



09/07/2020

Brussels

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Dear President of the European Council, Charles Michel,
Dear President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen,
Dear President of the European Parliament, David Sassoli,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Young European Federalists, a non-partisan political youth organisation active in more than 30 European countries. Today is dear to our organisation and the European Union alike, as today marks the 40th anniversary of the foundation of the 'Crocodile Club', the precursor of what is today known as the Spinelli Group in the European Parliament.

As you might know, this group of early federalist MEPs led by MEP Altiero Spinelli worked tirelessly in pursuit of a democratic and united Europe. Thanks to their committed work as directly elected European representatives, the European Parliament (1979-1984) drafted the "Treaty establishing a European Union", whose aim was to chart the path towards a Union equipped with a constitutional framework. This created great momentum at the time, as the Spinelli Treaty greatly influenced the Single European Act of 1986, for example. Unfortunately, however, the main call of the so-called 'Spinelli Treaty' remained unheeded: a symbol, today, of what Europe should have become, and did not.

Dear Presidents, the pain brought about by COVID-19 has created a similarly new and great momentum for Europe which is why I am writing you today: We believe it is your duty, as European leaders and institutions, to redefine and refound the Union in order to live up to the expectations of European citizens. Below I will outline a few points our organisation wants to convey to you.

Ahead of the next European Council meeting, taking place on 17-18 July, we - young Europeans who believe in a free, democratic and united Europe - urge you and European national leaders to take a bold step forward, bringing to life a brighter future for Europe. In these times of great crisis, the resilience of European institutions provided hope to European citizens. And yet, this is far from enough: the economic impact of the COVID-19 crisis is unprecedented. This crisis reveals, even more deeply than others in our lifetime before, the necessity to create democratic institutions able to govern globalisation in a world rife with supranational challenges, providing a model to pursue the common interest of European and global citizens, and to safeguard our common European values. In a word, the time is ripe for a federal Europe.

During the next European Council, you the European leaders have the responsibility to deliver a response that is proportionate to the magnitude of the challenges faced by our fellow Europeans. The Next Generation EU plan and the new Multiannual Financial Framework need to be established on firm grounds, with the full power of our common ambition. We understand there are reservations by some national leaders about the unprecedented size of the borrowing under Next Generation EU, or about increasing the EU budget's financial independence with the creation of genuine own resources. We urge you, however, to convey to these leaders a very simple message: exceptional times require exceptional measures. Today is the day when we establish the principle of "European financing of European public

goods". If we don't have the courage to take those necessary steps as Europeans, tomorrow's history books will not have forgotten us: they will remember us for making the gravest mistake of our generation.

Your historic responsibility and that of your fellow national leaders does not stop here. European citizens have said, time and time again, that the Union must be given the powers to respond to future crises and protect their well-being. Simply "listening" will not cut it this time. It is time that citizens, civil society, decision-makers discuss together, without reservation, of what direction the future of Europe should choose. This means discussing the sharing of competences between the EU, the Member States and local governments, including competencies in health, social and economic matters. Ultimately, this will mean re-thinking the very institutional architecture of the Union.

We call on you, with COVID-19 pushing Europe to its limits, for the adoption of an interinstitutional agreement on the Conference process, methods and aims before the summer break. The document should reflect the urgency to discuss and reform the European Union in the framework of the Conference, as the current institutional and legal framework is obsolete. Hence, the Conference should serve to take stock of such limits and improve the EU, by giving the Conference the tools to fulfil its ambition and potential, becoming a strong and decisive step towards a constituent assembly.

We call on your support for the necessary clarification on how the Conference will be implemented, as well as clarifying further the role of youth, civil society and citizens and how the Conference will be meaningful. It is crucial that the Conference has a clear political mandate and follow-up. The Institutions of the Union must commit to deliver legislative proposals on all policy recommendations adopted by the Conference, as well as Treaty changes if citizens deem relevant to do so, not precluding an ambitious outcome. Recalling the spirit of the Crocodile Club, we bank on the European Parliament to start this process should the other institutions not commit to act in this direction. Our engagement with European citizens needs to be genuine, with meaningful engagement and a feedback loop, otherwise you will fail again in the promise to renew the democratic pact between citizens and decision-makers in Europe.

We call on your historical responsibility to ensure that this exercise of true pan-European democracy is carried out in the most effective, inclusive and transparent way, to genuinely relaunch and realise the legacy and the spirit of the Crocodile Club towards a federal Europe.

Sincerely,

Leonie Martin