



CONFOEDERATIO EUROPEA (CE)

THOUGHTS FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION

WHAT KIND OF EUROPE DO WE WANT?

WHAT FORM SHOULD A CONFEDERATION TAKE?

WAYS AND MEANS TO ACHIEVE A CONFEDERATION

History and insights into the functioning of supranational unions show that they are of limited duration and require continuous development if they are to achieve their intended purpose. The nation-state model as a form of state organization became established from the late 18th century onward. The federal-states model, as in the USA, was adopted by the EU's predecessors in the 1950s. The European Coal and Steel Community was founded in 1951, the EEC in 1959 and the EU was created in 1993 (Maastricht). The EU was from the start and still is a 'work in progress'.

The European Union was in effect designed to be an economic and centralist federation, geared toward enlargement and bigness. After more than a quarter of a century, the time has come for Europe to change direction toward a devolved European Confederation¹ (CE). The central-state model still pursued by the EU Commission should have been discarded a long time ago.

THE FOLLOWING PROPOSALS ARE INTENDED TO BE CONSTRUCTIVE AND MILDLY CONTENTIOUS TO ENCOURAGE DISCUSSION, AND WIDE-RANGING ENOUGH TO LEAVE SPACE FOR IDEAS ON EUROPE THAT A MAJORITY OF CITIZENS CAN IDENTIFY WITH.

¹ The name "Confederation" has been proposed to designate a voluntary and co-equal association of communities/regions/states. The terminological affinity to Swiss political ideas is intentional.

WHAT KIND OF EUROPE DO WE WANT?

The Latin term “Confederation” emphasizes the cultural and historical connections of a continually evolving Europe. This contrasts with the EU, self-restricted protecting the status quo, optimizing its own administration, and serving the interests of unitary states and business. The EU is an economy and state-oriented organization whose next evolutionary step is a Confederation.

EUROPE’S IDENTITY SHOULD BE A CULTURAL COMMUNITY FIRST — AN ECONOMIC AREA SECOND

MAKING CULTURE A FIRST PRIORITY WILL HAVE MANY CONSEQUENCES. HERE ARE A FEW:

- The Christian roots of Europe must be expressly acknowledged.²
- Turkey is economically associable, but culturally not a candidate.
- Brussels can be headquarters of the EU, but not the capital of Europe (Krakow, Prague?).
- Executive powers of the EU Commission must be limited to core tasks.
- New federative regions (some identical with present states: Slovakia, Malta, Cyprus, Slovenia and others) will have authority over their homeland affairs (the principle of subsidiarity).
- The juridical sovereignty of the European Court of Justice, short on legitimacy, will be restricted.

There are huge differences in the geographical area of EU states (Malta:Germany = 1:100). This is because most large so-called ‘nation’ states were formed by annexing neighboring and smaller historical countries: e.g. Wales, Scotland, Catalonia, Alsace, Lorraine. These annexed historical countries and existing autonomous regions (e.g. South Tyrol, Basque Country) and former states that retain a strong identity (e.g. Bavaria) should have greater autonomy. There are also significant advantages to be gained by more inter-state regional cooperation (e.g.

Lake Constance region, Basel region, Alps-Adriatic).

The principle of “human scale” will contribute to healthy, environment-friendly, non-violent human relations and manageable political and commercial organizations. In the economic sphere this will mean, above all, reforms that reduce market concentration, standardization and size (the cult of bigness); the elimination of centralist discrimination against decentralized bodies, SMEs (Mittelstand) and small-scale operations (e.g. small farms); and limiting metropolitan overgrowth, rural sprawl and overconsumption of natural resources.

A social market economy (the original Ordo-liberal model) is the appropriate social order (organizations and institutions) for Europe. Mistaken welfare policies (‘cradle-to-grave’ social security instead of basic social insurance) and comprehensive state assurance instead of personal responsibility, under the flag of solidarity, must be reformed to avoid European ‘give-aways’ that create social tension and divide society.

EUROPE MUST BE THE EXTERNAL REPRESENTATIVE FOR REGIONAL INTERESTS, AND THE GUARANTOR OF SECURITY FOR CITIZENS

With the current polarisation, above all between the USA and China, and with its exposed geographical position and demographical imbalance, Europe must acknowledge its own special character, clearly define its future role, and at last assert itself. The danger of external powers attempting to isolate individual European states is a real one. This calls for agreed, coordinated and credible foreign and defence policies as well as effective protection of Europe’s external border. The EU has failed the latter test in the eyes of a majority of EU citizens. A flexible monetary system and moderately regulated market system will be (superordinated) common tasks.

² The deliberately secular nature of the European Constitution intentionally ignores history and heritage; it weakens the human bond formed by sharing a cultural past — and present.

WHAT FORM SHOULD A CONFEDERATION TAKE?

FUNDAMENTAL ORGANIZATION AND ELEMENTS OF THE CONFEDERATION:

1. SUBSIDIARITY PRINCIPLE, CITIZEN-ORIENTED AND EFFICIENT

- Bottom-up organization, principle of manageability
- Regional self-government, superordinate governance as a service
- Social market economy as the organizing principle

2. DIVERSITY OF REGIONS/CULTURES

- Cultural excellence, competition between regions
- Rejection of bilateralism (FRA - GER)
- Decentralization of large states, self-determination of historical regions (e.g. Bavaria)

3. DEEPER AND WIDER COOPERATION

- Flexible membership levels: trade in goods and services, currency
- Optional joint solutions, especially for infrastructure (energy, transport, communication, Internet)
- Regulation of market concentration and equal treatment
- Graduated entry/exit options

4. ENHANCING THE VALUE OF COMMUNITIES

- Expansion of municipal/regional intermediate organizational levels, resilient organizational structures
- Promotion of clubs, associations, cooperations and exchange (youth programs)
- Strengthening of neighbourhoods and partnerships (towns and regions³)

5. SHARED PROGRAMS WHOSE PRAGMATISM IS PROVEN

- Europe for Citizens, Europe of education, Europe of security, Europe of a "human scale"
- Acknowledgement of cultural roots (e.g. Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation), lessons from mistakes of the past (ideologies, nationalism, relativism, dictatorship)
- Powerful economic alliances/clusters/networks
- Credible defence, protection of external borders, controlled immigration, internal security including cyber security, a coordinated foreign policy
- Initiative to support neighbouring countries (especially Middle East and Africa)
- Organizational simplicity as a rule, "Brussels cut by half", learning from each other.

WAYS AND MEANS TO ACHIEVE A CONFEDERATION

There is no roadmap for the long road to confederation. It will be a sequence of numerous steps and actions to be undertaken, prioritized and coordinated, which cannot be predicted. There will be many new developments, agreement, disagreement as well as opportunities. There

should be comprehensive studies to accompany a Europe-wide discussion on relations between states, regions and the confederation, making it easier for a consensus to be reached.

³ Town twinning began in Germany and Austria in 1947 - often one town with several other towns, above all with Britain, France, Italy and Poland. This program has contributed to an impressive cultural and economic exchange. The EU initiative of 1985 to annually nominate a Capital of Culture (from 1999 one city, from 2004 two cities) is more symbolic and does not really connect with most citizens.

MAJOR FIRST STEPS WITH REGARD TO:

UNITARY STATES

- Replace the co-leadership of Germany and France (in particular after UK exit) by stronger multinational orientation and federalisation of large unitary states (GER, FRA, ITA SPA). For small/smaller states that often overlap one or more regions, little will change.
- Gradual devolution of the unitary states. The opportunities of digitalization for administration to be fully exploited.

REGIONS

- Devolution of regional economic development (with strategic exceptions)
- Devolution for self-management of direct taxation
- Developing the (personal) interface with citizens
- Fostering a sense of community and civic participation

CONFEDERATION

- Europe as a network of regions with different speeds and levels of affiliation
- Europe as an area of jurisdiction, security and standardization, with options
- Europe as infrastructure coordinator for networks and transportation
- Europe as flexible currency area (currency snake, Euro and parallel currencies)
- Europe as external representative on foreign and trade matters by elected representatives; coordinated defence policy (including procurement of military equipment)

The Confoederatio Europea (CE) is not a new 'big' idea. The Confederation with its unique, coherent confederative model for relations vis-à-vis the major states/powers can be a positive

example for other parts of the world. But before that happens, many people will have to take many small steps.

NOTE

To progress the confederative idea the IEM - together with welcome participants - will submit proposals on external and internal security, trade in goods and services, currency and on institutional and organizational questions.



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