According to philosopher Allan Janik, the feeling that the EU is being swept away by globalization feeds the notion that European democracy is faltering. Janik argues for a new public philosophy based on a consensual European attitude towards globalization. At present, Europeans have diverging views towards globalization, formed in part by their political history and economic situation. This needn't be viewed as an insurmountable hurdle, but rather as an occasion for rationale debate taking all views and interests into account. In "agreeing to disagree" Europe may develop its public philosophy towards globalization.
TOWARDS A NEW PHILOSOPHY FOR THE EU GLOBALIZATION AND POLITICAL CULTURES IN EUROPE

To the memory of Bronislaw Geremek
“We have created Europe. Now we have to create Europeans.”

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The concerns raised by globalization or the benefits that people believe can be derived from it vary considerably from one European Union Member State to the next.¹ This broad range of reactions can undoubtedly be explained by each country’s particular political history and current economic situation.

Nonetheless, the future of the European Union depends precisely upon the way in which Europeans are now responding to the transformations brought about by globalization. Will they emphasize a national approach to globalization or manage to implement a common, or at least concerted, strategy? We have established the European institutions, yet what remains to be created is European solidarity: the sort that exists between citizens of the same city or members of the same political entity.

In this essay, Allan Janik focuses on the conditions required for the emergence of this European solidarity, based on the premise that European democracy is taking far too long to materialize.

Indeed, it has been 25 years since the Treaty of Maastricht established European citizenship and a debate is still going on about what one might be tempted to call the EU’s “irreducible” democratic deficit.

What we are dealing with, however, is not so much a democratic deficit as it is a “civic deficit.” Several years ago, what might have

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been considered a lack of democratic representation has gradually, in the course of various treaties, been compensated for by successive measures such as the election of European MPs by universal suffrage, the strengthening of the European Parliament’s powers, the increased transparency of the European Council, etc. On the other hand, the Union’s persisting civic deficit is delaying European citizen participation in public decision-making through deliberation and consultation. Such deficit is not unique to Europe. It is the product of a shift in what citizens expect of their political representatives: they do not wish to simply cast their ballots, they also want to become more involved in deliberations that lead to policy decisions. The civic deficit experienced nationally is amplified on a European scale by the anonymity and remoteness of most European MPs from their constituents, the complexity of the distribution of powers between national and European levels and of the mechanisms of Community decision-making, as well the challenge of accurately identifying all interests at stake, etc. All of these factors constitute obstacles which citizens must overcome in managing to participate in European debates. For, beyond a mere exercise in making claims based on personal interests, participation consists of contributing to the preparation of policy decisions by means of a rational deliberation process that takes all interests into account.

To that must be added two more hurdles in constituting a European public space: first, the enlargement of the European Union, which increases the diversity of the Union’s viewpoints, political traditions and languages and, second, the dispersion of information sources. The mosaic of public spaces constituted by Europe as a whole is sustained by the dispersion of information spaces on television and on the Internet which can be accessed by all citizens. The reduced number of information sources and the resulting diversification of information processing to some extent lead to a dispersion of public debates, and therefore scarcely enhance the emergence of a common public space.
It is precisely at a time when Europeans are struggling to strengthen their cohesion and seem somewhat overwhelmed by this diversity that Allan Janik’s approach demonstrates its originality: diversity is not only an asset but, as he reminds us, a founding principle of political philosophy: there can be no consensus without initial discord and any democratic political experience consists of making it possible for a common good to emerge from the diversity of special interests.

Janik’s research thus draws inspiration from political philosophy in presenting an argument in favour of seeking a European consensus: it is only by managing to build a common public philosophy for meeting the globalization challenge that we will succeed in creating true Europeans.

Now that the debates preceding the June 2009 elections just a few months away, this instructive approach to the European deliberation process marks an excellent occasion to initiate a major public debate on the challenges of globalization in which all citizens can participate.

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Towards a New Philosophy for the EU. Globalization and Political Cultures in Europe
The deep, frequently anxiety-ridden concern with respect to globalization on the part of some Europeans should not let us lose sight of the fact that the very perceptions of this elusive and complex phenomenon can themselves paradoxically become occasions for growth and development for the European Union, especially with respect to overcoming the notorious “democracy deficit” within it. Those highly diverse perceptions of the implications of globalization are in fact revealing of the collective political climate, i.e., the state of political culture (Delmotte, 2007, 24-27), in Europe today. As such, they are a potential key to the development of European political culture and ultimately creating a moral basis for sustaining democratic values, a public philosophy (Murray, 1964, 23-24), as we shall call it, for transforming Europe positively. Properly viewed, European perceptions of the various problems presented by globalization —cultural and economic, diplomatic and environmental—contain critical clues with respect to the motive force for supplying a Europe often described as “stalled” with the jump-start that can help it regain its lost momentum in moving towards that “more perfect union” to which it is committed. Of course, this is a very wide field to straddle stretching from social and economic matters to political affairs and ultimately to philosophical issues; for it involves understanding 1) the political challenges currently confronting the European Union in connection with the notorious “democracy deficit”, 2) the challenges implicit in coming to grips with current perceptions of globalization in the various European lands, and 3) adequate responses to those challenges, i.e., the task of creating a “public philosophy” for Europe utilizing the perceptions of globalization in Europe as a point of departure. Europeans are in fact the big winners from globalization,
which is responsible for cheap imports, low inflation and equally low interest rates and although the data bear that out (The Economist, 1.3.2008, 3-5), they do not believe it. Today’s crisis in Europe is a crisis of belief.

The contention that Europe needs a public philosophy or, more simply, a moral basis for the renewal of political culture, is neither abstract nor esoteric; it boils down to this: the European Union must work to create confidence, which is, after all, a moral value, on the part of European citizens in the face of the challenges of globalization. That can be done by stimulating open debate about regulating it and therefore strengthening the fledgling European civil society in the individual lands. In fact, Europe’s notorious “democracy deficit” turns out to be more a “failure of democratic praxis in the public arena” (Ricard-Nihoul, 2008, 56). The need for a European public philosophy arises precisely to redress that failure and to restore ailing European democracy to health. Constructing a European political culture is a task that demands reciprocal action between Brussels and the national states. It has been remarked in the study Europeans and the Globalization Challenge (Fondation pour l’innovation politique, 2007, 47-51) that the organs of civil society, notably, churches, foundations, associations, think tanks, etc. have been remiss in creating constructive dialogue about the nature and scope of globalization. These organs should be supported and encouraged by national politicians to contribute to the formation of what we have termed a public philosophy in their nations, but it should be one which extends beyond their borders to embrace Europe. This also means embracing, rather than evading, conflicts about policies and values both at the political and at the philosophical level. Confronting genuine conflict is always difficult. However, we forget the admonitions of Ralf Dahrendorf at our peril: where there is real conflict, its destructive—and self-destructive—potential can only be mitigated by political dialogue. It is worth citing him directly here: “Conflict keeps societies open to change and prevents dogmatization of error.
Aversion to conflict is a basic trait of authoritarian political thought” (Dahrendorf, 1967, 184) and “the rationality of the liberal attitude to conflict comes ultimately from the fact that it alone does justice to the creativity of social antagonisms as motive forces of change... Wherever conflicts are suppressed as awkward obstacles to arbitrary rule, or declared abolished once and for all, these fallacies produce unexpected and uncontrollable responses of the suppressed forces” (Dahrendorf, 1967, 139-40). The problem of ignoring or suppressing conflict, then, is potentially calamitous and dialogue must proceed from the recognition of differences as the first step to channelling conflict. It is a matter of talking, a matter for a parliament. However, the European parliament is too far away from the citizens it represents. In order to grasp how it might be possible to transform discontent with globalization into constructive dialogue about the future of Europe we need to look at the discontents of European citizenry and, further, how our representatives in the European Union, the Europarlamentarians, can ameliorate those discontents. We must venture into political philosophy in order to understand what the requisite vital dialogue presupposes. This is a far cry from the sort of sociological studies that document the complexity of state of affairs in Europe and the degree of abstraction involved does not always make for easy reading but philosophy is necessary if we are to grasp the depth of the problems involved in producing a solidly founded political response to the challenges of globalization and the European Union’s “democracy deficit”.
Towards a New Philosophy for the EU. Globalization and Political Cultures in Europe
CITIZENS OF THE EUROPEAN COUNTRIES ARE OBVIOUSLY AWARE THAT THEY ARE EUROPEANS BUT MANY ARE RELUCTANT TO CONSIDER THEMSELVES EUROPEAN CITIZENS. THE EUROPEAN UNION LACKS A POLITICAL CULTURE IN WHICH ORDINARY EUROPEANS CAN THRIVE. GIVEN THE STATE OF EUROPE TODAY, THE PROJECT AT HAND IS REMINISCENT OF THE ONE THAT THE DANISH PHILOSOPHER SØREN KIERKEGAARD UNDERTOOK A CENTURY AND A HALF AGO. HE FOUND HIMSELF FACED WITH THE CHALLENGE OF MAKING AUTHENTIC CHRISTIANS OUT OF PEOPLE WHO WERE ALREADY NOMINALLY CHRISTIAN BUT DID NOT TAKE CHRISTIANITY SERIOUSLY. WE ARE SIMILARLY CHALLENGED TO MAKE EUROPEAN CITIZENS OUT OF PEOPLE WHO ARE ALREADY NOMINALLY EUROPEAN CITIZENS. THIS MEANS CREATING A POLITICAL CULTURE FOR—AND WITH—THEM. THE SPANISH THINKER JORGE SEMPRUN HAS PUT HIS FINGER SQUARELY ON THE PROBLEM THAT EUROPE MUST ADDRESS IN MAKING EUROPEAN CITIZENS OUT OF EUROPEANS, NAMELY, LEGITIMATION: HOW IS THE EUROPEAN UNION’S ENORMOUS POWER TO LEGISLATE TO BE LEGITIMATED BY THE EUROPEAN PEOPLE (SEMPRUN, 1992); WHEREAS THE AMERICAN PHILOSOPHER JOHN COURTNEY MURRAY, DRAWING UPON THE STRENGTHS OF THE SCHOLASTIC TRADITION OF NATURAL LAW IN POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY, HAS MUCH TO SAY ABOUT THE SOLUTION, NAMELY THE DEVELOPMENT OF A ROBUST CONSENSUS (MURRAY, 1964, 39-142). THESE THEMES SHALL FIGURE CENTRALLY IN THE DISCUSSION OF
the democracy deficit and the challenge to create a European public philosophy that follows.

For the most embittered opponents of globalization identification with Europe is simply impossible. “Hard” Eurosceptics, who oppose all forms of integration within the European Union, are not going to be interested in the matter from the start. However, that makes the task of convincing “soft” Eurosceptics, whose doubts rise from what they take to be European policy failures and inadequacies such as overly zealous implementation of neo-liberal economic measures, all the more imperative (Coman and Lacroix, 2007, 9-10). Where arguments may work we are obliged to advance them. Where they do not, as in the case of the “hard” Eurosceptics, opponents can only be “shown” that their position is untenable on the basis of the results that a genuinely European politics can accomplish (Ricard-Nihoul, 2008, 55). That is enormously difficult but it will be greatly facilitated if it is possible to convince “soft” Eurosceptics in sufficient numbers that the European Union is really transforming the Continent positively to make the “hard” sceptics want to take a second look. However, the Lisbon strategy foresees both a massive European Union investment for facilitating communication about what we can call a European civil society and further development of precisely the sort of reciprocal relationship between the individual national states and Brussels that our analysis suggests is necessary (Bell et. al, 2007, 67). This communication initiative has to be more than a matter of empty rhetoric; it must go to the core of the democratic idea and its realization in Europe today. It must tackle the most difficult questions in a trying time, for example, the difficulties that Europeans of all sorts have when coming to grips with globalization.

Soft Eurosceptics are reluctant to associate themselves with the European Union because they do not perceive themselves as being heard in Brussels. However, here we seem to have the same sort of projection of the national state of affairs upon the European Union
that is characteristic of perceptions of globalization. Lack of a sense of being represented in Brussels is a reflection of a sense that those citizens are not being represented in their native states. In fact it is a symptom of political alienation (to use an unfashionable but apt expression) and alienation leads to apathy. Voter apathy, long evident in the United States, seems to be spreading across Europe as participation in elections generally decreases and disgruntlement with public life, even with democracy itself rises (Libération, 2008). The corollary of the old political adage that all politics is local politics is that Euroscepticism begins at home. That is more reason why the national states and the European Union must shape their future more closely with one another. If the participation in elections for the European parliament is disastrously small, it is because dwindling participation in national elections indicates that large numbers of citizens consider themselves ignored in their own national capitals to the point of simply not being able to imagine that they might be heard in Brussels. In countries like France globalization presents source of disquietude about the adequacy of national governments to respond to it reinforced by the stereotyped picture that the disaffected intellectuals and populists present (Cautrès, 2007; cf. Rozenberg, 2007, Lacroix, 2007), which can just as easily lead to apathy and resignation as it can to radical mobilization against globalization and against the European Union itself. That superficial concept of globalization simply alienates many Europeans. That fact cannot simply be ignored. However, political alienation is not the sort of thing that changing a single policy line—or even many—can cure; it requires attention at the level of political culture (Coman and Lacroix, 2007, 12; Delmotte, 2007, 19-29). Identifying this deeper level is the first step to creating a European public philosophy.

So, if we are going to handle the issue at its roots as any inquiry into fundamental matters must, it is necessary to begin with some absolutely basic reflections on the state of European democracy. We should proceed from the consideration that the Europe which the
European Union is in the process of creating is an experiment, the biggest experiment that the world has ever known. We fail to reflect upon the fact that this political experiment that is Europe is not guaranteed to be successful. Nobody has had the courage to think the unthinkable, namely, what the failure of the European project of structuring the Union on the basis of a constitutional treaty would mean. However we might conceive it, the picture of a failed European Union would not be very pretty: insularity, protection, lack of tolerance, etc. would be its features. In all probability it would be as much a blow to the programs of the cosmopolitan “soft” Eurosceptics and opponents to globalization as it would be to the Union itself. In fact, such thoughts, ominous though they are, through their very remoteness, remind us of how much has been achieved in Europe in the last 50 years and how self-evident that success is to anyone who takes a deeper look. In any case, we do well to remember that there is no mechanism that assures success for the European project; Europeans must want to become European citizens for a genuine European identity to emerge. That means that they must make a political choice on the basis of intellectual—and moral—conviction. It is hard to see how the requisite conviction can come into existence on the basis of politics alone given the state of Europe today. That is why we need a public philosophy for Europe today: a European public philosophy should facilitate the development of the intellectual and moral conditions that themselves enable Europeans to become active European citizens.

The challenge to European politicians is to make the European Union politically desirable to the soft Eurosceptics. Successful regulation of even some of the problems surrounding globalization would certainly go a long way towards legitimating the European Union in the minds of the soft Eurosceptics. The latter have been worried that everything in Europe is getting to be too big and uncontrollable anyway. The rejection of the constitution in 2005 had more to do with such considerations than with the document itself.
(an unwieldy text that hardly anybody read in the first place). It is a highly significant fact about European politics today that matters of symbolism and prestige have more to do with the course of electoral politics than substantive policy issues. It is often difficult for citizens to know what their best interests are in the European Union; French attitudes to globalization present a particularly disturbing case in point; for opposition to globalization seems to be almost inversely proportional to the benefits that French society has from it (Cautrès, 2007, 198-199). This is the problem that both France and the European Union must confront. So there is a recognizably massive work of political persuasion to be done in aid of democratic renewal in Europe but it cannot be accomplished without institutional innovation at different levels.

The political unity which Europe is creating is clearly enough a democratic one but hardly transparently so. Lack of transparency in the European Union, allegedly the main concern of European citizens (Goldirova, 2008), undermines confidence in it. However, it is frequently overlooked by both politicians and social scientists that problems of confidence are as much moral problems as they are political and social ones: trust is a moral category. They are certainly not mere subjective psychological disturbances. We lose confidence in what is not reliable—or what seems so; moreover, reliability, especially in the public sphere, is a function of integrity. Lack of transparency creates the suspicion of lack of integrity and thus tends to undermine democracy. Democracy is something that citizens must want enough to work hard to obtain it. Democratic politicians must convince them in word and deed to want it and that implies engagement on behalf of the very quality of public life as well as sound policy-making. Democratic institutions (i.e., parliament, parties, elections etc.) alone do not make a democracy (Libération, 2008) as the fate of Central Europe in the Inter-War period demonstrates. We must breathe life into them. That is what the task of creating a public philosophy for Europe is all about.
Policy studies are vitally necessary for informing Europeans about the actual state of affairs in Europe and the world but they can by no stretch of the imagination move the recalcitrant to action. The “stalled” state of European development demands an exercise in democratic renewal. We need to reflect upon the state of political practices in terms of our political heritage, especially in connection with the intellectual and cultural values that are so obviously presupposed by European democracy as to be invisible in everyday political life, if we are to refresh our democratic values in Europe. So where we employ the weighty phrase “public philosophy” we are not talking about a particular political ideology or a body of theory but about a common trans-partisan strategy of creating an invigorating public discourse for the sake of strengthening the body politic as such. Such was the original visionary strategy of Walter Lippmann, who originally coined the phrase to describe such a strategy for responding to a crisis in American democracy fifty years ago, but the American origins of the notion should not blind us to its relevance for coping with a very different but very real crisis within European democracy today. (Lippmann, 1955; cf. Ceaser, 2000).

To reiterate: democracy is a political system with a moral basis. Tolerance, patience and integrity are personal qualities, virtues as 18th century republicans would say, upon which democracy is dependent. Moreover, democratic politicians, by the very nature of democracy, must also be moral teachers, whether they want it or not. The point is as simple as it is profound. Democracy too is always a project and that project can never be left unattended. There is much wisdom in the old adage that the price of freedom is eternal vigilance; the same is true of democracy. Nothing comes automatically. Many people tend to lose sight of that, especially among disgruntled intellectuals, who tend to forget that the truth of democracy resides in democratic practice, not in any theory of democracy (cf. Rozenberg, 2007). In any case, participation in the project is what confers an identity on the participants. The success of the project of producing a political culture
for a genuinely united Europe lies with the politicians. Politicians are the primary bearers of the public philosophy and as such they must be capable of stimulating concern for the state of public life. If they do not, who will?

**DEMOCRATIC PRACTICE AND THE EUROPEAN HERITAGE**

In order to rise to this challenge we need, among other things, to reconsider some neglected aspects of our European heritage. In our sometimes justified post-modern distrust of monolithic “big stories” about history and human nature we have tended to throw out the baby with the bath by forgetting history entirely and thus overlooking the latent resources within the European tradition itself. That tradition is richer and more resilient than many Europeans might think. The heritage springing from medieval Scholastic humanism with its notion of natural law and the notion of the common good, for example, is one particularly neglected storehouse of political resources for coping with post-modern problems. If it seems strange to hark back to Scholasticism and the middle ages in this respect, it should not. Florence Delmotte has eloquently argued that understanding the resistance against Europe and the project of creating a post-national integration requires the perspective of *la longue durée* (Delmotte, 2007, 20). To understand reluctance to transcending the national perspective it is necessary to understand its origins and the dynamics of its practice (*habitus social et politique*, Delmotte, 24ff.). Similarly, if we are to seek alternatives to political modernism, it is not entirely absurd to consider a pre-modern perspective on politics and culture. For the sceptical there are two things to reflect upon here. The first is the fact that Scholasticism forged Europe into a cultural unity between the 10th and the 13th century (Southern, 1995, 2001). Cultural achievements properly called European are, in a way, all based, however remotely, upon the Scholastic achievement in creating a cosmopolitan identity in Europe 1,000 years ago. The second is a concrete example of rediscovering what we have learned from the
medievals. In the course of trying to develop a critical framework for discussing the politics of waging war critically and rationally during the Vietnam conflict, Michael Walzer was driven back to the medieval concept of the Just War, which has been largely ignored since the Renaissance but is, nevertheless, highly relevant to a civilized attitude to that gruesome subject (Walzer, 2004). So it is anything but frivolous to suggest that we have something to learn from medieval political practices. Just War Theory is not the only thing that we have forgotten. The importance of the example as well as the clarity of the case that the history of Scholastic humanism presents justifies the lengthy digression that follows. Reconsidering the development of Europe’s medieval philosophical heritage, Scholastic humanism can provide us with some clues about what binds Europe together; for the context from which Scholasticism grew resembles that of today’s Europe in interesting ways. Thus, although the medieval world to which Scholasticism belongs may seem light years away from ours there are good reasons for reconsidering the achievement involved in Scholastic practice (we should bear in mind that it is the practice that interests us here, the theories of the Scholastics belong to another world from ours).

**SCHOLASTIC HUMANISM AND THE UNIFICATION OF EUROPE**

The Scholastic project arose after Europe had, for the most part, made itself secure from the external threats represented by, say, the Saracens and the Vikings. Security led to the accumulation of wealth through trade and a limited right to private property in Europe from around 1000. Growing wealth and complexity led to the need for new organizational procedures in law and administrations and for more sharply defined doctrines governing faith and practice in the whole of society. This placed new demands upon the educational system and led to the rise of the cathedral schools, from which Scholasticism takes its name. If the schools were the vehicles of initiation into this project, supplying the scholarly community with
the ability to master the spoken and written word, the courts were the scene of its application. Thus security and prosperity were not only presuppositions for cultural development but also a source of its very dynamics. *Mutatis mutandis* much of this is recognizable in European reality and aspirations today. We should bear in mind that the value of our comparison is to bring out the moral dimension of the project of creating a European identity today. With respect to its idealistic goals the Scholastic project could be considered strikingly modern despite its medieval religious context. It rested upon a vision of restoring to the earth the state of nature before the fall of humankind, to be attained on the basis of reason alone. Learning was the key to developing a logically coherent system out of all of what we know on the basis of evidence and employing that knowledge to transform the world. The schools provided a universal institutional framework employing the same textbooks and based upon formal logic as the single technique for dialogue and criticism. The common goal was an authoritative learned presentation of Christianity demanding the assent of the whole of society. Thus the goal of Scholastic humanism was to construct legitimate authority in intellectual—and legal—matters for Christendom as a whole. Interestingly, Gratian’s codification of canon law has been termed the “first masterpiece of Scholastic humanism”, (Southern, 195, 305).

Scholasticism properly refers to the method of logical analysis which would form the basis for constructing such a system. Rigorous debate in the schools actually played an analogous role to the one that parliamentary debates came to play at a later stage in the development of European society. Those debates were much more than mere hair-splitting as long as Scholasticism thrived. It is possible to speak of a medieval humanism dedicated to improving human life on the basis of the growth of knowledge. Commitment to the common good and the notion that knowledge was not the property of an elite but the result of collective critical thinking insured that these notions were not mere abstractions but the
very source of social and intellectual dynamism. Commitment to the common good, for example, made orthodoxy, not a matter of rigid dogmatism, but of collective commitment to pursuing a common goal. Thus self-disciplined subordination of individual goals to the common good of the scholarly community was the primary virtue of a scholar. What is perhaps of most importance for the builders—and critics—of today’s Europe is the fact that consciously cultivated values informed the Scholastic synthesis:

1. the notion that the world is systematically intelligible,
2. steadfast belief in the capacity of the human mind to grasp God’s plan as revealed in nature,
3. searching introspection as a source of knowledge and a mode of criticism (which provided protection against intellectual arrogance and vanity)
   and
4. the cultivation of friendship between master and pupil in the search for knowledge.

It requires surprisingly few adjustments today to make the comparison and contrast that is the point of this digression. Despite all the social, intellectual and technical differences between the medieval world and ours there is sufficient similarity with respect to the goals of collective aspiration to warrant suggesting that there is something to be learned from the values that formed Scholastic humanism in today’s secular efforts to understand and control Nature for the benefit of the human race. However, to have said that is not to have shown precisely what the tradition of Scholastic humanism has to offer those who would construct a European political identity today. The answer bears upon the Scholastic conception of the common good and consensus as well as on its importance for realizing the kind of pluralism that would enable critical spirits of all sorts to develop an identity as European citizens. What is the common good?
THE COMMON GOOD

It is difficult to do justice to the concept briefly. Perhaps the most useful way to explain this pre-modern view of society and politics that has such strong post-modern implications is to contrast it with a modernist view. We have two concepts here which do not merely present alternative visions but paradigms or “big stories”, adherence to which constitute the very social reality that they depict in practice. So it is easy to run the risk of caricature in a brief presentation like this. In any case, viewing political life from the perspective of the common good today entails an alternative way of thinking about the role of politics in human life.

According to the modernist view, from its origins in Nicoló Macchiavelli and Thomas Hobbes down to contemporary neo-liberalism, society is composed of individuals who are bearers of rights (MacIntyre, 1966, 121-145). Autonomy, equated with self-assertion and egoistic self-fulfilment, is taken to be the highest good and considered to be the most basic element in human nature. Society is the scene of a battle between competing individual interests within a legal space in which their rights clash in what Hobbes termed “a war of all against all”. All values and conventions are but masked forms of conflict. In such a society justice is little more than “the will of the stronger”. Conflict is the order of the day and compromise is the result of a primordial compromise for channelling the natural aggression of human beings, the “social contract”, according to which a minimal number of ground rules are established to prevent universal carnage are agreed upon, which in turn form the basis for determining what is just. Thus the contract becomes the paradigm for determining “rights” in society. The constitutional state (der Rechtsstaat) represents the ultimate form of communal development. Social life is, then, basically unnatural or at least only based upon loose bonds and developed at the expense of human nature, rather than growing out of it. In the best of cases, social ethics is a matter of securing
the greatest good for the greatest number under circumstances of unceasing social strife. The values of individuals, i.e., private ethics, are just that; their own business and their business alone. Inasmuch as all individuals strive to maximize their own autonomy conflicting sets of values and conceptions of the good life exist. Such conflicts can only be adjudicated on the basis of the law. When morality clashes with politics there is no way of adjudicating the issue beyond the law. From the moral point of view something like a civic cold war comes into existence on the basis of the social contract. Politics is something that individuals suffer. Civil society, the free association of individuals with common interests, comes into existence to mediate between individuals and the state. The primary value in civil society is civility or mutual respect across economic and moral differences. However, since the ensuing tolerance is fundamentally grafted on to the a-social nature of human individuals, civility remains a superficial value—an abstract obligation—in civil society. This is an ideal type or model of western society as it has come into existence over the last 500 years. The nation-state that emerged from the Treaty of Westphalia at the end of the 30 Years War in 1648 is thus the political incarnation of modernity.

The modern socio-political scenario of Hobbes and Machiavelli contrasts sharply with the pre-modern Scholastic picture of society and politics, which proceeds from establishing what it means for human beings to thrive, i.e., not simply to defeat an adversary in a struggle for survival, but to live well, to prevail as William Faulkner put it in his 1949 Nobel Prize address (Faulkner, 1950). However, it should be clear from the beginning that we are not discussing an ideal society; rather one that is rooted in the natural history of the kind of animal that a human being is, not in mere social conventions. This simply means that social life (including its political dimension) is something natural and normal for human beings. Human beings need each other both materially and spiritually. Ethics and politics grow out of their natural needs, which, as speaking and thinking beings, are more
than merely material, and thus entail subordinating the good of the individual (i.e., material advantage) to the good of the community (socio-cultural advantage). On this account, the picture of “society” as the proverbial war of all against all is a hideous caricature. Human beings are more than mere individuals striving to satisfy basic needs. They are essentially persons, sociable beings, whose dignity merits fair treatment (justice) and whose social nature is such that they require one another’s companionship, including spiritual and intellectual conviviality (civil friendship), if they are to live well (Maritain, 1947, 65-67). If this is the case, it is in the best interest of human individuals to subordinate (not to repress) their personal cravings and desires to those of the community, which is now seen as something more significant than a mere group of people. In short, human autonomy, becoming one’s self, is only realizable communally. In this situation, ethics is not merely a matter of personal values set over against the public sphere but bears upon the private values that are to be cultivated for the sake of developing discourse and deliberation about concrete social problems. The common good provides a way of organizing our liberties for the benefit of society. Briefly, where the idea of the common good permeates political discourse, ethics and politics are more complementary than opposed to one another. Where the common good is at stake it makes sense to ask: should I assert my rights? Or is there a good reason to abrogate them for the public good? (Cf. Jennings, 1988) Concern with the common good of society is thus a corrective at once to the view that all moral matters are matters of rights, which has recently been profoundly questioned in various circles even in France (Gauchet, 2008, 4) and to the view that collectivism/communism is the only alternative to individualism.

Today this harmonious view of social life has a way of seeming hopelessly nostalgic to so-called “realists” (even though bits of that perspective persist in “modern” societies). In a society which shares a common vision of the good life like medieval Europe this may all
be well and good, they say, but the very process of modernization destroyed that idyll once and for all. Their view cannot be ignored; for there is a good deal of truth in it, even if it is not the last word on the matter. First, the Reformation undermined its religious unity, then the Industrial Revolution its social coherence and finally 19th century nationalism its political coherence. In a way, the two World Wars represent the Worst Possible Case scenario with respect to what could go wrong with post-Westphalian political modernism. American neo-liberalism can be considered the most recent reincarnation of Machiavellian modernism. Seen from this perspective, the European Union, as an institution transcending the boundaries of the nation-state, represents a response to political modernity, which is at least implicitly oriented to the common good. To the extent that we are “modern” or “post-modern”, we find ourselves in a moral world lacking coherence, i.e., our moral vocabulary is made up of words like “justice” which can refer to all sorts of things including things that contradict each other. On a superficial view it often seems that such terms as justice are empty abstractions that can be filled with any content whatsoever. However, giving in to the temptation to consider words like justice as essentially meaningless or as simply representing the will of the stronger turns out to be a self-fulfilling prophecy; for that very belief blinds the people bound by it to evidence the contrary. What we see here depends upon the conceptual lenses that we look through. Our suggestion is that the lens of classical modernism, indispensable as it is in many respects—who would seriously dispute the indispensability of the constitutional state to civilized life?—, filters out too much. Indeed, it filters out just what must come into play at the point when a plurality of conflicting “rights” makes the centrality of rights to social life problematic. Here, the discussion of rights focuses our attention upon the law and away from our common humanity—something easier recognized than defined.

Be that as it may, lack of coherence, i.e, the absence of a commonly accepted picture of society and the good life, in post-modern society
does not imply that the idea of the common good is meaningless; it only makes it considerably more difficult to conceive than it was in the pre-modern world. The difficulty arises because we erroneously tend to consider pursuit of the common good within a pluralistic society an idle, utopian dream. Post-modern thought rightly sees recognition of differences as essential to this project but does not really propose any strategy for coping with the depths of the conflicts that those differences present politically in the way that our pre-modern conception of politics does. Tolerance for its own sake, as mandated by the multi-cultis, is simply inadequate: grudgingly accepting the other cannot possibly be a source of genuine social bonds. Tolerance needs a practical foundation. A public philosophy based upon the common good provides it. Translated into political terms in the context of today’s Europe, this means systematic pursuit of a democratic consensus about what European society should be like, which has to begin with a reflection within individual nations about their own traditional values and how they fit into the European panorama. Indeed, this is precisely what Europe requires at the moment.

Concern for a European common good might seem even more far-fetched in view of what separates us from the world of Scholasticism and, above all, the small communities that were its point of reference, but the idea is hardly absurd. In the wake of World War II some 60 years ago, Jacques Maritain wrote with as much foresight as insight, “in our day the common good has decidedly ceased to be merely the common good of a nation and has not yet succeeded in constituting itself as the common good of the civilized community but the good thing about this term is that it contains implicitly the idea of the common good of civilized society as a whole” (Maritain, 1947, 48). The founders of the Common Market understood that language better than we can (Fabry, 2005, 17-44) but that does not mean that we are incapable of learning it. How is it possible to do so? How is it possible to pursue the common good in a Europe of 500 million people in 27 lands and with their own cultures and traditions without riding
roughshod over their differences? Answering these questions require still further forays into philosophy which are anything but digressions; for without a philosophical perspective on pluralist discourse we are condemned to suffering under disagreement rather than channelling it constructively and democratically for the common good.

**POLITICS BASED UPON RATIONAL DISAGREEMENT: TOWARDS A ROBUST RELATIVISM**

From the philosophical point of view, the religious, social and cultural problems that we encounter in connection with the requisite sort of pluralism to cope with such cultural and political diversity concern the broader problem of rationality. These problems are typically post-modern in the sense that they arise as a result of the failure of all so-called “modern” monolithic concepts of rationality, the “big stories”, as they are sometimes called—be they political, economic or philosophical. It is a disastrous mistake of so-called post modern philosophy to draw the irrationalist conclusion from this state of affairs that “anything goes”. In place of this absolute, and absolutely confused, relativism it is necessary to develop a robust relativism which is capable of underpinning a genuine pluralism. The required robust foundation for political pluralism can be found in the much neglected tradition of natural law. In short, we have quite a lot to learn from that tradition in our efforts to produce a European public philosophy and with it an identity for European citizens.

The view of pluralism advanced here is neither new nor original. In fact it is that of the late American Jesuit political philosopher John Courtney Murray (1904-1967), author of the Second Vatican Council’s Declaration on Religious Freedom, a pioneer ecumenist and human rights activist. Although advanced as a Catholic position in an American political context, Murray’s view of pluralism transcends all forms of parochialism and has implications for European politics. In his book *We Hold These Truths* (Murray, 1960), Murray advanced
the thesis that Aristotelian political philosophy as developed by the medieval schoolmen and realized in the Anglo-Saxon common law tradition held the key to producing a civil society robust enough to embrace pluralistic aspirations in a large, heterogeneous society like the United States. (The premise here is that Europe should not want to become the United States but just as Europe strives to learn from the USA’s economic success without merely imitating American laissez-faire policies, Europe should not shun learning from what works in America. It is less a matter of imitating the common law than it is of appreciating the latent elements in it relevant to the development of a public philosophy for Europe.)

According to the natural law in the grand tradition of Aristotle, the Stoics and St. Thomas Aquinas, the basis of rationality does not rest in abstractions or theories but manifests itself in reasonable human behavior. It is the regularity in the actions of normal agents, acquired by experience, which determines what is normal and, therefore, reasonable, in human affairs. Understanding rationality is thus a matter of reflecting upon how reasonable human action is embedded in social practice (i.e., tradition). Collective values, which are implicit in collective behaviour patterns into which individuals have been acculturated, give rise to a living moral tradition in which politics is embedded. This tradition contains not only the implicit resources for adjudicating legal disputes but also an implicit forum for articulating conflicting opinions. With respect to the legal process, not abstract principles but the comparison between exemplary clear cut cases and problematic ones, determines what has the force of law on its side. It is this concept of rationality as incorporated in traditional practices that is the basis of common law (see, Holmes, 1991; Fromont, 1998; Encyclopedia Britannica, 1974, Vol. 22, 917-947).

The basis of the common law—which, like common sense, is conceptually linked to the idea of the common good—is the idea of practical insight (common sense), which is at the source of
the unarticulated rules that the common law rests upon: in any situation there is a reasonable thing to do, regardless of whether there is an explicit law requiring or forbidding it. Everybody can reason practically. Human beings are reasonable creatures who are capable of defending their interests rationally and not merely by ruse, cunning or slyness. Thus common sense becomes the crucial factor for determining after the fact how individuals have legally behaved and for determining what society does and does not really allow. After the fact, a jury can establish what the reasonable thing to do was, i.e., what the law demands on the basis of comparison with the decisions that have been made in the past. The rational thing to do is what is commonly acceptable as being reasonable in that situation. Thus rationality is taken to be immanent in human practices, i.e., not individual practices, but collective practices that are (more or less) stable over time.

The absence of a strict dichotomy between theory and practice, between the description of behaviour and its evaluation, lends this conception of rationality concreteness. There is no sharp opposition between “is” and “ought” such as we find in Immanuel Kant’s Critical Philosophy or in other prescriptive moral and political theories. Rationality is not a matter of employing a theory (i.e., some matter of speculation) to measure reality according to an a-priori ideal but of a theory based upon consensus in practice, i.e., of what Ludwig Wittgenstein termed agreement in form of life (Wittgenstein, 1958, I, 241): the consensus involved is not a matter of politics in the sense of being determined by someone’s conscious decision but agreement in a way of living at the root of social life itself, which we fall back upon when we are unsure about how to evaluate an action legally. Of course, not all disagreements have a legal aspect; moreover, there are deep-seated disagreements that are rational in nature.

There are such things as legitimate differences of opinion. In public life they are what politics is all about. Recognizing that is
crucial to the Scholastic concept of civil society. In a genuinely civil society conflicts have to be accepted as part of social life. This is what is central to any democratic order and what turns out to be central to the formation of an identity for European citizens. European citizenship will come into existence when Europeans are able to embrace the idea that it is worthwhile to agree to disagree with one another—and to disagree with Brussels—as European; for it is out of that tolerant form of consensus with respect to differences that consensus as basic agreement about confronting clashes of opinion reasonably emerges.

CONSTITUTING CIVILITY: TWO SENSES OF CONSENSUS

In order to establish the importance of this sense of consensus we should distinguish two senses of the term “consensus”. The first and most common meaning of consensus is widespread agreement about the ground rules of debate in a conflict. Such consensus in substance is a matter of the normative character of common opinion. The second sense bears upon how we arrive at that widespread agreement in the face of deep initial disagreement. In order to do so, we must learn to be civil to one another, i.e., to disagree with each other courteously and respectfully. The latter—let us call it constitutive consensus; for it constitutes the possibility of agreement from within disagreement—is the precondition for the former—let us call that substantive consensus. Constitutive consensus is agreeing to disagree. It is only possible if we can establish that each of us is arguing in good faith. Establishing that we disagree in good faith, in turn, depends upon being able to identify matters about which it is possible to have different concepts of what is at stake, which are legitimate. For example, there are several legitimate senses of a word like, say, “art”—or “democracy” itself. These differences lead us into frustrating, but, nevertheless, under certain circumstances, rational, discussions about a definition that prevent us from determining, say, whether Marcel Duchamp’s “La Fontaine” (the pissoir that Duchamp
created in 1917) counts as a work of art or not. What is crucial to see here is that the “factual” question of how you describe (i.e., classify) something determines to a great extent how you evaluate it. It is not possible to discuss what makes the object an interesting work of art, until it is established that it is, indeed, a work of art and that involves vigorous debate and the ability to modify our concepts to fit changing realities. Assuming that we have been successful in that debate, i.e., able to agree that “La Fontaine” is a work of art, we have constituted criteria for discussing it as well. Procedural consensus has been constituted.

However, there is nothing inevitable about this. We may not be able to agree in the matter. But by recognizing that we are arguing in good faith we constitute the basis for further dialogue. How can we do this? We need to understand the “essentially contested” character of the concept in question and what that implies. That means that the concept in question can be the subject of endless irresolvable debate, which, paradoxically, can be the basis for future agreement—it should be stressed that there is no guarantee that rapprochement will occur—as long as we make an effort to keep the argument, which the various parties will all rightly consider in some sense or other “political”, going. What are these circumstances?

**ESSENTIALLY CONTESTED CONCEPTS**

The fact that we can argue endlessly and inconclusively about such questions “is that really art?”, “is that really democratic?”, “is that practice really Christian?” etc. has led to despair that there can be procedural consensus at all. Such arguments about definitions are not merely quibbles about simple matters of taste but debates about criteria for defining: “what warrants our calling an object a work of art, an institution democratic? an action Christian? What sorts of possible grounds could be brought forward to justify, say, Marcel Duchamp’s claim that his urinal, rebaptised “The Fountain”
and exhibited like the work of an Old Master, should indeed be granted the title “art”? It is not that there are no arguments here. Nor is it the case that these arguments are always badly constructed. Rather, there is complete disagreement about what should count as evidence, i.e., what sorts of standard, (regulative) rule or “definition” should be appealed to. In short, what ensues is not merely a clash about differing tastes but a dispute about what is worthy of the appellation “art”. The disagreement is about politics of art. In the course of becoming modern nearly all of the interesting concepts we employ—“love,” “trust,” “responsibility,” but also “corruption,” “power,” “safety”, “freedom” to mention but a few—are essentially contested and therefore the focus of political disputes in the realm of ideas as well as in society. It is part of the price of the modern relegation of politics to a single aspect of social life (i.e., as opposed to being an essential element of all its aspects) that we fail to see that we are always involved in political conflicts (in this broader sense), not just on and around Election Day.

The examples we have mentioned are the classical cases of essential contestability. Our discussions of globalization and European political culture are full of similar notions such as “solidarity”, “participation” or “integration”, which can legitimately be construed in two or more different ways and, on that account, are the subject of deep-seated but, in the last analysis, rationally founded disagreements in today’s Europe. They are the key to understanding the conceptual structures in which the politics of creating a unified Europe is embedded. Philosophically considered, they are the stuff of European politics.

Be that as it may, rejecting the idea that there are matters about which we can endlessly, but legitimately, quarrel moves in two equally erroneous directions. Rationalists have sought to develop theories (both substantively and methodologically) for resolving
such practically irresolvable conflicts at an abstract, ideal level. The point of their solutions would be to present a standard which we could “apply” in our hopelessly confused situation. Another more Machiavellian, basically irrationalist, reaction has been to accept these conflicts as basic to human nature, but intolerable in practice, to be regulated according to utilitarian considerations or simply on the basis of brute force. The former emphasizes that we know what consensus is in the abstract, so theoretical concern with it will somehow make us more inclined to pursue it. The latter emphasizes the ubiquity of disagreement and despairs of consensus making it a matter of social and political expediency. In the end it accepts the view that “justice is the will of the stronger”. The rationalist reaction is a flight into idealism; the Machiavellian into cynicism—or irony. The former is the modern approach; the latter the post-modern approach to conflict. We are advocating a third pre-modern approach that is in fact more relevant than the other two as regards attitudes to conflict.

The English philosopher, W. B. Gallie, has coined the phrase “essentially contested concept” to describe the subject of such arguments (the examples are his). His aim was to demonstrate that these heated, frustrating and fundamentally irresolvable confrontations do not, for all that, have to be irrational (Gallie, 1955-6). The mere fact of essential contestability does not necessarily imply that one or both of the parties to the debates are acting in bad faith. Nor is it necessarily the case that our emotions have got the best of us. In short, Gallie set out to demonstrate that there are circumstances under which such disagreements are legitimate. To understand the nature of essentially contested concepts is to understand the conceptual politics of everyday life. Essentially contested concepts turn out to have seven characteristics:

1. They are appraisive, not merely descriptive concepts: they refer to achievements. So “work of art”, not “weight 5 kilo.”
2. They are complex concepts. So “democracy”, which contains a reference to further concepts such as equality, representation, freedom, not simple like “blue”.

3. The achievement that the concept represents is a result of the order of the parts. So democracy refers not simply indiscriminately to equality, freedom, and representation, but to a specific relation between a specific combination of these elements.

4. The order that confers the character of achievement upon the concept can be described differently. So, freedom or equality (or representation) can be taken to be the main element in the definition of democracy, depending upon whether one is a liberal democrat or a social democrat.

5. Such concepts are “open-textured”: there are new (potentially unlimited) ways of being democratic; whereas there are no new ways of being a triangle in Euclidean geometry.

6. All of the parties in the debate recognize some common authorities on the subject. Everybody who rationally argues about democracy recognizes that such authorities as Locke, Mill, Jefferson and Rousseau have to be taken seriously and cannot be simply capriciously dismissed however one might rank them.

7. All of the parties to the debate believe that it is in principle possible to convince their opponents of the truth of their claims on the basis of arguments and not force. All parties involved must be committed to dialogue.

Gallie’s idea was, not to show that all arguments which have not attained resolution were nevertheless legitimate, but that we could distinguish between legitimate and illegitimate disagreements in conceptual matters, and on that basis learn to live with our differences
tolerantly and ecumenically in some cases at least. He wanted to explain how it can be that we can argue about the definition of concepts like “art,” “Christianity,” or “democracy,” endlessly but, nevertheless, rationally. The complex structure of concepts like “art, “democracy” or “Christianity” enables us to “define” them in many legitimate but conflicting ways. Such legitimate conflicts can only be met with good will and a commitment to continuing a difficult debate for the sake of the common good.

Examining the criteria for “essential contestability” a bit more closely we can obtain an insight into what rational politics entails. It is important to point out that the first three criteria are semantic, the third, fourth and fifth pragmatic, the sixth a matter of history and tradition and the seventh moral. This is important because there are no rational discussions of contested concepts unless everybody involved really believes, despite it all, that matters can be solved on the basis of evidence and persuasion. The discussion has a value of its own - it is in the interests of all, i.e., in the common good, to pursue objectivity even though it is anything but easy to attain. This allows us to develop a robust account of consensus by demonstrating the link between political legitimacy and conceptual legitimacy.

In the most important contribution to the literature on “essentially contested concepts” after Gallie, William Connolly added “politics” to this list, thereby opening the door to the discussion of the politics of “politics” (Connolly, 1983, 39-40). He explained how it is that defining politics in a given way is tantamount to setting the political agenda, i.e., to determine what is and, above all, what is not discussed in the political arena. In doing so he effectively explained how it is that programs for radical social reform, as opposed to “politics as usual”, (Green, feminist, socialist, etc.) could not possibly succeed without transforming the definition of politics itself, i.e., the existing consensus about what the concept of “politics” means. Thus the “politics of politics” is anything but idle meta-political discourse but in fact its
immanent philosophical component. With that we have arrived back at the European Union’s “democracy deficit”, which justifies our lengthy abstract philosophical digression into the nature of rational disagreement; for it is precisely annoyance at how politics in Brussels “defines away” what many concerned Europeans consider to be the vital political issues of the day that is the source of the “democracy deficit” in the first place.

CONSTITUTIVE CONSENSUS

Where politics is not simply a matter of determining policies but of defining (and thereby constituting) the subject itself, consensus can hardly be a matter of general agreement. Consensus here refers to agreement to participate in debate with people of radically differing opinions in the hope that common interests can be worked out on the basis of rigorous debate across social and political perspectives. The current discussion of the pros and cons of bio fuels is a case illustrating the sort of dilemma we have a way of landing in: there are strong arguments that bio fuels reduce our dependence upon fossil fuels but at the cost of raising world grain prices. So the ecological victory is Pyrrhic because it leads to price rises in the Third World. In short, we are confronted with a dilemma, whereby we have no fixed criteria for adjudicating our disagreements and we have to learn to live with that.

Be that as it may, consensus as we mean it is a matter of learning to agree to disagree with others in a constructive way while we seek to invent genuine solutions to seemingly intractable problems. It is based upon the conviction that rational persuasion is possible even where there is deep-seated disagreement. More than that, consensus in the sense of agreement about the very nature and scope of the debate around a topic like globalization, for example, has to be reached from within the real disagreements surrounding it. If that happens, recognizing our differences becomes a source
of strength rather than weakness. Conflict is a strong, if negative, bond between people because, paradoxically, it involves a reliable form of recognition; whereas mere tolerance is a positive but weak bond because it is an unreliable form of recognition. The idea behind accepting difference of opinion is to transform the negative strength of the bonds of conflict into a positive sense of respect in the face of real differences vehemently asserted in public debates. The confrontation involved in agreeing to disagree is the very process of transforming the vengeance-seeking Furies into the rational arbiters of a high court, which we find in Aeschylus’s *Eumenides*, that is explicitly an exercise in the restoration of social balance (Fagles and Stanford, 1979, 86). That should remind us of the relationship between politics and tragedy that is implicit in Aeschylus’ and Lord Dahrendorf’s endorsement of democracy as a mode of transcending, self-destructive, conflict. The key to that transformation is the emergence of a concept of political discussion based upon rational persuasion and not merely manipulable public opinion.

Understanding that profound disagreements may be of this character, combined with the sensitivity to the practical logic of the other’s position puts us into a position where it is possible to “agree to disagree”, i.e., to pursue the argument further where that is possible because we are each honorable human beings deserving to be treated as such. If we cannot do so, we shall find ourselves in a conflict-ridden situation, which may become tragic in the literal sense of the term because we can be caught in the middle. Like Orestes in Aeschylus’s play, who finds himself in the impossible situation of having to kill his mother to be a good son to his father, something that is obviously enough impossible if he is to be a good son to his mother, we are bound by incommensurable and incompatible duties. Thus, if there are grounds to agree to disagree, it is wise to do so.

“Consensus” in this sense is a notion that is entirely concrete. Far from being an ideal apart from political reality, consensus has to
be reached if we are ever to talk of democratic politics at all. Such consensus constitutes democratic politics. In the classical tradition of western political philosophy from Aristotle and the Stoics to Jefferson, consensus must be reached across disagreement; consensus is attained not at the moment that agreement is reached but at the moment when the partners in discourse realize that they disagree in good faith. Then it is possible to agree to disagree and thereby to maintain a polite or civil relationship to one another even in the face of heated discussion. According to the classical view, consensus reigns in public debates when the disagreeing parties treat each other with respect despite their differences. We can continue to discuss our views conscious of each other’s disagreement but sensitive to the difficulties involved in reaching agreement. The civility involved in this sense of consensus is implicit in the British idea of the “loyal opposition” in parliament, whose function is to remind the ruling majority that it is in fact responsible for the whole of society and not only specific interest groups. Consensus is thus the courteous and respectful disagreement upon which civil society is based.

Constitutive consensus creates an atmosphere of respectful tolerance which gives birth to democratic discussion by laying the moral groundwork for transforming the clash of individual opinions into a basis for rational debate, a consensus that is constitutive of public opinion. It creates an intermediary instance between individuals and the government. Legitimation is born in this political space, civil society. Thus consensus as the moral link between the individual will and public power is the dynamic basis upon which all democratic institutions rest—and therefore the source of the citizen’s identity. Agreeing to disagree entails a fallible, critical systematization of collective experience, which is by nature incomplete. Consensus is a process of discussion but it is not a mechanical process. It is formed on the basis of a decision that a given dissenting opinion is legitimate. It assumes that agents, be they students, writers, clergy, financiers, journalists, politicians, businessmen, professors or other specialists
etc., i.e., civil society, develop and defend their views publicly on the basis of substantive arguments that directly address the grievances of dissenters.

From this sketch it is easy to see that the opponents of pluralism and the enemies of civil society are dissimulation, hypocrisy, manipulation and intimidation. Con-sensus is literally a “feeling together” which entails a con-spiracy, a “breathing together”, despite differences, for the public good, which becomes a matter of pursuing a common purpose despite political differences with respect to the exercise of public power. It is what turns power into legitimate authority. It is the reasonable way of dealing with fundamental differences because it “civilizes” conflict rather than resorting to force.

Thus consensus is neither a matter of majority opinion, nor of public compromise but a process of collective mutual criticism. To participate effectively in the debate it is necessary to articulate one’s own position but also to be able to understand how our position relates to the perspective of our opponents, whose grounds for and principles of assertion are of as much importance to the debate as the assertions we question. In short, it is exactly what “soft” European sceptics find lacking in the EU and what prevents them from developing an identity as European citizens. From this point of view the “no” of the French and Netherlander to the proposed constitution in 2005 presents an opportunity for growth. Of course, that involves considerable effort but that alone does not distinguish it from most worthwhile human pursuits. Nothing comes from nothing.

Be that as it may, we should not deceive ourselves with respect to one crucial point: the consensus I am referring to is not a chimera, it exists already in varying degrees in all European countries with respect to domestic issues. The problem is that national politicians, for the most part, have not really taken it upon themselves to create a European consensus, which would,
in fact, turn Europeans into European citizens. That would mean to create a general public debate in which the whole gamut of regional and local interests would have the right to be heard by the EU. It is the task of the national states in conjunction with Brussels to create this forum. The consensus in question is thus not something preliminary projected onto social reality, it exists in the very diversity of opinions as they are affirmed in public life. The affirmation of diversity of opinion in public life and of public debate itself as the very basis of politics is what leads us to a society which is genuinely civil; for affirming diversity of opinion in public life, i.e., speaking courteously, is the essence of civility. European parties have been remiss in this respect.

**EUROPE’S “DEGENERATING” POLITICAL PARTIES**

However, there is another very large problem here. The very “degenerating” character of traditional European national parties both on the right and on the left (Roger, 2007) tends to stifle the growth of the very pluralism, which Europe so desperately needs and it clearly acts as a brake with respect to the emergence of genuinely (i.e., transnational) European political parties. The “Christian” element in Christian Democracy has had a way of dissolving into Neo-liberalism; whereas Social Democracy stifles under a petrified notion of what is “social”. In effect, parties often come between voters and their representatives; for traditional European politicians are in the first instance responsible to their parties and not to their voters. To be sure, the matter is highly complicated but traditional European parties seem more capable than their American counterparts to sacrifice the interests of their voters to the interest of the party (an Austrian federal chancellor once said, “without the party I am nothing”), or local interests to national interests. This has the effect of weakening the credibility of politicians and increasing the frustration of the voters with the central government.
The ubiquitous coalitions that we find throughout Europe today seem also to be part of the problem because they permit the parties involved to blame all the government’s failings upon the partner, whose wishes have to be tolerated. Indeed, they have a way of becoming collusions against their own constituents, making political parties even less responsible than they otherwise might be. However, Grand Coalitions are worst of all. In Germany and Austria, for example, Grand Coalitions have been established in the wake of the failure of traditional right and left to gain workable parliamentary majorities. (The current French government is a peculiar variation on the theme of coalition by virtue of its ministers coming from so many different parties.) However, to the extent that such coalitions work, they represent at once a victory for “politics as usual” and a defeat for democracy; for they tend to marginalize opposition. Little wonder that insightful analysts speak of the “cartelization of politics” in our time. (Roger, 2007, 34-39) Grand Coalitions are like the absolute power conferred upon the ancient Roman dictator: something to be granted only in an emergency situation. When they become part of political everyday life, there is something radically wrong with the way democracy is functioning in a given country. Citizens in many European countries are loath to see this but it is so. At the simplest level, it does not make sense to consult two doctors with diametrically opposed views about healing in the hope of discovering agreement about the cause of one’s medical problems. In fact, the existence of Grand Coalitions is an index of the extent that national party politics has managed to save face in the wake of popular rejection. In short, to the extent that they work in normal times (however “normal” may be defined) they represent the conspiracy of politics against democracy. Where the populace is reticent to confer a clear majority upon a given party or a traditional constellation of right or left parties it is because they have lost their trust in the positions those parties represent without finding an adequate substitute. If it is true, as it is sometimes said, that all politics is local politics, it is because trust is a local phenomenon, i.e., something rooted in acknowledging that
our representatives are capable of acting responsibly on our behalf. This is one of the more enviable features of American democracy and one of its great strengths. American politicians know that their first duty is to their constituency and not to the party. If they forget that, they may find themselves recalled from office by the people who vote for them, because they have failed to represent their constituents’ interests. Electors are no less fully conscious of their power in this respect. This is something that Europe has much too little of.

CIVIL COURAGE

This leads us to a final set of reflections upon the importance of civil courage in a democratic society. The strength of democracy lies in the possibility for everyone to participate in public life. Indeed, that is what democracy is. In a democracy nothing works by itself. The political system only functions as well as people want it to. If they neglect their political responsibilities as Americans seem to do from time to time, it is obvious to everyone. We forget at our peril that a democratic society cannot be better than its citizens. Democracy is their project. It is never completed and always fragile. In effect, it requires citizens to take unpopular stands to defend their views. In short, politicians must come to recognize that “politics as usual”, both on the right and on the left, has become highly problematic. In the context of the European Union many politicians seem quite happy to be with one another but what they fail to realize is how unhappy their constituents are with them.

Contemporary Europe is in the midst of the greatest transformation that a democratic society has ever undergone. The European Union, as we have seen, is, in fact, an experiment, but it is also an experiment in reformation and regeneration deeply rooted in European tradition. However, it can only succeed with the full participation of all Europeans. The identity of European citizens does not imply that everybody has to be of the same opinion but that people have to be
interested in making Europe work. This requires vigorous but polite public debate on all important matters. It must be the goal of European politicians to create the forum for that debate both within the EU, e.g. by finally creating a European parliament responsible to voters, and in the individual member states where modalities for communicating local views to European Union organs must be established. The next section of this essay will be devoted to that theme.

The scepticism that many Danes, French, Dutch, English and most recently Irish Europeans, for example, have shown to the course of European integration should be considered as an important signal that Europe cannot simply be created from above, that it requires genuine popular legitimation as Jorge Semprun insists. European politicians must establish institutions capable of furthering consensus in the sense of agreement to work together in the face of disagreement about specific matters, which is, in the end, the only real source of legitimation. In doing so they must be careful to channel rather than to circumvent local interests. Civil society is truly a matter of conspiring, of breathing together, for the common good. It is what will create a European identity. Globalization can be the focus of that debate because it is widely acknowledged to be the most pressing “European” problem at many levels.

It should be clear from the outset, however, that the discussions in question are going to be about more than “politics as usual”. Regulating the environment wisely in conjunction with our energy demands, for example, is, among other things, a matter of discussing values comparatively and critically. The consensus—agreement-in-disagreement—referred to above is the moral basis for a constructive, no-holds-barred discussion of what European society can be. Agreeing to disagree creates values in the sense of establishing that it is possible to disagree honestly and sincerely about a matter of great importance. That creates the possibility for rational persuasion, even if it does not guarantee it. That is no small challenge but it is nothing new:
it is always the challenge within democracy and ultimately how
democracy legitimates itself. Continued discussion in a situation
where we agree that we disagree produces a civil (polite) discourse
with a moral basis in the good will of the parties involved. Where
people persevere in being civil to one another, consensus grows:
from agreeing to disagree, the possibility of agreement arises. Briefly,
genuine communication occurs and a community emerges. The very
act of arguing honestly across perspectives establishes a constellation
of values such as tolerance and patience in the participants. The
regulation of globalization presents an important occasion for the
transformation of European political discourse. How is that the
case? We must begin to answer that question by considering how
globalization has been perceived.
WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM THE EUROPEAN PERCEPTIONS OF GLOBALIZATION?

The Fondation pour l’innovation politique has already produced an illuminating empirical study, *Europeans and the Globalization Challenge*, which has meticulously collected and analysed a full range of those perceptions. So we have a good idea both about what Europeans think about globalization and how their views compare with those of American, Japanese and Russians. That study forms a convenient point of departure for raising further questions about the political challenges that globalization presents. Thus the first thing to realize about them is that those very perceptions of globalization in Europe have a dynamic potential. They are not simply a documentation of the status quo but a summary of the expectations which Europeans have with respect to their future, that are deeply revealing, not only of discontents, but also, paradoxically, of the positive possibilities that existing attitudes to globalization within the European Union (as well as the other countries mentioned, which were also studied for the purposes of comparison) have. From the responses of individuals in a representative cross section of European countries, large and small, north and south, prosperous and developing, eastern and western, it has been possible obtain a comprehensive picture of actual thinking about globalization that is a welcome counterweight
to the prophecies of doom that we all too frequently hear in countries like France and Austria in connection with globalization. Moreover, reflection upon the attitudes of individuals within European national states can aid us in the search for hints about adequate political responses to the fears and hopes of Europeans, which themselves can facilitate the development of institutional responses from the European Union and, in turn, lead to a growing recognition of the legitimacy of the project that is Europe.

In the boldest terms the results of the international survey *Europeans and the Globalization Challenge* that The Fondation pour l’innovation politique undertook in conjunction with the Swedish Kairos Future firm under the aegis of the Europe-International Director, Elvire Fabry, can also serve as basis for broader reflections upon how a European public philosophy can be conceived and implemented today. That is certainly no modest goal; but then the European Union is no modest undertaking. However, it should be clear from the outset that the term “public philosophy” does not refer to a theory or anything abstract but to a collective identity based upon living commitment to Europe as a rational political entity (which will be explained in due course below). Fears and hopes are not mere feelings but indicate underlying values that must be taken into account by such a project if it is to have any chance for success at all. Those very fears and hopes are evidence for a certain lack of public confidence in the legitimacy of political authority within both the European Union itself and its member states, that in itself is the prime indication of a need for a European public philosophy, which would at once legitimate and further the “ever closer union” to which the European member states pledged themselves in their Charter on Human Rights. Moreover, the idea of a European public philosophy is nothing new. It has always been implicit in the European Union’s firm commitment to the values of democracy and the freedom of the
individual on the continent and throughout the world. So there is nothing revolutionary in what is being said here. The revolution is, rather, implicit in that very European commitment to freedom and democracy. The problem is that its advance has been “stalled”; the task is to set it in motion again.

The aim of these reflections should be to elicit the collective wisdom and awareness at hand in Europe in order to exploit it for future developments in aid of realizing that “ever closer union” which is emphasized as the European Union’s goal in the preamble to its Charter on Human Rights. Ours is thus an effort to develop an enriched public discourse for the European Union on the basis of reflection upon globalization. In order to carry out these reflections it will be useful to recapitulate some of the main findings of *Europeans and the Globalization Challenge* as a point of departure. Recounting the European Union’s most pressing concerns at the moment will also aid us by providing some leitmotivs for our discussion of the implications of the globalization challenge for the development of European democracy. We began with a discussion of a general strategy for dealing with soft Euroscepticism and the democracy deficit in the European Union. We must now explain how perceptions of globalization reveal current pressing concerns on the part of the various European peoples in order to identify the potential that those perceptions of globalization have for the growth of European democracy. We shall then proceed in the final section of this essay to make suggestions about how the European Union and its member states might develop a European civil discourse and thus create new solidarity among European citizens in terms of a debate on globalization. In effect, ours is a project in reformation, a concept deeply rooted in both Christian tradition and European life, of restoring the core values of the European project on the basis of criticism and self-criticism with globalization at its center.
PERCEPTIONS OF GLOBALIZATION IN EUROPE

What are the problems surrounding globalization, which cause it to be perceived as a threat in the minds of many Europeans? The difficulties begin with the very vagueness of the term. For many people it is extremely difficult to imagine anything concrete in connection with the term “globalization” apart from a pronounced threat of being engulfed by something too large and amorphous for individuals to defend themselves against, which is all the more menacing on account of its vagueness. In fact, the tabloid press and populist politics, both on the right and on the left, have made “globalization” into one of the central buzzwords or clichés of our time by oversimplifying its content and producing a stereotype which educes powerful sentiments on the part of the unwary in lieu of informing the public. Indeed, it is a paradox of European democracy that its own liberal values require it to defend the rights of its worst enemies to free expression.

“Globalization” has come to be identified by the forces of populism with a ubiquitous stereotyped system of business and finance, which permits faceless multinational enterprises to exploit and uproot helpless individuals by transferring economic enterprises to remote parts of the world where their power cannot be challenged in order to reduce production costs drastically and at the same time reducing their own tax burdens as well as their social responsibilities in their home countries. In short, globalization to them is nothing but Mammonism, i.e., pseudo-religious worship of the false god of riches and greed, in these quarters. Emphatically repeated, such emotionally-laden stereotypes become firmly ensconced prejudices and unquestionable self-evident “truths” emerge from what are at best distorted half-truths. So in the case of “globalization” we tend to end up with a universal explanation for more or less all sort of dubious or unpleasant developments in contemporary European society on the basis of a clichéd idea of what the phenomenon is. Like all clichés there is a grain of truth in this view of globalization
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but only a grain. To the extent that such a clichéd picture takes hold of the public imagination, creating anxiety in its wake with respect to the future of individuals and undermining confidence in political institutions, the quality of political life declines. That very anxiety is a provocation to turn the tables on the *terribles simplificateurs* and exploit their loud but superficial dissent as presenting an opportunity to set the record straight.

The alternative to the stereotyped notion of globalization presents globalization rather as “a set of processes in interaction” (Fondation pour l’innovation politique, 2007, 318). Under more careful scrutiny, globalization reveals itself to be constituted by the following elements:

1. a transformation of international capitalism (especially finance markets), which might just as easily be described at the newest or latest phase in the process of industrial rationalization that has been underway for 250 years, which
   2. in conjunction with new communication technologies
   3. has strong implications for international relations
   and
   4. involves new ways of demarcating the public and the private sectors within society as well as
   5. produces new inequalities of distribution
   that
   6. bring with them new sources of social and political tension.

All of these factors are related but by no means identical or reducible to one another. Such a differentiating approach to globalization is crucial because it focuses our attention away from a monolithic black and white view of the phenomenon to the multiple senses that the word has actually acquired with mixed positive and negative characteristics. It further suggests that we look ever more concretely at the variety of phenomena that fall under the rubric instead of focussing our
attention exclusively upon the word “globalization” as though the very term were permeated with some kind of Black Magic. The notion “perception of globalization” has a similar multiplicity of meanings, which explains methodologically why a set of comparative studies like the ones carried out by The Fondation pour l’innovation politique in collaboration with Kairos Future are just the sort of sociological approach necessary to cast light on what is really happening in the minds of Europeans when they think of globalization today. Only on the basis of comparisons between perceptions of globalization in the individual European lands does the arbitrariness that attaches to the dogmatic yes/no attitude to globalization become apparent.

However, the problems involved in understanding globalization and tempting people to think that it is the sort of things that one must simply approve or disapprove of are not merely the effects of intentional distortions. The very vagueness about the term already mentioned indicates that it is desperately in need of public clarification—and not only on account of populist distortions. These further considerations must be spelled out here. As we have seen, globalization refers to numerous related but nevertheless distinct interacting economic and financial developments with technological and communications aspects having social and cultural implications that are as important as they are complicated; yet, the term itself seems to be simple. It is but a single word; it only seems “logical” that it refers to but a single thing. Not only the distortions of the tabloid press and the “opinion leaders” are responsible for misunderstandings, but the very simplicity of the expression invites us to think about globalization in an oversimplified manner, i.e. as the sort of monolithic reality we must either support or oppose. The simplistic thinking involved in demanding a yes/no answer to The Question of Globalization is thus reinforced by the very form of the word “globalization”. The importance of this factor should not be underestimated. It is possible even for unwary intelligent people acting in good faith to deceive themselves by the word into ignoring the multiplicity of things to
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which it refers. This is an aspect of the way language can “bewitch” us and we should not underestimate the role that the very word can play in confusing us about globalization. Conceptual problems arise when we make the assumption that there must always be one and only one thing corresponding to a single word (cf. Wittgenstein, 1958, I, 139). In effect, the whole discussion of globalization is further complicated by the fact that there is a conceptual problem lurking here as well as a problem with populist journalists and dissatisfied intellectuals. As it turns out there are good reasons, as well as bad ones, for being confused about the meaning of globalization. Such difficulties have scarcely been mentioned in the discussion to date. They are further indications of the depth and complexity involved in discussing a concept like globalization.

Indeed, there is yet another philosophical point to be made here: what we do not know can most definitely hurt us. Societies can develop self-destructive tendencies when they do not know what forces are actually at work within them. Lack of a comprehensible account of globalization can certainly pose a danger for Europeans; for the kind of confusion that is arising from the straightforward demand to take a stand pro or contra “globalization” can lead us into situations in which we act against our own best interests as, for example, French opponents of globalization do when they ignore French success in the global market. The matter is not a simple one.

Be that as it may, on the more sophisticated view of globalization, it is clear that it should be considered to be a historical process continuous with the development of Europe more or less from the age of exploration in the 16th century onwards, i.e., from the point at which Europe began to perceive its very “Europeaness” (Hale, 1994, 3-50), which continued through the Industrial Revolution from the 18th till the 20th century, and not merely a novelty peculiar to our own time. Indeed, Europe discovered that it was Europe in the age of exploration—or, if you like, the first phase of globalization—by
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discovering how different it was from the rest of the world. From a less Eurocentric long-term perspective it has been rightly suggested that what we are seeing is in fact an economic re-empowerment of (at least some of) the peoples in those parts of the world such as India or China, which have been colonized by Europeans and thus dispossessed in the course of the last 200 years (Fondation pour l’innovation politique, 2007, 318). From this perspective the phenomenon of globalization is not a caesura in European history but a transition, which is, nevertheless, continuous with the movements that have done most to determine modern European identity, the Renaissance and the Enlightenment. Thus, from the point of view of the history of ideas, the crisis surrounding globalization, as it is perceived in some circles at least, amounts in fact to a latent challenge to Europeans to rethink what it is—and what it should be—to be European in the first place under the current circumstances. There is nothing really unusual in this. It is all too easy to think of the Renaissance and The Enlightenment as cultural phenomena but that is to forget that they were periods of monumental transformation fraught with intense economic and technical development but also political upheaval (Europeans have a curiously “American” way of forgetting such crucial aspects of their own illustrious past). That sobering thought may not be much consolation to someone who finds himself threatened with unemployment, relocation or re-education but it certainly should be of significance to the anti-globalization prophets of doom among the intellectual “opinion leaders”, as they are called, in today’s Europe. While the stereotyped notion that globalization is exclusively to be associated with cut-throat capitalism is at home in the media and populist politics, the idea that it represents the latest phase in an on-going process of European historical development is one that can stand up to scholarly scrutiny. Of course, that is not intended to make excuses for anything and everything that is done in the name of or associated with globalization; it is to remind Europeans of the very complexity of their heritage, which is and has to be a central theme in the discussion today. Since the Renaissance, Europe’s own dynamism has continually been a motor for change and as such a threat to established values at home and abroad. However, that very
threat has continually re-invoked debate about the nature and limits of power that are as old as the western civilization itself (e.g. in the Bible or Greek tragedy). Globalization is yet another occasion for serious public debates about how to channel future developments constructively. That is our central concern here.

The study, *Europeans and the Globalization Challenge*, has shown that the prophets of doom with respect to “globalization” are in fact a minority in Europe—and elsewhere—today. Both within and outside Europe, the kind of “socio-economic pessimism syndrome” that we find in France and elsewhere with respect to the future is scarcely to be found. What we do find when we examine actual perceptions of globalization largely reflects recent national collective experiences, which get projected onto the globalization debate. American fears for the global future arise from the recent terrorist attack on the World Trade Center and its disastrous aftermath in the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Similarly, Russian fears turn upon environmental catastrophes due to chemical and nuclear pollution of a sort that have become commonplace in the aftermath of the fall of the Iron Curtain as well as the problems arising from the post-Communist developments such as the emergence of a flourishing drug trade there. Positively viewed globalization is clearly identified with the acceleration of international commerce but it is also seen as facilitating much-needed cultural exchange and leading to mutual understanding across cultural divides (Europe, USA, Japan). Other perceptions of globalization include the idea that it involved setting up common rules for commercial interaction on a large scale (Russia), increased emphasis upon high-powered research and development programs (USA), enhanced mobility (Europe) and led to declining retail prices (Japan). So, while there may be some common general concerns there is no simple response shared by everybody.

What sorts of perception/expectation are associated with globalization in the minds of the Europeans surveyed? The answer
has to shock the pessimists: first because there is certainly no single response on the part of the Europeans surveyed; in fact, there is a whole range of differing responses from absolute confidence (Sweden) to absolute despair (France); second because those responses are closely much tied to the age of the respondents with the young generally optimistic and their elders more pessimistic; third because the positive or negative responses to the survey directly reflect how the respondents view their own national government. If this is right, pessimism is largely, but not exclusively, a function of age and will die out over time but that cannot be grounds for hesitation; for it is of the essence of the portentous developments that we are in the middle of that they occur at breakneck speed. In general the way that globalization has been perceived in a given society seems to be revealing of the way that society perceives its own situation, i.e., as revealing its hopes and satisfactions as well as its fears, tensions and conflicts. What is certainly beyond question is that there is no single way that globalization must be understood.

Let us summarize the key features of the eight European reactions to globalization that have been the subject of the Fondation pour l’innovation politque’s study with a view to teasing out the implications of the perception/expectations revealed there for the future of European democracy: Germany, Spain, Estonia, France, Italy, Sweden, the United Kingdom and Poland were the subjects of that study.

Germans have a certain pessimistic attitude to globalization which is at least in part traceable to the crisis that reunification brought on and to the context for the first German discussions of the theme. Globalization is nevertheless compatible with a certain optimism with respect to international investments and competitiveness in German minds. So the German picture is hardly all black. Germans typically have deep concerns about environmental problems. In short, Germans have a broadly
pragmatic attitude to the challenges of globalization according to which risks should be regulated but opportunities, especially in connection with Germany’s successes as an exporting nation, should be further exploited. (Uterwedde, 2007)

Spain perceives globalization primarily as economic modernization, from which the country profits considerably but which threatens to uproot people from their homes and destroy their regional identity. There is a great faith in education as a source of optimism for Spain’s future in a globalized world. Spaniards have strong fears that globalization is causing massive immigration to their land. However, they also see globalization as a way into Latin American markets and thus a means to gain political clout within the European Union. (Martínez-i-Coma and Sanz, 2007)

Estonians are among the happiest, most open, Europeans when it comes to globalization; for they have profited from it both economically in terms of their entrance into the world market but also on account of the westernizing processes bound up with the economic expansion. Despite their economic euphoria Estonians have fears about the impact that globalization will have on the environment but even more pressingly that it threatens their national identity and language. (Kirch and Kirch, 2007)

In France the “socio-economic pessimism syndrome” rules the roost. Fears of all sorts: job loss, relocation, loss of international influence, loss of the welfare state, cultural decline etc. run rampant despite the actual state of affairs, which is dramatically more positive than French perceptions of globalization would indicate. (Cautrès, 2007).

“Fatalistic” is the word that has been used to describe Italian reactions to globalization. Italians tend to believe that international economic interdependence and the loss of autonomy that it entails is a good thing because the Italian state is wholly incompetent anyway, so
anything would be better than the national status quo. They consider that the increased cultural contacts that accompany globalization are worthwhile. Generally they have a weak environmental consciousness. (Pasquino, 2007).

Sweden presents the rosiest picture among European nations with respect to its perception of globalization. Swedes see globalization as continuous with Sweden’s traditional international involvements with trade and perceive absolutely no contradiction between globalization and their welfare state tradition, which is dependent upon trust in the state as at once regulator of industrial development and protector of the well-being of the people. Swedes have a strong environmental consciousness. (Lefebvre, 2007).

In the United Kingdom perceptions of globalization are steered by political and economic elites, whose message is that free trade is an inevitable force that demands constant adaptation in the form of research and development and life-long learning on the part of the populace. In sharp contrast to most other countries, the young, rather than the old, are afraid for their jobs and also of the effects of massive immigration on English society. There is little sense of the urgency of environmental issues in the UK. (Hay and Smith, 2007).

Finally, Poles see themselves as profiting immensely from European Union subsidies especially to agriculture. Thus they consider globalization to be first and foremost an economic matter with very positive associations. Nevertheless, despite strong pro-Americanism in Poland, there is also a sense that internationalization threatens Polish traditions. Like Italians and Estonians, Poles perceive the European Union as co-extensive with globalization. Poles have little sense of environmental problems. (Bafoil and Dabrowski, 2007).
Summarizing, the issues that are perceived as being essentially connected with globalization throughout Europe are socio-economic matters associated with jobs, relocation and protection of markets, issues of national (and regional) identity and culture, problems relating to the environment and, finally, problems arising from massive immigration. Generally younger people are more optimistic than their elders but the case of the UK and Poland show that this is not always so. Anxieties related to globalization are primarily to be found among intellectuals and among the uneducated on the far right. For the most part globalization is accepted but it also presents challenges with respect to regulation. In lands such as Estonia, Sweden and Germany there is a strong sense that education permits us to cope with the personal problems that arise from globalization.

In general popular attitudes to globalization in a given country reflect the national government’s ability to cope with innovation and to guide and support the private sector in the international context. In countries like Sweden where there is a longstanding consensus with respect to the legitimacy of the traditional political system, there is a sense that globalization is positively desirable. In countries like France, where a poll in 2006 established that there was widespread discontent with politics as usual and mistrust of the political elite, there has been a scepticism that is almost absolute with respect to globalization. Italy, on the other hand, presents a curious case in point because there is an absolute lack of confidence in the state as such, i.e., as opposed to any specific political parties or programs, which leads citizens to be open to more or less any alternatives to it and the cultural benefits accruing to globalization are further reason to regard it positively. Reactions to globalization are thus reflections on the nature and functioning of traditional political practice in particular European countries bearing upon the issue of openness to change, creating confidence, or being guarded with respect to it. However, these very differences are clearly indicative of the fact that there is no
single reaction or set of reactions to globalization that counts as “the European reaction to globalization”. That is an important corrective to several prevalent clichés such as the idea that the whole of former Communist East Europe is a hotbed of neo-liberalism or that the British are simply wild proponents of unbridled globalization. (Fondation pour l’innovation politique, 2007, 41).

Briefly, there is little fixed or inevitable about globalization contrary to what many people in pessimistic countries like France might be inclined to think. People feel that there are problems but also that there are opportunities grounded in recent national achievements, say, with respect to exports as is the case in Germany. Indeed, the very heterogeneity of European reactions to globalization is a starting point for considering its implications for the future of European integration; for it clearly offers opportunities for creating the “ever closer union” so praised in its charter. What might these be?

The players in the globalization sweepstakes are basically the multinational companies, the WTO (World Trade Organization), the individual national states and the European Union. Globalization turns out to be one of the issues with respect to which the European Union enjoys the confidence of many Europeans, who believe that there is a sub-set of problems connected with it (typically bearing upon the environment and global warming) that can best be handled by the Union. That view is logical enough: the national states on their own are too small or otherwise too limited with respect to the scope of their action; whereas the multis are more in need of regulation than inclined to be regulators and the WTO is too exclusively focused upon economic growth to be in a position to deal with the human and cultural dimension of globalization. That confidence can be the basis for further growth within the European Union. Many Europeans believe, for example, that the European Union is in the best position to deal with problems relating to the environment and climate change. Since the problems relating to the environment were
ranked as the most pressing ones by the people across the board well before the fear of unemployment, which only managed to take 7th place on Europeans’ list of priorities as reflected in Fondation pour l’innovation politique’s survey, the search for a common environmental policy is an area where the European Union could well begin to cash its super-national position into political growth. Environmental problems of the sort that are connected with climate change know no borders. So it is logical that national states join together in order to tackle them. Individuals are all but powerless when confronted with environmental problems but even nations are not capable of coping with the big ones on their own. Here there is a most definite role for Europe to play and it is in a good position to play that role. In short, globalization’s new demands reinforce an existing general awareness of the need for the individual European states to pull together at the level of European Union policy.

EUROPEAN POLICY IMPERATIVES

Another closely related study can be of help here. It is the report that appeared in English as An Ever Closer Union: The Forward March by Sir Stuart Bell and in French as Resserrer L’Union entre les Européens under the authorship of Sir Stuart Bell, Francis Mer and Frédéric Allemand (published by the Fondation pour l’innovation politique). It concerns the need for determining priorities within the EU with respect to concrete strategies for tightening the bonds between Europeans after the French, Dutch and Irish rejections of the proposed European Union constitution in 2005 have loosened them. They have identified five primary areas where common European Union policy development is desperately needed, all of which bear directly upon globalization and a-fortiori upon its implications for the development of a more democratic European Union. All five points relate to the tensions relevant to the challenges facing European countries today as reflected in the study Europeans and the Globalization Challenge:
– the first is the question of remaining competitive worldwide without sacrificing the social welfare networks that have become characteristic of European societies: clearly a delicate tightrope walk;

– the second, the need to confront environmental problems connected with climatic change;

– the third, the need to reduce European dependence upon foreign energy sources;

– the fourth, the question of a common European foreign and defence policy and the last, the question of migration to Europe.

All of these interrelated problems both bear upon each and every member state (in widely divergent ways, of course) and at the same time are aspects of the challenge that globalization presents. Moreover, the authors strongly suggest two reforms that are of paramount importance for our discussion of the European public philosophy and globalization, namely, 1) the need for closer reciprocal relations between politics and politicians in the national states and Brussels (Bell et al., 2007, 67 and 2) “a new politics of communication” whose aim is to create a European public sphere (Bell et al., 2007, 66). We shall have to return to these latter topics in the last part of our discussion.

With respect to the first it goes without saying that the European Union exists for the sake of winning international markets for European enterprises. However, competition from traditional trading partners such as the USA and Japan has been intensified by the emergence of China and India as major economic players, soon to be further intensified by the emergence of Russia, South America and perhaps even Africa and Central Asia on the international economic scene. The resulting world situation is fraught with ironies and dilemmas for European nations. The increasingly globalized economy makes
people aware that they face competition both from within Europe (the notorious Polish Plumber) and throughout the world. Such knowledge presses the thorny issue of protection of jobs upon both the individual member states and the Union as such. At the same time, the requisite flexibility to respond to the new situation is a source of fear of unemployment and/or dislocation among workers. These aspects of globalization press difficult problems upon the European Union that strike to the very heart of its substance as a common market. However, the other problems are hardly less pressing—or global. The climatic changes that threaten any individual part of the world demand action from individual states but are in fact the concern of the whole of the world as only the slightest reflection upon toxic gas emissions from fossil fuels reveals. Yet, the cases of Italy and Poland, for example, indicate that this urgent problem is not perceived in the same way as it is, say, in Sweden or Germany. The second and the third areas for concern are clearly intimately linked. Dependence upon increasingly expensive fossil fuels threatens European competitively in world markets; whereas toxic carbon emissions from them are a principal source of environmental problems both within Europe and in the non-European countries from which fossil fuels are imported. Apart from economic, environmental and energy issues, the EU is increasingly recognizing that it has to present a common face to the rest of the world in order to be able to confront international conflicts justly and effectively in both the diplomatic context and in the context of peace-keeping as well as in connection with the threats presented by international terrorism and peace-keeping activities. Finally, there is the huge, multi-faceted problem of migration. The sheer prosperity enjoyed by Europe makes it a magnet for its economically deprived neighbours to the east and south, who want to gain a stake in that well-being at all costs. Since the fall of the Iron Curtain massive illegal immigration including even the most despicable forms of white slavery have followed. Similar waves of immigration from Africa have plagued Italy and Spain. Clearly illegal migration into Europe is desperately in need of sharp controls. At the same time
Europe itself desperately needs both skilled and unskilled workers to maintain and further develop its economic capabilities. There is an enormous tension arising from the conflicting demands that these two contradictory aspects of the migration problem present.
CREATING CONSENSUS ON GLOBALIZATION

With that in mind, let us return to the questions we posed about European citizenship and identity at the beginning to of our essay, now fully aware of the complexities, challenges and difficulties that they present, rephrasing our problems as follows: how can the difficulties that European perceptions of globalization present be exploited in aid of expanding the scope of participation in European public life and thereby contributing to the formation of a European political identity? The question of creating a European public philosophy boils down to the issue of increasing participation in public life. How can globalization be a key to developing a genuine European political culture?

At the simplest level, globalization affects everybody and that is hardly a secret. It does not take profound insight to realize that the most urgent concerns of the European Union bear upon need to react quickly and decisively to problems that far transcend individual national borders. For all the fears and anxieties surrounding globalization in Europe, there is also a positive side to the matter. That is less obvious but nevertheless the case. The fact that Europeans tend to believe that European Union is in a better position to cope with the problems of globalization than individual national governments contains an important ray of hope that can be exploited to the benefit of all European citizens. With respect to the scope of globalization Europeans, especially young ones, have reason to identify their hopes, for example, with respect to cleaner air or water with the European
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Comparative discussions within the individual nations could, for example, be an important factor in reducing soft Euroscepticism and taking concrete steps towards producing a European identity on the basis of participation in debates about pressing matters or common concerns. In effect, such discussions would produce a common political culture. Here is a chance for the European Union to create trust and shape identities positively; however only in co-operation with the national states. Solutions to problems that affect the whole world or substantial parts of it demand common collective—global—responses of a sort that the individual national states on their own are not capable of delivering. On the other hand, both the logic of the global scenario and the principle of subsidiarity dictate that the national states must participate in any solution. The relationship must be reciprocal here. However, this does not simplify the matter in the least.

**A RECIPROCAL CHALLENGE TO BRUSSELS AND THE NATIONAL STATES**

Globalization certainly needs to be explained to “soft” Eurosceptics. But who can explain it plausibly? The theme does not lend itself to lectures or political speeches: there have already been too many of them for the critics. Convincing people of what is in their best interest has to be a Socratic process of collective self-discovery of the sort that the European Union conceived in 2005 under Plan D: democracy, debate, dialogue (Sørensen, 2008, 63) whose raison d’être we have been spelling out. But who is to play the Socratic midwife, the interrogator? The multis who drive globalization cannot provide a credible overview of it; whereas the WTO, like the European Union itself, is too remote from normal citizens. That leaves the problem to the individual states; however, they are, paradoxically, only capable of rising to the challenge working in tandem with the European Union as we have seen. Responding to the reciprocal challenges that globalization presents simultaneously to the nation states and the European Union as such can also be the occasion for “European
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renewal”. The many aspects of the problem—economy, migration, national identity, world diplomacy, peace-keeping and the like—can stimulate the discussion of what it means for 27 very different members to belong to a European Union, which the last expansion presses upon everyone but has also been almost systematically avoided. This will be especially important in nations like France whose citizens tend to perceive themselves as losers in the globalization sweepstakes but which is at the same time a primary beneficiary within Europe. However, the problem is not restricted to France; nor is it exclusively linked to the “losers” in the globalization sweepstakes. There is much to be said for the thesis that the European nation-states, as they currently are, are a major stumbling block to creating a European political identity. Here identity means a having positive sense of participating in a common project to reach common goals, i.e., what has elsewhere been termed “post-national integration” (Roger, 2007, 24-27). The individual European national states—and their political elites—have tended to subordinate their commitments to Europe to their own national political agendas. They have been half-hearted Europeans in practice, even when they have paid loud lip-service to the idea of Europe. Moreover, when things go wrong domestically, they have often tended to make the European Union a whipping boy for whatever is problematic in their own countries. Thus it is not only that the nation states have not provided much of a forum for the constructive discussion of Europe (cf. Fabry, 2005, 29), but they have frequently made the European Union into a scapegoat for, say, the social problems arising from outsourcing or from migration that they cannot or will not tackle themselves. Nevertheless, this does not have to be the case. Briefly, the democracy deficit starts at home in the national states, so remedying it must start there as well.

A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE ON GLOBALIZATION

Globalization is a theme that cannot be avoided but none of the individual states can tackle it on its own precisely because what is
perceived as problematic about globalization is linked indissolubly with what is problematic within the given country’s own tradition of democratic practice. The issue of globalization poses challenges to all of the European states in one way or another but no two of them are challenged in identical ways. Swedes and Frenchmen have a completely different perception of the economic impact of globalization in their respective countries, the latter being largely negative despite the economic indicators, the former largely positive. However, Estonians are as happy as Swedes with economic developments but unlike Swedes, they are worried about what globalization is doing to their national culture and their language. These simple examples ultimately indicate that reactions to globalization are rooted in the differing situations the European Union member states find themselves in but, beyond that, in national traditions. However, the latter are more complicated than simply waving the flag on national holidays. In fact, it is only possible to understand one’s own traditions, i.e., the ethos in which traditional thinking is embedded, on the basis of comparisons with others, whose differences with ours bring our own clearly into focus for us. The problem is a Socratic one; it bears upon collective self-knowledge. We need to think about how we differ from others to understand ourselves. Reflecting upon differences shows us possible, alternative ways of thinking and, as such, are intellectually liberating. However, it is crucial to underscore that the differences we encounter here are differences of perspective and involve concepts so different from our own that they are likely to be “essentially contested” such as “national interest” or “national identity”. The point is that it is anything a simple matter to discuss such differences.

The study Europeans and the Globalization Challenge clearly indicates that there would be considerably less fear of globalization in Europe if an enthusiasm comparable to that of, say, the Swedes for their own national democratic practice could be found in all European countries. The link between the perception of globalization and the state of national political practice is perhaps borne out most
dramatically in the case of Italy, where almost anything political is more credible to Italians than their own government. So Italians are certain that the European Union can cope with globalization infinitely better than their crippled state. On the other hand, where there is something like full confidence in the functioning of democracy, i.e., where citizens perceive themselves as adequately and honestly represented by their elected representatives as they do in Sweden, there is hardly a problem with globalization. This very confidence in national tradition is at the same time compatible with a certain suspicion of the European Union as Swedish reticence to join the Euro zone indicates. Both sides of this paradoxical coin are relevant to our discussion.

However, there are also problems in countries that are clearly profiting economically from globalization that bear upon national (as well as regional) identity and culture. Estonia, for example, is one of the economic success stories but Estonians, like Spaniards, who also welcome the modernizing, westernizing effects of globalization, have fears about what is happening to their national traditions. Comparing and contrasting what happens in a big country like Spain with a smaller one like Estonia can be as illuminating for these countries’ respective citizens as the even more dramatic contrast with those countries like Sweden and Italy where such threats are at best marginal phenomena. “Must economic progress be uprooting?” is a profound question for all Europeans but one that they can best discuss together.

All of this indicates that the state of democracy in the individual states, the perception of globalization and hope connected with the future of the European Union stand in a definite relationship to one another. The issues surrounding globalization such as migration, the environment, uprooted identities etc., present a golden opportunity for coordinating European and national interests through intra-national as well as international dialogue. Naturally, these dialogues are going to involve clashes of opinion; for the issues that must be raised are
shot-through with essential contestability: for Estonians modernization is a blessing; whereas for Frenchmen it is a threat. From the point of view of the European Union the problem of globalization is not simply the sum of the perceptions of that problem in the individual lands but also the relation of those perceptions to one another. However, that is something that Brussels cannot thematize on its own; for it is too far away. Thus there is a pressing need for co-operation in creating dialogues within the European national states as well as within the European Union itself in order to address the problems posed by the perceptions of globalization in the individual lands. Such dialogues would have the effect of strengthening the fledgling European civil society. However, we should not delude ourselves about the difficulties that the task imposes upon European politics today. What might be done?

**EUROPARLIAMENTARIANS, YOUTH AND THE IDEA OF A GLOBALIZATION FORUM**

European parliamentarians could fulfil a useful intermediate function of mediating between 1) citizens groups from within civil society, i.e. churches, ATTAC etc., 2) national governments and 3) Brussels. The Lisbon strategy foresees both a massive European Union investment for facilitating communication about what we can call a European civil society and further development of precisely the sort of reciprocal relationship between the European Union and the individual nation states that our analysis suggests is necessary. (Bell et al, 2007, 65-69.) With respect to the need for more effective communication, the Irish rejection of that very Lisbon Treaty clearly demonstrates the pressing need for rational persuasion in European matters and at the same time illustrates the difficulties we must expect to encounter in creating genuine political dialogue in Europe. In this respect there is another very important lesson for Europe in American political experience: the first attempt to unify the original thirteen colonies under The Articles of Confederation was a complete failure; American unification was only
possible after the ratification of the present US Constitution, which required a massive exercise in persuasion, which is immortalized in *The Federalist Papers*, arguably America’s foremost contribution to the Enlightenment (Nevins and Commager, 1976, 97-116). With respect to furthering reciprocity between Brussels and the national states, the aim of post-national European integration would be served by striving for substantive consensus on the basis of constitutive consensus, i.e., agreeing to disagree; in terms of which all parties to the discussion would endeavour to persuade dissidents of the pertinence of their views. Here is where the virtues of patience, tolerance and integrity come into the picture. Without them the whole procedure is in vain; for we find ourselves in a situation in which we are arguing about such rudimentary matters whatever the relevant facts of the case are, i.e., in a situation where it is extremely easy to perceive the opponent as being a fool or a heretic. Yet, this is the sort of situation we find ourselves in. An adequate forum for discussing controversial matters of public life across perspectives must be created.

Striving to attain this sort of consensus about globalization should be strongly encouraged by the European Union. How? A new forum for public debates about the super-national concerns—the global economy, the environment, energy, migration, cultural identity—should be created within each European state precisely to discuss these pressing views. National parties should encourage their European parliamentarians to become a liaison between Brussels/Strasbourg and their countries. A first step in that direction would be to mandate that they regularly address the national parliament in European matters in order to get the “facts” straight; for there is much to be said for the thesis that globalization—and the European Union—is often deeply misunderstood and misrepresented at the factual level by its critics. It should be the task of the Europarlimentarians to set the record straight. It is important to note that the Lisbon Treaty would grant responsibility to national governments for seeing to it that the principle of solidarity is respected. This, in turn, implies
that national parliaments would have to be continually informed on the state of legislative developments in Brussels. In any case, the question of migration provides an excellent example: a strong case can—and should—be made of the many advantages and resources that migrants bring with them to the countries they visit. Problems in regulating migration should not be allowed to obscure those advantages (cf. *The Economist*, 2008). “What is in the common good with respect to migration policy?” “How are the factors involved to be weighed?” are questions that provoke interesting responses on the part of various interests precisely because it demands of their representatives that they make the effort to look beyond their own perspective. Europarliamentarians should also be responsible for organizing and animating such discussions of the implications of globalization in a given land in the context of a Globalization Forum, which should be open to the participation of all citizens. Groups concerned with the implications of globalization, including critics like ATTAC, should be encouraged to participate. In this context regional voices could be built into discussions of European debates in a way that would further the growth of a “Europe of regions”. The office of the European MP should also, for example, create blogging space in the internet on matters pertaining to globalization.

Particular care should be taken to interest the young in these debates; for the future lies with them. The current practice of sending semi-retired elder statesmen as representatives to the European parliament is hardly conducive to that end. More young representatives with whom youth can more easily identify and communicate will be needed to carry on the task of persuasion and to carry the wishes of the electorate, especially the young into the corridors of power within the European Union. A recent highly-acclaimed study by The Fondation pour l’innovation politique on the attitudes of young people in Europe (Fondation pour l’innovation politique, 2008) clearly indicates that young people are as much, if not more, concerned with participating in meaningful projects as they are with material rewards and that
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precisely the kind of common project that we would associate with the notion of a European public philosophy based upon a commitment to pursuing the European common good is a desideratum of the first order for them. Moreover, that very report suggests that participation in acts of orderly dissidence, such as strikes and alternative forms of political engagement etc. should be recognized on their CVs as part of their education and qualifications for work. Their participation in the discussion of a European Forum would therefore be a step in realizing the new image of youth that the report rightly advocates. It is more than a consoling thought that the future is in the hands of the generally optimistic young. It is, therefore, advisable that there be a maximum amount of contact between European parliamentarians and young Europeans, all of whom have plenty of reasons for being concerned with challenges that globalization presents with respect to economic development, the environment, migration, etc. One concrete step in this direction would be to create such a European forum in connection with the highly successful Erasmus Program, which allows thousands of young people to study in foreign countries annually. The creation of an “Erasmus Forum” would give them the opportunity to pursue their exchanges of views with students in the host country systematically and not just informally. This would encourage well-ordered social and cultural comparisons (the recent study of European youth emphasizes that national differences outweigh generational differences with respect to the attitudes of the young, Fondation pour l’innovation politique, 2008). The themes associated with globalization such as those bearing upon the environment, international terrorism, national traditions are equally logical subjects of discussion in such a forum.

In this way, national representatives in the European parliament would become, in effect, a new breed of genuinely European politician with strong roots in national politics but equally strong ones in European politics. They would be involved in producing a genuinely polyphonic European identity (cf. Burke, 1997, passim), i.e., an identity with mutually complementary national, regional, local and European
“layers” in both word and deed. Disaffection with politics is the result of a lack of a sense of being represented by European Union politicians. A new European Union politician is required to produce a New Solidarity. Thus what is required today in Europe is the establishment of centers for encouraging persuasive discourse in treating the concerns of Europeans with respect to globalization: economic development, the environment, international peace-keeping etc., both within the national states and within the European Union. What will the debates in such centers look like?

PRODUCING CONSENSUS ON IMMIGRATION: A TEST CASE

We can illustrate how a public philosophy for the creation of a robust political culture works on the basis of a series of hypothetical debate-situations which exemplify how the concepts we have developed in the first section of this study concerning consensus and the development of a public philosophy for Europe come into play. The controversies surrounding immigration will serve to concretize our discussion here. How can discussion of problems relating to migration deepen our understanding of ourselves as Europeans?

Understanding ourselves as Europeans demands that we reflect upon how we differ from each other as Europeans. European attitudes to immigration within the Union itself have been very different from country to country since 2004 when eight eastern European countries joined the Union. They constitute an excellent point of departure for establishing consensus about migration in Europe. In 2004 only Sweden, Ireland and the UK opened their doors to free migration from the east. These countries clearly have reaped benefits (Rudd and Skriskandarajah, 2008). It would certainly be desirable for Europarliamentarians from those lands to engage in public discussions with their counterparts, say, in France or Spain, which have been more sceptical (cf. Cautrès, 2007; Martínez-i-Coma, 2007). However, that discussion is radically incomplete without
participation from a country like Poland, which has sent so many of its daughters and sons to these countries. Poles have constituted a substantial element within the million eastern Europeans who have migrated to Britain between 2004 and 2007, about a half of which have remained. Polish immigrants to Britain have set up 40,000 businesses there in that period. Moreover they have a 9% higher employment rate than Britons and work some 4 hours per week longer. Polish participation in public debate can offer a great deal to the discussion of internal migration in terms of its benefits. Polish and British MEPs could also address the important issue of circular migration, whereby migrant workers return to their lands of origin, and see whether it can function. Furthermore, Europarlimentarians can also explain how European Union policies bear upon the standardization of rules respecting migration. Of course this does not begin to address the problem of migration into the European Union from the south and east but it would help to develop common systematic approaches to an issue that will clearly remain crucial in the foreseeable future. Yet, the very complexity of the theme insures that the way to substantive consensus with be thorny.

First of all, immigration does not refer to a single problem but to a nest of interrelated problems that touch upon almost all of the challenges confronting the European Union. Obviously enough, it can be considered a problem in economics: European lands need to supplement their workforces by importing people to perform both skilled and unskilled tasks. The fact that there are from the beginning two different needs to be fulfilled complicates the discussion. The fact that many immigrants do not speak the language of the host country and/or have religious beliefs about such matters as, say, arranged marriages, that are incompatible with the secular principles of liberal states are cultural dimensions of the problem with strong political implications. How much tolerance can be expected of the hosts? How much flexibility in cultural matters can be expected from the immigrants? This also points to the legal difficulties surrounding
immigration. Immigration is a legal issue inasmuch as the rights of migrants in their host country have to be firmly established. However, not all migrants enter the country in which they seek employment legally. The question of standards for the proposed Blue Card temporary work permit has legal as well as professional aspects. The legal issue is further complicated by the fact that many migrants seek refuge in their host countries to escape political persecution in their native lands: what sorts of legal rights should asylum seekers have? Are the same human rights issues at stake when people have entered the host country illegally as when they do so legally? Immigration also carries with it, especially in its illegal forms, the danger of introducing criminal elements into a society and is, on that basis, a problem for security forces. Immigration is basically connected to foreign policy inasmuch as economic assistance can help to curb clandestine migrants on the one hand and to encourage temporary or circular migration on the other: how might wise investment organized openly with diplomatic assistance further the cause of circular migration which most definitely would have strong implications for the relations between the countries involved? In the case of lands with different cultural traditions: how can reasonable cultural accommodation on both sides be furthered diplomatically? In any case, here we have a situation where a global problem clearly demands a global solution—global both in the territorial sense and in the sense that an almost cosmic set of variables are involved. Here it should be clear that we shall frequently have to rest content with constitutive consensus (agreeing to disagree) as we work towards substantive consensus.

In one way or another it is possible to see each of these aspects of the problem of immigration, the economic, the cultural, the legal, the security dimension or the diplomatic, as the central issue involved with the others subsidiary to it. They each allow us to define “immigration” in a particular way (and there are others as well which we have not discussed for the sake of clarity). Moreover the existing debates about
immigration frequently seem to be motivated by contradictory forces: the xenophobia on the right and cosmopolitanism on the left. Naturally, it will make all the difference in our discussions if we are talking about skilled or unskilled labor or both. Little wonder that a concept like “immigration” easily becomes essentially contested. The point of having introduced the seven criteria for essential contestability is to be able to distinguish difficult but honest disagreements in debate from confused quasi-brachial verbal assaults in the realm of ideas. Recognizing that an issue is genuinely essentially contested is the key to understanding why concern for the common good compels us to continue the debate despite the difficulties surrounding a subject like immigration. It is a concrete way of being European.

Immigration is most definitely a European issue that can only be tackled in the context of globalization. It is in the interest of all Europeans to have a fuller understanding of how it affects them. More than that, understanding immigration in all its complexity in fact entails a challenge to produce a genuinely European politics. Rising to that challenge entails considerable effort in aid of producing consensus on Europe; for it means systematically airing all of the real and imaginary conflicts around issues like migration in Europe. For politicians it means looking beyond the good of the party or even the nation towards the European common good. There is a special challenge to MEPs to transcend national perspectives by contributing to transforming them. This is an exercise in courageous European citizenship. However, to have done so will be to have addressed the directly European “democracy deficit”, which has rightly been more accurately characterized as “a failure of democratic praxis in the public arena” (Ricard-Nihoul, 2008, 56).

A PUBLIC PHILOSOPHY FOR EUROPE

In 2004 Bronislaw Geremek lamented that there was no joyous atmosphere of reunion as eight Central European countries from the
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former Communist bloc entered the European Union (Le Soir, 2004, 6). There was nothing like the outburst of jubilation that attended the fall of the Berlin wall. There was no sense of European re-unification in 2004. Instead of a family reunion there was a sense of morbidity, fear and disenchantment. The abiding sense of alienation in what was formerly East Germany should not distract us from the truth in Geremek’s observation: Europe needs to cultivate the sort of democratic development that Europeans will want to celebrate. The point is that there is much less of a sense of a common political culture in Europe than there should be to make an unreserved success story out of the European Union. The lack of economic parity between East and West was highly discouraging as the European Union expanded in 2004 and the ability of economic developments to steer political developments into a strong sense of a common project whose goal is “ever closer union” overestimated—as it has been continually in the history of the European Union. For example the success of the Euro in the world of finance is not paralleled by popular enthusiasm. The mighty Euro has a rather modest place in hearts and minds of European citizens. It is less that there is no political culture in Europe but that it is insufficiently enlarged to be a rallying point in the lives of Europeans who are unwittingly in Europe but not of it. Changing that is a collective moral challenge and that makes it all the more difficult to rise to: we are simply unaccustomed to think in philosophical terms as we must if we are to realize Europe’s full potential. A public philosophy for Europe is nothing but a strategy for creating a viable political culture. A viable political culture is one in which political differences with national states and within the European Union can thrive and be exploited positively for the good of society as a whole. This is an enormous project. The problems surrounding globalization are common challenges to Europe’s nations and to its citizens that can only really be met with intelligent debate and moral commitment to the European common good. If globalization is perceived to be a common threat in many parts of Europe, it is, nevertheless, a common concern. Let Europeans learn from each other’s experience in vigorous
debates and in doing so create a European consensus that would give democracy back to the demos and be a decided step towards that “ever closer union” to which Europe aspires. It is a worthy goal: one whose realization could only be celebrated together.
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According to philosopher Allan Janik, the feeling that the EU is being swept away by globalization feeds the notion that European democracy is faltering. Janik argues for a new public philosophy based on a consensual European attitude towards globalization. At present, Europeans have diverging views towards globalization, formed in part by their political history and economic situation. This needn’t be viewed as an insurmountable hurdle, but rather as an occasion for rationale debate taking all views and interests into account. In “agreeing to disagree” Europe may develop its public philosophy towards globalization.

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Allan Janik, philosopher and historian of ideas, is a scientific advisor at the Fondation pour l’innovation politique. He was research fellow of the Brenner Archives and professor of philosophy at the University of Innsbruck until his retirement in 2006. He is currently honorary professor of philosophy at the University of Vienna. His books include *Wittgenstein’s Vienna* (with S. Toulmin), *The Concept of Knowledge in Practical Philosophy* (in Swedish), *Style, Politics and the Future of Philosophy* and several others.