



European
Commission

Jean Monnet Seminar "The future of Europe: a commitment for You(th)"

Rome, 23–24 March 2017

Education and
Training

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Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture

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General report

The Jean Monnet Seminar "**The future of Europe: a commitment for You(th)**" was held in Rome on 23-24 March on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the Rome treaties.

The seminar debated the future of the EU in the light of the current challenges (migration crisis, Brexit, recent and forthcoming elections in Member States, etc.) and the need to further involve young generations in the construction of the European project. The theme of communication was central in the discussion, notably the role of media in portraying Europe, as well as the contribution of academia in teaching and explaining Europe. The focus was on the challenge of reaching the most difficult-to-reach citizens, and helping them make sense of the EU in a balanced and objective way. Speakers and participants expressed views on the way forward for Europe, taking into account the recent release of the Commission's White Book and its five scenarios, with particular focus on the "Those who want more do more" option. Possible methods for the reform of the EU were debated and proposals formulated.

127 participants attended the Jean Monnet Geo-Thematic Seminar, including 94 Jean Monnet professors and 33 international and national level policy makers, journalists, civil society and youth association representatives and students. 40 different nationalities were represented (24 EU + 5 Western Balkans, Turkey, 3 Neighbours and 7 from rest of the world).

The seminar languages were English, French and Italian. Web-stream (23 March – 323 viewers, 24 March – 311 viewers) and twitter (117 mentions of the #EU60JeanMonnet hashtag on social media) allowed for broader and active distance participation. European youth original tweets were seen by 23096 with 332 engagements. The European youth Facebook post on the event reached 5273. Very good logistic support was provided by the event organiser Cecoforma.

The Jean Monnet Seminar featured high in the list of the 60-year events held in Rome in the anniversary week, next to the Digital Day organised by DG Connect and the Citizens Dialogue organised by DG Communication. The success of the Jean Monnet Seminar was due also to the positive cooperation with DG Communication, the support and information dissemination by the European Commission Representation in Rome and the direct link with the Citizens Dialogue. Useful was also the cooperation with the Italian and French European Movements, which secured participation of institutional high level representatives and professional moderators. Interinstitutional presence was assured by participation of representatives from the European Parliament and the European Council. Youth was represented by the Erasmus+ Student and Alumni Association (ESAA), the European Voluntary Service and a Jean Monnet project run by a group of international students. Culture was represented by the President of Europe Nostra and an internationally renowned novelist. Presence from non-EU countries' speakers was assured by an American keynote speaker and a Japanese Professor. Overall the seminar offered a very varied panorama that ensured a multiplicity of views and perspectives.

Immediately after the Jean Monnet Seminar, all participants moved to the Citizens Dialogue where High Representative Vice-President Federiga Mogherini and Prime Minister of Malta Joseph Muscat met with an audience composed of some 300 people (Erasmus students and

Jean Monnet professors) and replied to their questions for one hour and half. Most questions came from young people, concerned about their future perspectives in a critical time for Europe. This event represented the link between the 60-year anniversary and the 30-year anniversary of the Erasmus programme. Some of the Jean Monnet Seminar participants also attended other events on 24 March, such as the big kermesse "Changing course to Europe" at Sapienza University, where policy-makers (Romano Prodi among many others), European Institution representatives (President of Committee of Regions Markku Markkula, Parliament Member Jo Leinen, etc.), cultural actors and youth representatives met together to discuss and celebrate Europe. On 25 March (in parallel to the holding of the EU27 Summit where the Rome declaration was signed) a pro-Europe march (organised by European and Federalist movements) took place with some 5000 participants, among which President Mario Monti, Parliament Member Sylvie Goulard and some Jean Monnet professors. At the same time other anti-European marches also took place.

Main messages and conclusions from sessions

Welcome remarks

Marcella Zaccagnino, representing the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, opened the seminar presenting the main features of the Rome Declaration, highlighting its main goals (to support a safe and secure Europe, a prosperous and sustainable Europe, a social Europe and a stronger Europe on the global scene), as well as the shared political will to relaunch the European integration project, even in a complex and uncertain situation.

Mikel Landabaso Alvarez, Director of Directorate Strategy and Corporate Communication at the European Commission, DG Communication, focussed his intervention on the scenarios sketched in the White Paper on the Future of Europe. He recalled that the Commission did not dictate or try to persuade, but launched a debate, engaging to listen to citizens and will take it from there to offer an alternative for a way forward united at 27. Furthermore, he highlighted the crucial role of youth and academia, recalling that surveys say that these categories want more Europe.

Pier Virgilio Dastoli, President of the Italian Council of the European Movement, stated that a reform of the EU system would require extensive preparatory work and continuous, genuine and open-ended dialogue with citizens, associations representing civil society and European political forces (also engaging in debate with Eurosceptic and other critics of the European project). Universities might make an ideal setting for this debate. He expressed the view that the goal of reform must be the creation of a European federation that isn't a super-State but rather a federal Community. To do that a new Treaty is required.

Round table discussion "The future of Europe"

Participants in the Round table were **Renaud Dehousse**, President of the European University Institute, **Sneška Quaedvlieg-Mihailović**, Secretary-General of Europa Nostra, and **Stefano Maullu**, Vice-Chair of the Committee on Culture and Education at the European Parliament. The session was moderated by **Eric Jozsef**, Italian correspondent for Libération and Swiss Le Temps.

Stefano Maullu underlined the crucial role of education, training and culture to overcome the political and identity crisis of the EU. There is a need to work together to achieve shared priorities under the Europe 2020 Strategy for Education and Training and contribute to the fight against radicalism. He highlighted the role of the European Parliament to strengthen the Erasmus+ program (but there is still much to be done to extend it to the largest possible number of recipients), to support the "Learning Europe at School" project and introduce civic education into school curricula, and to foster intercultural dialogue. He also expressed disappointment vis-à-vis the lack of ambition of the White Paper and the complete lack of references to culture and education therein, whereas they should be considered as catalysts for growth and development.

According to **Renaud Dehousse** the 60th anniversary should not only be an occasion for the celebration of a glorious past, but an opportunity to reflect on what should be the way forward. Ongoing crises have accentuated the differences and disagreements between states, but the EU has not yet been able to provide common responses (notably to the migration issue). The challenge for the EU is now to ensure that the voice of people count more. The rise of populist movements shows us that there is a strong criticism to the "government by elites" model. More attention should therefore be paid to the concrete concerns of citizens.

Sneška Quaedvlieg-Mihailović stated that culture plays an essential role in society, and that cultural dialogue between the citizens of Europe is a key element to continued support of the European project. She advocated and supported policies and programmes that aim to preserve cultural heritage and that foster the understanding of other people's cultures. Europa Nostra closely cooperate with the UN and UNESCO, the EU and the Council of Europe.

Keynote speech "Communicating Europe: Observations from an American Believer"

In his keynote speech **Anthony L. Gardner**, outgoing US Ambassador to the EU, focused on how the EU institutions should communicate their contribution to improving the lives of ordinary citizens and gave very concrete examples of key messages to be disseminated.

Europe cannot inspire a sense of solidarity with a defensive narrative; it needs to offer a vision that can inspire, because visions are essential to justify sacrifice for the greater good.

If Member State leaders perpetually denigrate the European project in the eyes of European citizens, the feeling of solidarity – the essential glue that keeps the project together – is at risk of evaporating.

Communicating Europe, even to its own citizens, requires a sense of shared identity. Even in the US it was necessary to invent a sense of solidarity, not based on race or religion, but rather on the ideas and ideals embodied in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. It has taken time for the US to build common institutions.

Europe can make a stronger case to Europe's youth that may take peace for granted. The case should focus on what youth cares about: choice (including how they communicate and what content they watch or listen to), opportunities to study and travel, and pride in Europe's regional and international role.

The 60th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome should be an opportunity to reflect as to why Europe has a hard time communicating its role and importance to citizens. The White Paper on the Future of Europe identifies the problem that the EU's positive role in daily life is not well publicized enough.

There are several key messages about the EU's contribution that should resonate widely, notably: (1) the single market has resulted in wider choice and higher quality for goods and services; (2) the EU has made possible free movement of people for work, leisure and study, including passport free travel and an extremely successful Erasmus program; (3) the EU has been a leading actor on climate change and environmental policies; (4) the EU has improved food safety and consumer protection. It has liberalized EU telecom markets, leading to higher quality services; (5) in many areas the EU acts as a "force multiplier" – enhancing the ability of individual Member States to achieve important goals (in global trade, In development assistance and humanitarian aid, n energy security). All these, and many others, are powerful and valuable messages that deserve a wide audience.

In summary, there has never been a more urgent time for the EU institutions to reinforce positive messages about the EU's contributions. The EU institutions should not expect the Member States to be active partners in this objective. Therefore, they should continue to refine the messages that the public will find most relevant to their lives, and to identify new ways of delivering those messages.

Introduction to "day 2 working groups"

Eva Giovannini, Italian RAI journalist, moderated three inter-generational mini-dialogues, each of them devoted to one of the themes of day 2 working groups.

In the first mini-dialogue **Ken Endō**, Professor of International Politics at Hokkaido University, Sapporo and **Nicolas Moës**, from the Jean Monnet project "European Horizons" discussed possible methods for the reform of the EU. **Endō's** view was that the varying degrees of commitment for integration, governance capability and shared values make it highly unlikely for an entire EU-27 to centralise its power in Brussels. The only viable way forward, as is being pursued by Benelux, Germany, France, and Spain, would be to form an inner circle, subject to the electoral outcomes. Endo also made a concrete proposal to create a pan-EU Fund to pool resources into certain areas (medical, housing and educational services) in regions where the immigrant population exceeds 5% of local populations, so as to soothe difficulties (and dissatisfactions) on the part of localities. **Moës** started by trying to identify the reasons why some young people care for Europe more than others. He stressed the need for the EU to play a proactive role in establishing systematic communication channels with other constituencies that do not spontaneously reach out to EU policy-makers. He also proposed systematically listening to the recommendations of young Eurosceptics and reflecting upon the validity of their criticisms without the isolationist touch often associated with the EU debate. This would assure richer and more sustainable reforms.

In the second mini-dialogue **Jörg Monar**, President of the College of Europe, and **Ecem Oskay**, from the Erasmus+ Student and Alumni Association (ESAA) debated the role of citizens, academia and young people in the construction of the future European Union. **Monar** highlighted the need of multi-dimensional multi-stakeholder national action plans on communicating the benefits of the EU, regular reporting on the results of these action plans, best practice identification, and the naming and shaming of national governments failing to engage in this effort. Speaking of academia, he stressed that academics with expertise on the EU should feel a responsibility to make this expertise available to help attaining European objectives which are aimed at increasing common goods for European citizens. On a broader level, he underlined that the national identity formation transmitted at both nursery and primary school level should include a European complement as part of the national identity to help immunising young Europeans against any attempts they may encounter later in their lives to convince them that their national identity is incompatible with or even opposed to a European one. **Oskay** referred to the 30th anniversary of Erasmus as an inspiration to change the traditional European narrative, which opens Europe to other regions worldwide. The refugee crisis has become one the most divisive issues in the EU. It is an important reminder that we need to foster tolerance, non-discrimination and anti-racism as European values to prevent further division. Bringing in more international students from across the world into cities that traditionally have not received many people from other nationalities is a start. The internationalization of higher education is not simply an ivory tower endeavour but also involves local communities. Projects funded by ESAA try to empower international students and alumni to get involved in a range of social causes (environment, social justice, diversity), even outside their university context.

In the third mini-dialogue **Emmi Itäranta**, novelist and journalist, and **Olena Kryvunda**, beneficiary of the European Voluntary Service (EVS), discussed how to communicate Europe and reach the 'hard-to-reach'. **Itäranta** claimed that reaching a new generation of European citizens requires focusing on matters that are of interest to them and will have a large impact on their lives. These include environmental issues (climate change), freedom of movement (particularly studying and working abroad) and intense investment in media reading skills and education. Social media and the internet are natural communication tools for most people who have reached adulthood since the late 20th century. Therefore it is particularly important to develop a critical and responsible understanding of their inherent potential for manipulating opinion. Moreover a code of conduct in online journalism is necessary to tackle spreading misinformation that has the potential to influence elections. If we give up on truth, the only thing left will be an endless chaos of confusion where no one is accountable for anything. Avoiding this is essential if we are to protect democracy and human rights. **Kryvunda** recalled the fundamental role of youth movements, volunteering and NGO services that engage with groups that are deemed 'hard to reach' and serve as useful lessons for society improvement and efficient communication within it. Programs like EVS work not only for the project duration but also cause long-term changes in society. Collective volunteering efforts make not only a positive change in the projects, but also causes major changes in home countries where volunteers bring experiences back home.

Working groups

Working Group 1 "What method for the reform of the European Union?" was moderated by **Yves Bertoncini**, President of the French Council of the European Movement and Director of Delors Institute. **Luiza Bialasiewicz**, Jean Monnet Professor of EU External Relations, reported the conclusions of the group back to the plenary.

This working group started by asking: 'what needs reforming?' Is it the institutional architecture of the Union? The ways in which it functions and develops policies? Or is it the policies themselves and the ways in which they are implemented? Are we focusing, then, on EU politics – or simply on its policies? Equally importantly, however, it also turned to the 'why' of the need for reform with a view to avoiding to risk of falling into a simplistic narrative of a 'Europe in crisis'. The issue was also raised whether the discussion should be necessarily bound by the White Paper and its proposed scenarios, or should it also go beyond it in the thinking of possible futures for the Union.

The group expressed a general sense of the need for some sort of reform, but specified in very different 'shades' – from fundamental and far-reaching, to incremental and (largely) invisible. A shared concern was that this is a delicate moment for reform proposals, albeit needed. A new '**constitutional moment**' is needed in order to re-align the EU to its intended purpose, and in line with its stated values and the rights and obligations enshrined in its treaties. General sense in the room was that now is not the time for a new treaty or a constitutional leap – but we do need to 'go further'

Challenges / Recommendations

- Among the most urgent challenges to be addressed by reform are (1) lack of legitimacy of the current system; (2) its lack of responsiveness; (3) the gap (or mismatch) between current institutional architectures and policy frameworks - and current challenges and needs. / **We should begin with 'what we already have': that is, beginning by making sure EU institutions deliver on what they actually claim they do (starting from Article 2).**
- How can we create truly transnational structures of political representation, truly European political parties? Voting for MEPs still proceeds through national party structures, and is largely bound to national concerns and needs. / **We must reflect on how (at least some) MEPs could be elected on a European basis and how to create fully European constituencies, to reach electors across national boundaries.**
- EU's external action and foreign policy have a crucial role in 'making Europe' and in creating a sense of common purpose. / **That sense should be translated into a common 'internal' purpose – or at least sustain a sense of a common identity and shared values (that are somehow easier to perceive in external action than in contested internal policies).**

Working Group 2 "Role of citizens, academia and young people in constructing the future EU" was moderated by **Brian Holmes**, Director at Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). **Maria Stoicheva**, Jean Monnet Professor and Deputy Rector of Sofia University, reported the conclusions of the group back to the plenary.

The workshop was divided into three parts, focusing respectively on the roles of citizens, academics and young people in constructing the future EU. The debate was launched from the premise that Europe cannot be constructed without the direct involvement of citizens and young people and that in the current period of crisis the active engagement of these groups is more important than ever. The following challenges were identified and recommendations formulated:

Challenges / Recommendations

- European citizenship is not perceived as a status and is not experienced as a potential producer of advantages (e.g. green card in the US gives clear benefits) / **The EU should clearly show/communicate the advantages/benefits of being a EU citizen through traditional media, social media and the digital environment.**
- Political elite does not sufficiently talk and promote the European level in the national public space / **There is a need to get beyond the elite and higher education actors and engage more with hard to reach groups, for instance further promoting the "European citizens' initiative".**
- Information/study about the EU comes too late in citizens' education / **Academia should share its expertise and extend its involvement to civil society and local**

communities, particularly children, pupils and young people. Need to introduce EU identity early in school parallel to national one as a priority subject to be closely monitored.

- Research too often remains within universities / **Additional work on communicating research and reach out to citizens is needed. For this purpose additional incentives should be provided.**
- There is a lack of communication between generations / **More talk with (rather than about) young people is necessary. Young people should be taken seriously. In order to do that we need a change of mind-set. Intergenerational interaction needs to be fostered. Young people should say where they want the EU to go.**
- Messages conveyed by EU are too often negative (a crisis after another) / **Turn crises into opportunities (e.g. use Brexit in a positive way in communication with EU citizens).**

Working Group 3 "Communicating Europe: how to reach the 'hard-to-reach'" was moderated by **Paul Reiderman**, Director for Media and Communication at Council of the European Union. **Deborah Reed-Danahay**, Jean Monnet Professor reported the conclusions of the group back to the plenary.

The introduction session on day 1 gave two different but mutually reinforcing avenues into the theme of the working group: respectively, the power of words and the power of lived experiences. At the outset it is necessary to distinguish between the **hard-to-reach** and the **hard-to-convince**. In a plural, open democracy we cannot expect the message of European integration to be universally accepted, but we have to work harder to ensure that it is more widely received and understood.

Challenges

Is the difficulty to reach a question of accessibility (language, platform, required education/knowledge)? Two big changes have intruded in these sixty years: the **transformation and digital disruption of the communication landscape**, and the **general decline in the trust of institutions**. One constant remains: apart from language differences, **audiences in different countries and generations consume information differently** (access to broadband internet, digital literacy, quality and reach of television and print news).

Recommendations

Faced with these challenges, **communicating Europe requires being present across the right range of channels**. It requires also to **work with trusted third parties as multipliers/mediators**. We must recognise that **humans are wired for storytelling and craft messages that resonate on an emotional level**. We need to be aware that the communication space has become polluted with propaganda and 'fake news'. In response we must persist with and **promote further a communication style that is authentic, open and honest**.

