

---

# WHAT AWAITS EUROPE : TOWARD FEDERAL EUROPE ?

**Conference given by [Christopher H. Cordey](#), CEO of Futuratinow at The 2013 World Future 2013 Conference on July 21 in Chicago.**

Well, a "Swiss citizen talking about the future of Europe at the World Future Society" ... quite peculiar some might say ?

Frankly, Switzerland, called "the country of the middle", has much more to offer than its quality watches, exquisite chocolates, multi-national headquarters, wealthy middle class, beautiful landscape, pharmaceuticals products, irrelevant unemployment rate, or disappearing banking secrecy.

As Switzerland is a confederation using federalism as its political system, the main idea here is to outline if "Federalism is the way forward for an ailing Europe of 6 millions impatient young jobless European ?

## GAME OVER ?

Back in 1950, Europe was not built for economic or financial reasons but to bring peace between European countries.

It was a political ambition, whose design was essentially a Franco-German compromise.

But, let's be realistic. Today, Europe is in a mess and under stress

What started as a financial crisis back in 2009, has transformed into a economic, banking, political, institutional, societal but above all moral crisis.

Europe is uncertain about its future, its own values, interests and even identity.

And even the most brilliant economists, academics and thinker do not agree on what is the next best for Europe.

## EUROPE 1.0

Today Europe survives mainly by fear of a breakout. It is perceived by some as "an elite-driven republic lacking the benefit of a democratic, pan European identity" which "institutional expansion has proceeded way ahead of the appetites of its citizens".

But unlike many of the new emerging economic power, most of Europe is stable, largely peaceful and rather democratic, at least at the periphery.

In fact, under the surface there are six different schisms

- **Germany vs. the Rest:** this is the German exceptionalism. Its outstanding economic resilience generates growing negative feeling among other nations.
- **France vs. Germany:** both countries have divergent views on the future of Europe. Growth vs Austerity.
- **North vs. Southern Europe:** Competitiveness in the North clearly out passes the one in the South.
- **West vs. Eastern Europe :** there are still post-cold war negative resentment among countries
- **Populace vs. Elite:** a disillusioned, disenchanted and dispirited population.
- **Old vs. Young:** there are growing tensions between "the jobfull senior generation" and "the jobless and junior generation".

According to the OECD, 6 million or 26 % of the young European are jobless. The figures reaches 60 % among the young Greek.

The question is then "how to channel the young European's energy toward "something" more positive, constructive and engaging ?"

But, Europe is not only about corruption of politician, democratic deficit, youth unemployment, street riots, populism or nationalisam.

The European Union has been an amazing success story, pertaining the ashes from which it arose after WW2.

Over the past decade, Europe's major achievement include

- the emergence of the European Union & the creation of a monetary union
- the creation of a 500 millions consumers Free trade market
- the reunification of Germany
- the extension of democracy to Eastern Europe
- the improvment of national health services and welfare
- the enforcement of some human rights

Last but not least, the European Union was awarded the 2012 Nobel Peace Prize as it contributed to the advancement of peace and reconciliation, democracy and human rights in Europe. No other nation or union of Nations has ever received such a coveted prize.

## EUROPE 2.0

In Global Europe 2050, published in 2012 by the European Commission, three scenarios were outlined :

In the first scenario, **Nobody cares**, Europe just muddles along with no clear vision or direction.

In the second scenario, **EU under Threat**, EU faces a Global economic decline followed by reactionary protectionist measures.

where in the last scenario, **EU Renaissance**, EU continues to enlarge and become stronger. It

consolidates its political, fiscal and military integration.

There is a fourth scenario envisioned by Augur, a collaborative Research European Projet, that might blend into the EU Renaissance scenario.

**Federalism**, could prove to be as a possible way forward for Europe. Federalism is a system based upon democratic rules and institutions in which the power to govern is shared between national and provincial governments.

But can federalism provide solutions to the EU's current crises of confidence and democratic legitimacy ? Can the Swiss Federalism model and experience point the way forward ?

Switzerland is a very prosperous small country of 8 millions people located in the center of Europe. The country – beloved by China with which it signed an historical free trade agreement - owes its current prosperity, security (or least perceived) and stability to a certain number of factors, of which :

- Its size and strategic geographical location.
- Direct Democracy – "We (citizen) are the State"
- Subsidiarity Principle - "Complete decentralisation"
- Non-Professional Politicians
- Safe Haven for Capital and Brainpower ...
- Middle-Class Mentality
- and of course for its Neutrality

What unify a country of 26 cantons, 4 nationals languages without any ethnic, linguistic identity is its common history and a unique political system.

The Swiss Federal Constitution declares the cantons to be sovereign to the extent their sovereignty is not limited by federal law. The cantons retain all powers and competencies not delegated to the Confederation by the Constitution.

Even more democratic...any voter has the power through initiative or referendum to propose a new federal law or ask modifying the federal constitution, pertaining the minimum required number of signatures are gathered.

Will the existing European Union morph into a European Federation ?

At least some politicians – of which Mr José Barroso the President of the European Commission – pro-federalism advocacy groups, political parties and specialised foreign affairs media - are bringing back this possible scenario under the limelight.

But there is no quick fix. It took centuries for Switzerland to build a federation. But back in 1848 internet was not existing, then it is doubtful that the young jobless European will be so patient.

## **BEWARE THE “DEPRESSION GENERATION”.**

More than ever, the future of Europe holds in the hands of its young generation. Its obvious of course.

The growing malaise among disillusioned, dispassionate and “hope-less” young European is a risk not to be minimized by the national States and the EU.

With only 0.7 % of the European budget spent on youth projects ... Brussels technocrats might wish to quickly get the pulse in the streets, to then implement viable, engaging and pragmatic solution to not only create job in fine, but rebuild trust and hope.

Then, what former french prime minister Mr Raymond Barre was once saying to Dr. Klaus Schwab, founder of the WEF "In the future, you will not be offered a job; you will have to create your own job" – makes a lot of sense today.

The European governments pledges (€8 billion) and the European Investment Bank (€18 billion) loans - to “combat unemployment in Europe's worst-hit countries” are great, but they are temporary short-term Band-Aid; gesticulation some might say.

Up to the professional, well established European politicians to tap into the extraordinary resources and imagination of 6 million minds.

At least this might engage them into a worthwhile, constructive and forward looking common project, ultimately helping them to regain some dignity.

As China economic growth is slowing down faster than expected, the decade ahead will be extremely volatile and bumpy.

With the coming European Parliament election next may, the young European have a tremendous opportunity to voice their concerns, but above all to engage constructively to shape the future they want. Up to them.

## **REGRESSING OR REPOSITIONING ?**

But, empowering the new generation might not be sufficient. EU needs to rebrand and reposition itself. The narrative must change.

What if Europe was repositioning itself as the "World's Nr 1 Federation (Union) of States" ? instead of competing on economic indicators ? and be downgraded to 3<sup>rd</sup> economy after China and USA in few years ?

## IN A NUTSHELL:

- ✓ Europe is a young, peacefull Union of 28 States. EU was awarded the 2012 Nobel Peace Prize. It is in a mess, under stress, not in decline but in transformation.
- ✓ Europe has a symbolic meaning for the whole world. It is a symbol and a prototype for living peacefully together despite contradictions and opposing interests.
- ✓ EU needs a new transformational leadership French+German ? not a technocratic one at the may 2014 european election.
- ✓ Reform NOW ! Banking + Fiscal + Competitiveness + Political Union. Eventually toward a European Federation (EF) by 2020, inspired from the Swiss model ?
- ✓ Europe needs a new, thruthful but inspirational narrative.
- ✓ EU should Reposition/Rebrand as «The World's #1 Federation (Union) of States» in order to avoid becoming the "3<sup>rd</sup> largest Economy after China and USA". Blue Ocean strategy.
- ✓ The young European generation must become self-reliant, more entrepreneurial, more mobile and above all engage in civic life. Up to them.
- ✓ Imagine tapping into the mind of 6 million young bright mind ! What about crowdsourcing «Europe Vision 2040» among the young jobless European ? A great way to channel positive energy into a constructive, common, and forward looking project; ultimately enabling the hope-less young to contribute, then regain some hope and dignity.

By **Christopher H. Cordey**

Fondateur de [www.futuratinow.com](http://www.futuratinow.com) - un cabinet-conseil en IDEAtion, anticipation stratégique et formation - Christopher est co-auteur en 2014 d' *"Heidi réveille-toi : la Suisse est-elle tombée dans les pièges du succès ?"* (Slatkine) et auteur en 2018 d' *"Intelligence 5.0 : le nouvel enjeu de prospérité nationale."* (Revue Militaire Suisse). Depuis 2008, il accompagne les dirigeants des secteurs public et privé à tirer parti de cette période complexe, contradictoire et chaotique. Il travaille actuellement sur le futur de la neurodiversité, sur les enjeux sécuritaires du nexus eau, alimentation, énergie et minéraux stratégiques et sur la convergence cyber-bio-physique. Associé de [www.yonders.world](http://www.yonders.world) il collabore avec l'association [www.procure.ch](http://www.procure.ch). Il est un ancien membre du board de l'association [www.swissintell.ch](http://www.swissintell.ch)

### References :

- The Re-Emergence of Europe, Weforum 2012
- Global Europe 2050, European Commission, 2012
- The End of the West : the once Future of Europe, 2011
- Augur Project, 2013
- Global Affairs, July-August 2013