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Ressort: Politik

Rome Summit of 25 March 2017 and EU

Rome, 20.03.2017 [ENA]

The European Union is a constitutional system based on the rule of law and in case the Treaties must be changed the European Court of Justice (ECJ) has the jurisdiction over all aspects of EU law, in particular common foreign and security policy (Article 24(1) Treaty of the European Union) and monetary and economic policy (Article 126(10) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union).

The need for a true reform of the Union has been dramatically increased by the United Kingdom's decision, through a referendum, to leave the "Community". It is clear that the negotiations to set out the arrangements for the UK's withdrawal also require to take into account the framework for its future relationships with the Union. This agreement must be negotiated in accordance with Article 218(3) Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (2007) and be concluded on behalf of the Union by the Council, acting by a qualified majority, after obtaining the consent of the European Parliament.

According to ANSA Agency Italian Premier Paolo Gentiloni said on 17th of March that it was time to stand up for the European Union. "If we don't defend the values of Europe today, we'll regret it," Gentiloni declared in the Senate as he addressed speakers of European parliaments ahead of the March 25 summit in the capital to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Treaties of Rome. He added that having a multi-speed EU must not be a source of division. "Going forward (on integration) does not entail choosing to exclude someone," he said. Italy will not accept a choice between Europe of the east and Europe of the west, of a first-tier Europe or a second-tier one".

The European Commission presented on 1st March 2017 a White Paper on the Future of Europe, which forms the Commission's contribution to the Rome Summit of 25 March 2017. According to the introduction of the White Paper the Idea of Europe took off with the vision of Altiero Spinelli and Ernesto Rossi, political prisoners locked up by a fascist regime on the isle of Ventotene during the Second World War. Their manifesto For a Free and United Europe painted a picture of a place in which allies and adversaries would come together to ensure that the "old absurdities" of Europe would never return.

"Sixty years ago, inspired by that dream of a peaceful, shared future, the EU's founding members embarked on a unique and ambitious journey of European integration. They agreed to settle their conflicts around a table rather than in battlefields. They replaced the use of armed forces by the force of law. They opened up the path for other countries to join, reuniting Europe and making us stronger."

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The White Paper on the future of Europe has the ambition to contribute to the debate on the future strategy and direction of the integration process. The road map announced by the Commission sets out five scenarios, each offering a glimpse into the potential state of the Union by 2025 depending on the choices Europe will make.

In fact if the definition of the new European Union targets (EU) moves from the premises posed by the Commission document, the horizon is a period of deep frustration of the ideals and values on which the common European edifice was built. The white paper seems insufficient compared to the far-sighted goal of stimulus and reflection that it arises.

First, on the political front, it outlines a gloomy and uncertain panorama, with respect to which the ambition of "an ever closer union among the peoples of Europe" announced in the preamble seems relegated to a naive dream.

However, never before, in the presence of its ups and downs - even after the failure of the draft Constitutional Treaty in 2005 - the common European path has met today's political inability to react to current events. Multilevel mistakes have been made by a short-sighted generation of national leaders with a European Commission devoid of authority.

Recent Commission documents denote how, in recent years, a confused policy has accompanied the silence of the law. Traditionally, thanks to the efforts of the Commission and to the regulatory law of the Court of Justice, the law has been a powerful force for integration but, eventually, it became a refugium peccatorum for the difficulties of politics.

The current moment denotes a sort of abdication of legal technique. Again, the Commission is not exclusively responsible but has given a pivotal contribution to what has been called a disintegration through law. That is a radical distortion of the positive and proactive role always played by the law. On the other hand the EU budget is based mainly on national contributions rather than on genuine own resources as provided for in European treaties since the Treaty of Rome.

Consequently, the debate on expenditure in the Council revolves around net receipts rather than European added value and around 'juste retour' rather than the imperative of solidarity as prescribed by the preambles of the TFEU. The Council ought to return to the letter and spirit of the Treaties and establish a system of genuine own resources that would be clear, simple and fair, and which would improve the visibility and efficiency of the EU budget while alleviating pressure on national budgets. This seems to be the State of the art on the eve of Rome Summit of 25 March 2017.

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