

Lyon 2006 - European Ideas Speeches

European Ideas Fair

21 September 2006

Second Roundtable - *The European Agenda for Revival*

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In 2020 we might imagine the great powers and players on the world stage sitting around a great round table, organising the world order or the world disorder.

We know today that the USA and China will be jostling for position as the world's leading power. We know that Russia will be back. We know that India will be there, and that Brazil might be.

The question for us, with all our different nationalities and patriotisms, is whether we will have something to say, and how we will say it. I can tell you, as a French citizen and a former French Foreign Affairs Minister, that I know one thing for sure: none of us will be at that table, regardless of all our past diplomacy or our economic importance. None of us will be at the table of great powers organising the world order or disorder unless we are there as Europeans. I am sure about that. So the question for us is not whether globalisation is a good thing or a bad thing, but whether we will be masters of our own destiny, whether we will be globalisation actors or spectators.

If I had to make a few recommendations about what we need to do between now and 2008-2009, because the next 2 or 3 years will be crucial, in my view, I would say that to revive the European project and get it back on track, we need to do the following.

First of all, we need to use the tools currently available to us to push on with practical projects that will prove to ordinary people that there are reasons why we should be together. This is true of energy, controlling immigration and probably other areas such as education and civil defence, for instance.

Secondly, we need to carry on playing our geopolitical role, as we do today when there are crises or difficult negotiations, such as with Iran and the crisis in Lebanon. The Council Secretary-General, with the tools currently available to him, the Commission with its huge resources, and the ministers are working together to ensure the

Europe plays its political role in combating major threats such as terrorism or in dealing with crises. This was what we tried to do together, fairly successfully, in the recent crisis in Lebanon.

Thirdly, we need to discuss a number of issues that ordinary people expect us to deal with. I am thinking here of something that people in our countries want us to discuss and that we will in any event have to consider, which is the geographical limits of the European project, to prevent people from having the impression that things are out of control and no-one knows how it will all end.

Fourthly, we need to revive the institutional process. I think that the text of the Constitution was the best we could hope for, given that there are 27 countries around the table, and we know that it cannot come into force because of the French and Dutch rejection. This is the position in reality, and we have to deal with it. The idea of going back to the drawing board in 2007 - the German Presidency could restart the debate on a simpler, more practical treaty dealing with the operation of the European Union and incorporating Part I of the text of the Constitution, which was the least controversial, plus foreign policy, defence and the Charter - appears entirely possible, as does the idea that we should set ourselves the target of producing a simple treaty for the successful operation of the European Union within one year, starting in June 2007.

My last recommendation would be that we should try - and this is where our party and our movement have an important role to play - to create a single European public debate, rather than 27 national debates alongside each other. The European elections will be an opportunity to launch this large-scale public debate in Europe, if we want to.

I am sure that we need to do everything I have just mentioned and probably more besides, because otherwise I am convinced that everything we have achieved over the last 50 years, starting with the Single Market, will be undermined. Being a global player means that we must have an economy that works (the single market is already in place), a currency (which not everyone has adopted yet), and political capability in the field of foreign and defence policy.

I think we need to give ourselves the resources required to revive the construction of this political dimension, otherwise everything else, everything we have achieved, will be undermined.

I am quite worried about this, particularly when we see the rise of a number of populist movements in many countries, including France, which are the first to threaten to 'unravel' the European project.