

## **SCHUMAN'S EUROPE AS THE SOLUTION TO THE ACTUAL CRISIS: FOR A MORE UNITED EUROPE**

Europe is going through its biggest crisis since the World War II due to COVID-19. Despite the fact that each Member State has taken measures to face the consequences of the health, economic and social emergencies within its borders, these have been uncoordinated and not very efficient to combat a pandemic that does not respect territorial borders. This pandemic highlights, once again, the need to equip the European Union with the necessary instruments to face transnational crises.

Current attempts to fight the virus have not been sufficient due to the lack of mechanisms for a true European leadership. As European civil society activists, we appeal to the spirit of the original project and advocate for a number of urgent and medium-long term measures to emerge from this crisis stronger, united and guaranteeing fundamental rights:

- The European Commission, asserting art. 168 TFEU, must coordinate a **strategy of de-confinement measures** and, if necessary, of a new confinement, based on the **principle of subsidiarity**. The European Union shall also promote a **health union** that reinforces the European pillar of social rights, enabling health to be a shared competence between the European Union and its Member States.
- **Closed borders in the Schengen area must be opened** as soon as possible to maintain the unity of the European Union and its internal market, **implementing measures of social distancing, hygiene and health care**.
- The European Union must guarantee **the search and distribution of a vaccine at a fair and affordable price**, establishing a European research consortium.
- Given the recent breaches of the Rule of Law, some during the current state of emergency, it is unavoidable to reinforce its protection by **introducing a Review Mechanism for democracy, the Rule of Law and fundamental rights**, as proposed by the European Parliament, reforming and overcoming the procedure provided for in Art. 7 TEU.
- European leaders must commit to making decisions based on the principles of solidarity, subsidiarity and diversity in accordance with the Treaties. Likewise, **they should not hinder the negotiations** to approve an economic recovery and social cohesion plan, nor appeal solely to national or partisan interests.
- The approval of the **Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027 (MFF)** that **contemplates the creation of a recovery and reconstruction** fund based on subsidies and loans is urgent to alleviate the socioeconomic consequences of this crisis. The maximum spending shall be, **at least, 1.3% of the Union's Gross National Income**, exceeding this figure during the recovery period.
- For this, it is essential to **increase the financial resources of the budget of the European Union** through existing instruments, the creation of new tax figures (tax on non-recyclable plastics, digital fees, tax on financial transactions, or a community reform on VAT) and the **issuance of joint debt instruments**.

- To guarantee correct functioning of the single market, it is essential to ensure the development of a **fiscal union** that facilitates the coordination of economic and fiscal policies among Member States and that avoids internal distortions on the one hand, and on the other hand, **a completed monetary union with macroeconomic stability instruments**. In this sense, **it is urgent to integrate the ESM into the legal framework community, contributing to a banking union**.
- It is necessary to establish a **permanent mechanism for direct citizen participation**, helping to close the gap between citizens and European institutions, **promoting empowerment of citizens** and the creation of a European identity.
- Finally, it is imperative that the European Council summons as soon as the circumstances allow, **the Conference on the Future of Europe**, whose proposals **drawn up together with citizens and organized civil society, inspire institutional reforms**. The European Union needs a **European Constitution** that completes the economic, social and political union, as well as the necessary instruments to become a global actor with a single voice.

On the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Schuman Declaration we recall the vision that the Founding Fathers of the European project had for Europe, based on the Rule of Law, democracy, solidarity between its peoples and respect for diversity as pillars for overcoming populisms and nationalisms and, therefore, the achievement of lasting peace. We are facing a crisis of great dimensions that we must turn into a historic opportunity because as Jean Monnet said: "Europe will be forged in crises, and will be the sum of the solutions adopted for those crises". We must continue building the European project; a project that inspires global governance and that allows us to continue establishing a space of peace, diversity and shared prosperity.

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