [Ash, 215–219].

There are important globalisation aspects. In the world economy a new stage of development has taken place: the information civilisation. The industrialisation is no more deemed so important as it was in the period after the World War II (this is the key problem of all developing countries), although desindustrialisation in the West went probably too far. Reindustrialisation has recently become a catchword. Besides economic changes, globalisation implies profound transformation of socio-political structures and status of societies. Politically, globalisation entails the demise of the nation states. The state plays, more and more, a lesser and different role in serving the business interests of new international actors like global firms. Sometimes these firms may consider it an obstacle [...] Surely, the role of the nation-state is evolving, and we see its sovereignty shrinking. National and

monetary policies are increasingly affected by what happens outside the national boundaries. While these phenomena reduce the autonomy of all national economies, small and/or weak economies are of course likely to be worst hit as they are less resistant to external shocks. This can be obviously the case of almost all new EU-member countries of Central Europe, for that matter.

Surely, in the rapidly globalising world a come-back to the early stage of the integration within EU will not produce any positive effect. Neither for Europe and Europeans, nor for other continents and their population. It won't be helpful, to say the least, to tame and reduce the impact of the crisis underway. After the recent turmoil as to the direction and forms of integration as well as fears as to the future of Euroland and the common currency, EU and the world (as confirmed e.g. by the U.S. request to David Cameron to abandon plans for calling a referendum on UK's membership in EU). It is deepening of integration – whatever shape it may take – that should be sought. Otherwise we would end up with Europe that is fragmented, introverted – not to say selfish, and geopolitically sidelined. Should the forces of renationalisation continue to prevail, the EU's individual member states will gradually slip into geopolitical oblivion – [Kupchan, 2012: 174–177] warns. Such a risk appears, unfortunately, very real.

2. AVERTING COLLAPSE, REVIVING THE UNION?

2.1. Ideas for Action

The issue – and the concern - was present throughout the Wrocław conferences “*Quo vadis, Europe?*” held in Wrocław in recent years. Their main objective has been – in our opinion = to contribute to the educational effort designed to convey the faith in the European Project and its future. Also, to emphasise a need for – now largely missing – strategic thinking about Europe in terms of 2050 at least. Renaissance of Europe, including further enlargement of the EU, will not come along unless EU citizens see the sense of its political – and not just narrowly understood economic (common market) – unity. The boat carrying the flag of the unprecedented European integration needs a determined and experienced steersman. And the latter – needs unanimous support from members. Should the EU be getting (in the current decade?) its Constitution, it might as well borrow from the wording from the preamble to the United Nations Charter: “We, the peoples of the United Nations of Europe [...]” since this would reflect well the democratic nature of the integration project and the prerogatives of its citizens – Europeans/nationals of countries making its members – whatever their size and population.

For, as already mentioned, disintegration of the Union will make worse off not only them but would adversely affect partners of Europe worldwide. Whereas its Renaissance amid restored European unity – would benefit the global community.

To make it happen, a convincing vision of the future EU presents itself as a must. One that would ensure cohesion within the Union, its reintegration instead of gradual erosion. Antoni Kukliński [2012] suggests here the following four problems that call for solution: revival of innovativeness and experimentation, stronger Euro-Atlantic community, federalisation of the Union (as advocated by Angela Merkel² and Radek Sikorski³), strategic thinking on its place on the global scene. Also new president of France, François Hollande [2012] called for a “real debate on the future of the EU”. What about European solidarity and dignity, we may ask? Economic and political divisions present in the today’s EU may be bridged only through the revival of the spirit of solidarity which had transpired through the European project since its inception – reminds us George Soros [2012]; he praises recent decisions on the common currency which calmed markets and gave rise to cautious optimism, and advises that they should be followed by more specific measures to strengthen integration.

Same preoccupation is expressed by Witold Orłowski [2011]: inability to achieving agreement and solidarity in co-operation of member states for common good, abandoning egoistic differentials – all this tends to undermine the Union. To avert its break-up and restore its capability of rapid growth to aspire to the role of global economic superpower, Europe should – he asserts – finalise the process of creating the common market, solve difficult demographic problems, reform institutions and work out an efficient decision-making mechanism. Probably – as Roman Kuźniar [2011: 412] usefully suggests – “through different, and more pragmatic methods of the institutional reform than new treaties and, in the first place, through show of effective unity as a pre-condition of its desirable global role, possible only if Europe is treated by the external world as a single actor”.

² As *Süddeutsche Zeitung* of November 8, 2012 noted she can hardly gather support for revolutionary reforms of EU embracing financial supervision, common fiscal policy with monitoring of national budgets, strengthening the European Parliament and common economic policy.

³ **Sikorski Radek, Westerwelle Guido.** “A New Vision of Europe”. *IHT*, September 18, 2012. They called for greater powers at the European level (if democratically legitimized), a balance between solidarity and responsibility, more – not less – of competitive Europe, Europe exercising a global role corresponding to its economic power, and – last but not least - for motivated citizens and stronger institutions. Sikorski appealed in Berlin to promote building European political consciousness – “Mamy Unię, teraz trzeba stworzyć Europejczyków. Unia będzie unikalna” (We’ve got the Union, now we need to create Europeans. The Union will be unique). Interview wit Radosław Sikorski. *Gazeta Wyborcza*, October 18, 2012.

It is regrettable that – now, that the so-called Grexit looks less probable, threat of Brexit (Brixit?) has emerged [...]

This is why we definitely should be talking about economic and political union and – why not – the notion of a European citizenship so that half a billion of the EU inhabitants feel their links with Europe in the first place? The EU Commission (plus new institutions established by the Lisbon Treaty) might one day become a government, the Council of member states – an “upper chamber”, and the European Parliament equipped with more power⁴. Such bold moves have little chance of being taken up if not preceded by dealing with another weakness – and critical challenge: that of reducing the distance of citizens *vis à vis* the European Project and awakening their almost non-existent European identity [Bochniarz, 2012]. The latter should be sort of parallel to national one, not substituting it, nor endangering national culture and local lifestyles. Nonetheless, the European identity (formally taking shape of the citizenship) should not be considered inferior, or derived from the national one; rather, either put on equal terms or given first place. One would feel then a European and British, Dutch, or Slovak not the other way around: British, Dutch or Slovak and – hence – European. Another task would consist in convincing Europeans that further voluntary limitation of national sovereignty by member-states is in their interest in long term and as a contribution, at the same time, to international political and economic stability.

CONCLUSIONS

Therefore, the time seems ripe for Europe (Europeans, heads of EU states/governments) to wake up from dangerous lethargy, abandon a bazaar (or accountant's) mentality and make up their mind as to the way forward to take: loose integration, i.e. going backward towards eventual multidimensional break-up and collapse of the European Project, or tightening of integration with a view not to aim at the superstate but, eventually, a federation that will ensure Renaissance, and reinvention, of Europe to make it ready to confront challenges of the XXI century. In the spirit of the revived European solidarity, now seriously weakened not only due to the crisis, as a condition of the success. To succeed, it would be essential for people of the Old Continent to become aware it is up to to make such a crucial choice. They need to be persuaded that it's them who

⁴ <Euobserver .com>, November 7, 2012.

bear moral responsibility to support a right option and indicate their preference for such policies to their governments and the governing bodies of the Union.

Before passing to the conclusions, we think it is pertinent to recall that at the beginning of 2013 David Cameron has announced the referendum in Britain before 2017 on the future relationships between his country and the EU. The reaction of British public opinion has been mixed. The Guardian [January 12, 2013] published a very interesting letter entitled: “**What’s the EU done for us. This lot [...]**”. It deserves to be cited in full: *At last we may get a debate on Britain’s relationship with Europe (Leader, 11 January). What did the EEC/EU ever do for us? Not much, apart from: providing 57% of our trade; structural funding to areas hit by industrial decline; clean beach sand rivers; cleaner air; lead free petrol; restrictions on landfill dumping; a recycling culture; cheaper mobile charges; cheaper air travel; improved consumer protection and food labelling; a ban on growth hormones and other harmful food additives; better product safety; single market competition bringing quality improvements and better industrial performance; break up of monopolies; Europe-wide patent and copyright protection; no paperwork or customs for exports throughout the single market; price transparency and removal of commission on currency exchanges across the eurozone; freedom to travel, live and work across Europe; funded opportunities for young people to undertake study or work placements abroad; access to European health services; labour protection and enhanced social welfare; smoke-free workplaces; equal pay legislation; holiday entitlement; the right not to work more than a 48-hour week without overtime; strongest wildlife protection in the world; improved animal welfare in food production; EU-funded research and industrial collaboration; EU representation in international forums; bloc EEA negotiation at the WTO; EU diplomatic efforts to uphold the nuclear non-proliferation treaty; European arrest warrant; cross border policing to combat human trafficking, arms and drug smuggling; counter terrorism intelligence; European civil and military co-operation in post-conflict zones in Europe and Africa; support for democracy and human rights across Europe and beyond; investment across Europe contributing to better living standards and educational, social and cultural capital.*

All of this is nothing compared with its greatest achievements: the EU has for 60 years been the foundation of peace between European neighbours after centuries of bloodshed. It furthermore assisted the extraordinary political, social and economic transformation of 13 former dictatorships, now EU members, since 1980. Now the union faces major challenges brought on by neoliberal economic globalisation, and worsened by its own systemic weaknesses. It is taking

measures to overcome these problems. We in the UK should reflect on whether our net contribution of £7bn out of total government expenditure of £695bn is good value. We must play a full part in enabling the union to be a force for good in a multipolar global future (Simon Sweeney).

We earnestly hope the common sense like this will prevail in the current disputes on the EU budget for 2014–2020 and, more importantly, on the future shape of the Union and its integration model including various divisive ideas like the integration with several speeds. Whatever the reason of the problems experienced now. A prospect of marginalisation of the EU seems so far to have a weak effect, so long as the imagination and memory of both politicians and society in member-states fails. Should we wait for another large crisis to strike, or any external or internal threat to materialise before we agree – and act?

We believe it can be deduced from our presentation that it's not enough to hope for a good outcome, i.e. consolidation of the Union and regaining its solidarity, now in serious jeopardy. To avert much worse scenario from happening, an urgent joint educational effort has to be made to arrest an increasing societal indifference, if not disenchantment, with the grand and unique European Project. We strongly believe that unified Europe and its solidarity do serve – in fact – national interests of the EU member-states. It should continue. Lasting peace, preservation of democracy within and among them, freedom of movement of production factors and people, and novel ideas, will greatly help – as it used to in the past – to enhance economic benefits, diminish unemployment and improve welfare throughout the European Union, with a positive impact globally as well. To this end, we need in the Union another *l'approfondissement*: more solidarity among member-states as the basis of further integration, also in political, economic and social terms, and much neglected need to make people of the Old Continent feel Europeans in parallel of being Poles, Germans or Portuguese. Let the dramatic Maidan's example – of Ukrainians determined to join Europe – awaken dormant European patriotism.

One can expect the worst without strengthened and united EU – militarily and politically – an issue that we advocated throughout our article. History of our continent tends to repeat itself, as a tragic farce also in XXI century. Frightening remembrances of the consequences of European nationalisms 100 years ago, when the World War I had started, seem to revive eastward of Poland. An outstanding expert on the war, professor Margaret MacMillan warns that the circumstances seem to resemble those preceding that tragic event. This unwelcome and unsolicited challenge must not be ignored or underestimated by our European family.

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PRZYSZŁOŚĆ EUROPY: UPADEK CZY ODNOWA

Streszczenie

Kryzys w strefie euro dał asumpt dyskusjom, na ile model integracji europejskiej przystaje do dzisiejszych warunków. Zwłaszcza – jak tchnąć nowego ducha we wciąż aktualne wartości europejskie, wydostając się z zapaści gospodarczej. I jak zapewnić spojrzenie perspektywiczne pod presją bieżących kłopotów, zapobiegając zrozumiałej, acz nieuzasadnionej erozji wiary w przyszłość Projektu Europejskiego wśród elit i części społeczeństw w – głównie niektórych „starych” – państwach unijnych. I nie dopuścić do rozczarowania nowych, wciąż mocno popierających europejską integrację. Wreszcie, jak poprawić konkurencyjność i pozycję Europy, polityczną i gospodarczą, na globalnej arenie post-amerykańskiego, czy też post-zachodniego świata, nacechowanego niepewnością i szybkimi zmianami.

Trudny test, jakiemu podlega solidarność europejska, wskazuje, iż UE znalazła się na rozstajach: renesans lub bankructwo. Czy jednak osłabienie Europy (i euro) leży w interesie albo Zachodu z jego cywilizacją demokracji, praw człowieka i wolnych rynków, albo świata? Mocna i zjednoczona Europa jest potrzebna, aby utrzymać równowagę na tej arenie. W warunkach rosnącej współzależności jako osnowie globalizacji uniknięcie rywalizacji między głównymi ugrupowaniami państw stanowi przesłankę pokojowej przyszłości i dobrobytu na naszej planecie. Oraz wspólnego rozwiązywania napotykanych problemów. Odnowiona Europa powinna wziąć na siebie część tej odpowiedzialności wobec swych obywateli i międzynarodowej społeczności, pogłębiając integrację i trzymając się wartości, które połączyły i łączą nadal narody Europy, i umacniając poczucie europejskiej tożsamości.

Słowa kluczowe: Unia Europejska, integracja, przyszłość, system światowy