



Speech by Secretary General Christian Moos

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### **Federalists in exile**

Dear federalist friends!

We are convinced of our purpose. We fight for a true European Federation.

We need a federal Union. That is our claim. And we want it now or at least as soon as possible.

We call upon the European leaders to agree on a new Convention.

And to ensure broad representation and participation we ask for the inclusion of Europe's civil society, its NGOs and its citizens.

We still believe in the deepening of what has actually already started to fray at the ends.

We believe that we can stop the drift by quickening our pace.

Yet, we are witnessing a massive disaffection from the European idea, the very values we federalists share and cherish.

Undoubtedly, we have to hold on to our dream, but, having said this, we must realize what is really going on.

Let's face the hard truth:

A possible outcome of the series of crises, which we have seen since the fall of Lehman Brothers struck our European shores, is nothing less than the end of the European integration project as we know it.

The socio-economic decline in various European countries is so deep, I am afraid; it has the potential to erode the very foundations of our European house.

"The economy, stupid" was the winning slogan of the presidential elections in the USA back in 1992.

It is my firm belief that the future of the European Union largely depends on the simple truth expressed in these few words – "It's the economy, stupid."



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Unprecedented mass unemployment that strikes the young, above all, plus a continued economic decline undermine the legitimacy of the European project that is based and has always been based, first and foremost, on economic success.

The European integration process was centered on the establishment of the common market and the economic freedoms that constitute it and the welfare this engenders.

Hence, its acceptance depends on its performance.

Do we really believe we can build political union on these slippery grounds?

The idea of a political union is not new, and it has already died several deaths.

The birth of a political union was aborted even before the treaties of Rome, back in 1954, when the European defense community failed to obtain a majority in the French *Assemblée Nationale*.

The Monetary Union pursued in the early 1970s – this is an interesting point - was abandoned in the aftermath of the first oil crisis and the economic shock waves this triggered.

1999 we finally introduced the Euro, and 14 years later the European Central Bank has to pursue highly controversial policies introducing unorthodox measures to secure the Eurozone's survival or at least its integrity.

While all this is happening, mass unemployment and impoverishment are creating conditions for political turmoil at the ballots and on the streets and in the squares of our European cities.

As we watch the unfolding of this tragedy, we gather here, the last men and women standing, holding on to our true belief and developing far-reaching ideas on the creation of a new federal Union.

Yet, are we so wrong?

Well, it depends.

We are wrong if we ignore what is actually happening around us.

We are wrong if we believe we can achieve something gathering here happily chanting out gospels.

Does it make sense to preach to the converted?

We are enclosed in a nice room of the European Parliament, undisturbed by non-believers – are we out of touch with the outside world?



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Perhaps we are not wrong if we use this occasion to focus on what really needs to be done.

We need to redefine and redesign the European project in the light of its undeniable shortcomings.

We need to overcome the European Union's primary focus on the economy, we need to overcome the democratic deficit and we need to rebalance the division of powers between the levels of governance in Europe.

Europe needs to give its people a real electoral choice. And the European Parliament is key to this.

Now, what are the stakes?

The failure of the European project which is a real possibility today would mean the definite end of European freedom, wealth and well-being for generations to come.

If the European project does effectively fail we shall see failing states and societies in Europe.

To avoid this, it is not enough to go on asking for "more Europe", as it is a more intelligent, a more convincing Europe that we need.

It must be more democratic with a stronger European Parliament, a European government that depends on the European Parliament, and a much more effective involvement of the national chambers.

This new Europe must be less technocratic and more respectful of the division of powers that is essential for the inner balance of the European multi-level system.

But more than anything else we need more responsibility and more solidarity in Europe – one doesn't go without the other. Only then we can overcome the crisis.

The European idea will only have a prosperous future if it entails an authentic European vision of the Pursuit of happiness as it is laid down in the American Constitution and was expressed in the Declaration of Independence of the 13 states that were seeking to establish a federation.

I quote:

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. — That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, — That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to



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alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to affect their Safety and Happiness.”

War between the European nations may still be unthinkable but civil war, chaos and anarchy may reign where public order cannot be maintained in the face of lost generations out of work and without any hope for an improvement of their economic situation.

At present, the situation is continuing to deteriorate.

We may well have to survive in a sort of diaspora, in a federalist exile.

We may have to be patient and enduring until we see one day the realization of a federalist' European constitution.

But let us stop being naïve. The majority of Europeans in the present situation does not share our federalist dream.

What is required of us now is that we talk to the European citizens and we try to keep alive the ideals that are essential for the European integration.

A European Republic needs Republicans, the broad support of its citizens.

And we only get this if they have jobs and hope and security.

“The economy, stupid.”

Of course, our Union is based on much more than just the economy but the current unemployment crisis needs to be dealt with first.

The revolution must come from below, not from above.

Let us close our ranks but not our eyes.

Let us be aware of the difference between the world as it should be and as it really is.

Let us stop flying high on dreams and get down to earth, to the hard and strenuous labour of securing the European peace project.