

Manifesto for the democratization of Europe

We, European citizens, from different backgrounds and countries, are today launching this appeal for the in-depth transformation of the European institutions and policies. This Manifesto contains concrete proposals, in particular a project for a Democratization Treaty and a Budget Project which can be adopted and applied as it stands by the countries who so wish, with no single country being able to block those who want to advance. It can be signed on-line (www.tdem.eu) by all European citizens who identify with it. It can be amended and improved by any political movement.

Following Brexit and the election of anti-European governments at the head of several member countries, it is no longer possible to continue as before. We cannot simply wait for the next departures, or further dismantling without making fundamental changes to present-day Europe.

Today, our continent is caught between political movements whose programme is confined to hunting down foreigners and refugees, a programme which they have now begun to put into action, on one hand. On the other, we have parties which claim to be European but which in reality continue to consider that hard core liberalism and the spread of competition to all (States, firms, territories and individuals) are enough to define a political project. They in no way recognise that it is precisely this lack of social ambition which leads to the feeling of abandonment.

There are some social and political movements which do attempt to end this fatal dialogue by moving in the direction of a new political, social and environmental foundation for Europe. After a decade of economic crisis there is no lack of these specifically European critical situations: structural under-investment in the public sector, particularly in the fields of training and research, a rise in social inequality, acceleration of global warming and a crisis in the reception of migrants and refugees. But these movements often have difficulty in formulating an alternative project, and in describing precisely how they would like to organise the Europe of the future and the decision-making infrastructure specific to it.

We, European citizens, by publishing this Manifesto, Treaty and Budget, are making specific proposals publicly available to all. They are not perfect, but they do have the merit of existing. The public can access them and improve them. They are based on a simple conviction. Europe must build an original model to ensure the fair and lasting social development of its citizens. The only way to convince them is to abandon vague and theoretical promises. If Europe wants to restore solidarity with its citizens it can only do so by providing concrete proof that it is capable of establishing cooperation between Europeans and by making those who have gained from globalisation contribute to the financing of the public goods which are cruelly lacking in Europe today. This means making large firms contribute more than small and

medium businesses, and the richest taxpayers paying more than poorer taxpayers. This is not the case today.

Our proposals are based on the creation of a Budget for democratization which would be debated and voted by a sovereign European Assembly. This will at last enable Europe to equip itself with a public institution which is both capable of dealing with crises in Europe immediately and of producing a set of fundamental public and social goods and services in the framework of a lasting and solidarity-based economy. In this way, the promise made as far back as the Treaty of Rome of 'improving living and working conditions' will finally become meaningful.

This Budget, if the European Assembly so desires, will be financed by four major European taxes, the tangible markers of this European solidarity. These will apply to the profits of major firms, the top incomes (over 200,000 Euros per annum), the highest wealth owners (over 1 million Euros) and the carbon emissions (with a minimum price of 30 Euros per tonne). If it is fixed at 4% of GDP, as we propose, this budget could finance research, training and the European universities, an ambitious investment programme to transform our model of economic growth, the financing of the reception and integration of migrants and the support of those involved in operating the transformation. It could also give some budgetary leeway to member States to reduce the regressive taxation which weighs on salaries or consumption.

The issue here is not one of creating a 'Transfer payments Europe' which would endeavour to take money from the 'virtuous' countries to give it to those who are less so. The project for a Treaty of Democratization (www.tdem.eu) states this explicitly by limiting the gap between expenditure deducted and income paid by a country to a threshold of 0.1% of its GDP. This threshold can be raised in case there is a consensus to do so, but the real issue is elsewhere: it is primarily a question of reducing the inequality *within* the different countries and of investing in the future of *all* Europeans, beginning of course with the youngest amongst them, with no *single* country having preference. This computation does exclude spending that benefit equally to all countries, such as policies to curb global warming. Because it will finance European public goods benefiting all countries, the Budget for democratization will de facto also foster convergence between countries.

Because we must act quickly but we must also get Europe out of the present technocratic impasse, we propose the creation of a European Assembly. This will enable these new European taxes to be debated and voted as also the budget for democratization. This European Assembly can be created without changing the existing European treaties.

This European Assembly would of course have to communicate with the present decision-making institutions (in particular the Eurogroup in which the Ministers for Finance in the Euro zone meet informally every month). But, in cases of disagreement, the Assembly would have the *final word*. If not, its

capacity to be a locus for a new *transnational, political space* where parties, social movements and NGOs would finally be able to express themselves, would be compromised. Equally its actual effectiveness, since the issue is one of finally extricating Europe from the eternal inertia of inter-governmental negotiations, would be at stake. We should bear in mind that the rule of fiscal unanimity in force in the European Union has for years blocked the adoption of any European tax and sustains the eternal evasion into fiscal dumping by the rich and most mobile, a practice which continues to this day despite all the speeches. This will go on if other decision-making rules are not set up.

Given that this European Assembly will have the ability to adopt taxes and to enter the very core of the democratic, fiscal and social compact of Member states, it is important to truly involve national and European parliamentarians. By granting national elected members a central role, the national, parliamentary elections will de facto be transformed into European elections. National elected members will no longer be able to simply shift responsibility on to Brussels and will have no other option than to explain to the voters the projects and budgets which they intend to defend in the European Assembly. By bringing together the national and European parliamentarians in one single Assembly, habits of co-governance will be created which at the moment only exist between heads of state and ministers of finance.

This is why we propose, in the Democratization Treaty available on-line (www.tdem.eu), that 80% of the members of the European Assembly should be from members of the national parliaments of the countries which sign the Treaty (in proportion to the population of the countries and the political groups), and 20% from the present European parliament (in proportion to the political groups). This choice merits further discussion. In particular, our project could also function with a lower proportion of national parliamentarians (for instance 50%). But in our opinion, an excessive reduction of this proportion might detract from the legitimacy of the European Assembly in involving all European citizens in the direction of a new social and fiscal pact, and conflicts of democratic legitimacy between national and European elections could rapidly undermine the project.

We now have to act quickly. While it would be desirable for all the European Union countries to join in this project without delay, and while it would be preferable that the four largest countries in the Euro zone (which together represent over 70% of the GNP and the population in the zone) adopt it at the outset, the project in its totality has been designed for it to be legally and economically adopted and applied by any sub-set of countries who wish to do so. This point is important because it enables countries and political movements who so desire to demonstrate their willingness to make very specific progress by adopting this project, or an improved version, right now. We call on every man and woman to assume his or her responsibilities and participate in a detailed and constructive discussion for the future of Europe.