



# BREXIT : A EUROPEAN FIASCO ?



« On turning their backs to the European Union, a majority of Britons have voted in favor of the death of a certain idea of Europe, Therefore, Europe will be compelled to reinvent itself.» (le Vif)

The Brexit amounts to a landslide, while China is definitely on the verge of becoming a world-power, whereas Russia is resuming its imperial ambitions and both Clinton and even Trump are going global.

The British exit into the land of no return is actually questioning the Union's democratic deficit that has been accepted for decades across the old continent. Basically, this Brexit is heralding the agony of a certain way of conceiving Europe. There is no denying that European federalism- one parliament, one government, less national sovereignty- is not everybody's cup of tea. Europe's postwar ideal is no longer shared by every single European, far from it. Europe happens to work as a scapegoat for all possible frustrations and deceptions.

The origins of the present fiasco are pretty obvious:

- a brutal approach of the public debt of some countries Greece, in particular.
- a chaotic response to a huge flux of refugees.
- an abyssal gap that has kept widening between the Brussels elites and the man on the street.



- the absence of a substantial leap forward.  
The consequences may be appalling:
- beyond the economic consequences this historic referendum is likely to affect Europe's political credibility.
- It will most probably lead to a *two speed Europe*
- Both the Union and the United Kingdom will lose dramatically in a process that is going to affect more specifically the young Europeans and the coming generations.

This Brexit doesn't only express the opinion of 51,9 % de Britons it reflects a widespread distrust towards the Union that stands for the tyranny of big business and austerity. A new European impetus is required to avoid a Dutch, Polish or French exit. If the same sort of referendum were to be organized in one of these countries it might very well result in the a similar fiasco. The European project has ceased to make us dream of a better future. Europe embodies for many the tyranny of the market, « Big Business », austerity and radical reforms such as: a more flexible labor market, less investment in the public sector, raising of taxes and the retirement age and all that sort of very unpopular thing. Put in a nutshell: the neoliberal creed that is so popular among the Brussels elite is clearly loathed by the man on the street.

## EUROPE DRAMATICALLY NEEDS A NEW START

In the 21st century sovereignty needs to be shared in order to tackle the challenges of the day and reconnect with the average European citizen and offer them an ambitious project.

The United Kingdom happens to be more divided than ever. The campaign was a ten-week horror show that exposed fault lines by age, region, class and education. *This was a campaign that revealed a Britain divided class against class, region against region, electorate against politicians, nativist against cosmopolitan, , rich against poor and London against the rest and most of all: old against the young*

*The Britons divide by generation. Two-thirds of voters under 35 want to stay in. Sixty per cent of those over 55 want to leave. We divide by class. People in the professions want to stay by 62 per cent to 38, while 63 per cent of unskilled workers want to leave. They divide by education. University graduates prefer staying to going by 70-30. It is incredibly sad that the young, successful, well-educated and cosmopolitan are now being held hostage by this vote. (The Times)*

The challenge that is awaiting the political class across Europe is now to address its citizens and look at them right in the eyes. Europe's political elite must talk to the Europeans. It is no use blaming its member states. Europe, i.e Brussels, must focus upon one single question:



how to reconnect with all those that are beguiled by extreme right as they feel Brussels political agenda falls short of their expectations. Euro-sceptics are in the lift all over. Even in France where Front National leader Marine Le Pen is expected to go through to the second round of the presidential election next year and has already called for a referendum on French membership of the EU. For that reason, Germans wanted to avoid making too many concessions to the UK that might give incentives for other states to follow suit.

The instinct of many pro-Europeans, in Germany and elsewhere, is now to push forward with further steps in integration among the core around the *eurozone* to demonstrate the resilience of the EU.

The sad reality, however, is that there is little appetite for further integration even in “core” Europe. The fear, though, is that the British decision to quit the EU has set in motion a dynamic of disintegration that is difficult to stop. The problem now is no longer to argue about the past but to face the future in a completely new situation.

The question is what are leaders going to say to their citizens and how are they going to say it. They simply can no more get away from it; no single government can.

It is time for a new European project; high time to come back to basics with all the achievements and benefits such as Erasmus , the freedom of circulation, the euro etc. Aren't we facing a formidable paradox with this massive rejection of Europe? When it comes to the burning issues of the day- climate, growth, social justice, immigration, security, terrorism, we must recognize that national states are doomed to fail to solve them on their own.

The Brexit is a vote against the establishment, an expression of general frustration.

Basically the younger generations are all seeking new perspectives.

#### BUT WHAT EXACTLY DO THEY WANT?

Young people need longtime goals and perspectives, not short-time orientated narrow-minded policymakers. Some polls reveal that 73% of the 18-24 year-olds, and 62% of the 25-34 have voted against the Brexit.

For Rosa, 18 no waffle, the Brexit voters have sacrificed a whole generation. *No member of my generation stood for it. The leave voters are the old. It won't change anything to their lives that is behind them. But our whole future is at stake.*

Moïse, a Paris Erasmus student in Cambridge: *Studying in Great Britain may soon become even less affordable. I was considering settling in the United Kingdom but I am thinking it over.*

Guy: *Opponents have been saturating the public space for more than a decade; it's time for a coalition of the young Europhiles.*



Richie Xavier, a 21 year old barman feels dispossessed of his future.

*It is unfair that the “oldies” should have spoken in our name. We don’t wish to offend anyone but we are expected to live longer than them.*

Terence Smith 19, Britain’s younger mair has voted “Remain”. *I’m still trying to realize what we are going to have to face. How to overcome this abyss between generations. Social networks are overflowing with bitterness and anger: “This vote speaks against the young generation that will have to cope with the consequences says Luke Tansley. The future of our country was decided by nostalgics of a past that has never existed and they have chosen a depressing future.*

Rebecca on @ReallyRew. *It is high time we turned the tide and forged a coalition for the Europhiles.*

“A ROADMAP FOR A NEW EUROPEAN RENAISSANCE! “

A bunch of 7members of the European Parliament led by the gallant Guy Verhofstadt (liberal) and the flamboyant **Dany Cohn Bendit** (green) have responded with a bold initiative in favor of a European Renaissance.

*Europeans need change now. The issue is clear: How to counteract economic and political, but also moral and cultural marginalization of Europe? Our challenge is to reconnect with disoriented and unsatisfied citizens to recast an influential Europe able to carry out a project for the future and hope for all; otherwise we will fade away. Without a new political momentum – designed with and for European citizens – we are facing the risk of a stronger rise of populism in Europe, the same that lead us to our quasi-annihilation. Although history may not repeat itself in the same way, the results would still be disastrous. A precondition for new dynamics is to acknowledge our common successes: The European Union is the political, economic and social entity, which is the most inclusive, the least unfair and the most democratic, peaceful and diverse the humankind has ever known. Keeping Europe’s values and regaining its role as source of progress for all, requires a comprehensive, ambitious and realistic strategy. Right now, we need a clear roadmap. EU institutions and all Member States should work on this, or at least a set of Member States around France and Germany. To restore a mutual trust and relaunch positive dynamics, we recommend six strategic initiatives.*

E.O.E.: A COALITION AND A ROAD MAP FOR YOUNG EUROPHILES

*The challenge is to reconnect with disoriented and unsatisfied citizens to recast an influential Europe able to carry out a project for the future and hope for all; otherwise we will fade away. That’s is exactly what Eyes of Europe’s ambition has been for the last twenty years. Most of all, Eyes of Europe feels concerned by the sixth point of this general appeal:*



a new “*Secondary school Erasmus*” that may gather all the young Europeans of one and the same generation. EoE has been pleading for that for nearly a generation now but nobody would listen, nobody would bother, nobody would invest. In those twenty years EoE could have forged a new generation of European citizens including the British and definitely avoid this weird *exitmania*. It is for the young to reactivate the European dream. It is therefore urgent to stimulate and train a generation of young critical and independent European citizens. Young European citizens who are on speaking terms with each other despite their differences, who keep in touch both virtually and physically in order that they may become a real public opinion based on a collective European identity. Eyes of Europe is willing to work towards the foundation of one common young European folk between the Atlantic to the Oural.

The Commission and the Brussels technocrats have smothered the European project. All attempts to forge a European Union with the sword have failed. It is now for the young to give life and force to the old European dream.

A new start is necessary, right now.

*Reinforcing European democracy is essential. How could we feel European without common citizenship values? Member States should implement a common civic and citizenship education program...*

*The sixth initiative is a “Secondary school Erasmus”. The issue here is a basic one: democratizing Erasmus and expanding cultural horizons of all young European citizens, in order to promote equality and common sense of belonging.*

*The European Union should be back in everyone’s hands, and should no longer be monopolised by those who wish to destroy it. We believe that only such a citizens’ movement will give our leaders the strength to act. We call for all citizens sharing the same conviction to join us. Let’s start together a great European dialogue on how the European Union could benefit all of us – right now!*

Eyes of Europe is actually based on exchange, an ambitious pan-European dialogue where young Europeans communicate in real time and on virtual terms, in English (or Globish) about the issues that express their deepest concerns in a way that has been widely explained on this website.

27.000 English expats live and work in Brussels. A majority of them are now considering adopting the Belgian or Irish nationality which simply proves that national identities are a purely theoretical concept. For the *crème de la crème* of the young Britons, imperial nostalgia is just crap for oldies. They feel and think European and cosmopolitan. It all comes down to a degree of education and Eyes of Europe is indeed battling for some new form of European education. EoE is an auto active didactic platform where teenagers learn from each other.

Brussel’s establishment is widely to blame for this through their failure to educate and explain what Europe is basically about.



A major European revival is impossible without vigorous and bold pan European common media and a common education system; ideally a combination of both.

It would be absurd to ignore that for the last twenty years fewer and fewer citizens have taken part in the elections across Europe due basically to a general decline in confidence towards politics especially among the young and the less educated.

There is obviously a steep decline in confidence towards policymakers offering neither vision nor direction. In some regions less than 30% of the young went to pole stations, which means that 7 out of ten are unwilling to vote.

Again, there is a clear link between poor education level and abstention.

Obviously, there is plenty of work ahead for Eyes of Europe to make them aware of their power and responsibility.

Eyes of Europe goes future.

## [MARC GUIOT](#)

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