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The Federalist Debate

Papers on Federalism in Europe and the World

The establishment of a perfect civil Constitution depends on the problem of governing the external relations among states through law

Immanuel Kant

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Administrative Office
Einstein Center for International Studies (CESI)
c/o Polo del'900
Via del Carmine, 14
10122 Torino (Italy)
E-mail: info@centroeinstein.it

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Union of European Federalists (UEF)
Square de Meeûs 25
B-1000 Bruxelles
secretariat@federalists.eu
www.federalists.eu

World Federalist Movement/
Institute for Global Policy (WFM/IGP)
P.O. Box 1059
New York, NY 10150
www.wfm-igp.org

Young European Federalists (JEF)
Square de Meeûs 25
B-1000 Bruxelles
info@jef.eu
www.jef.eu

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A New Absolutism

Lucio Levi

Within the space of a single week, Trump arrested the President of Venezuela, Nicolás Maduro, and his wife, Cilia Flores, and transferred them to U.S. prisons pending trial on charges of drug trafficking. Trump embodies a turning point in international relations. The United States, which once represented the cradle of constitutionalism and democracy, has been transformed into a kind of world police force, acting as an absolute sovereign outside any rule, constraint, or control. The international order created after the Second World War is dead, and the United States has become the main enemy of international law. "I do not need international law," he stated; "my morality, my mind are the only things that can stop me."

To underline the relevance of this choice, Trump decided to withdraw the United States from 66 international organizations, 31 of which belong to the United Nations system. In reality, what interests Trump is not so much the fight against drug trafficking and illegal immigration, as he often claims in public statements, but above all access to oil – of which Venezuela possesses the largest reserves in the world – and real estate investments. Democracy is excluded from his political agenda. Other priorities prevail. This is confirmed by the fact that Maduro's liberticidal regime is kept in power. For some time, the United States has built the largest prison system in the world. The killing of people of color by the police has become increasingly frequent. The government attacks universities, reduces funding for research, and empties cultural institutions of their substance.

The fact that a genocide, even if carried out through different methods and on a different scale, is today perpetrated by those who were once victims, with the consent, acquiescence, or indifference of a large part of the West, opens deeply disturbing perspectives on the nature of the new world that awaits us. The entire framework of the international order, which states had constructed to guarantee peaceful coexistence and recent statements by President Trump regarding Canada, Panama, and Greenland have stirred significant media attention and prompted discussions about what could be considered a twenty-first-century Monroe Doctrine. In the press conference on January 7th , Trump expressed his intention to annex Canada, purchase Greenland, reassert direct control over the Panama Canal, and counter Iran's nuclear program. Donald Trump justified the desire to annex these territories on the grounds of national security, primarily determined by geography and the future strategic needs of the United States. Canada and Greenland are considered essential for control over the Arctic Sea, the Panama Canal for commercial flows between the Atlantic and Pacific, and Iran for neutralizing its threat in relation to a potential nuclear attack.

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This situation calls upon the European Union to assume its responsibilities in shaping a new international order. Andrius Kubilius, the new European Commissioner for Defence and Space as of December 1, 2024, of Lithuanian nationality, has described Europe as "a sleeping giant." To underscore the shift he intends to bring to the European unification process, for the first time in the history of the European Commission, a position exclusively dedicated to the defence sector has been established. Among the main space-related programs, Galileo, for satellite positioning, and Copernicus, for monitoring climate change, are noteworthy, highlighting the EU's growing commitment to achieving a higher degree of strategic autonomy.

In line with this approach was the address by Canadian Prime Minister Carney at the World Economic Forum in Davos, in which he called upon middle powers to form coalitions:

"Our view," Carney stated, "is that middle powers must act together because if we are not at the negotiating table, we will end up on the menu. But I would also say that great powers can, for now, afford to act alone. They possess the market size, military capacity, and necessary power to dictate terms. Middle powers do not. Yet when we negotiate bilaterally with a hegemon, we negotiate from a position of weakness. We accept what is offered to us. We compete among ourselves to be the most accommodating."

This is not sovereignty. It is the exercise of sovereignty while accepting subordination. In a world defined by rivalry among great powers, middle-ranking countries face a choice: to compete among themselves for favors or to unite in order to create a third path with real impact. We should not allow the rise of great power to prevent us from seeing that the power of legitimacy, integrity, and rules will remain strong if we choose to exercise it collective.

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How to Circumvent the Veto and Establish a Second UN Charter

Augusto Lopez-Claros and Andrew Strauss

Given the scale of the world's challenges, ranging from climate disaster, to the ever-present danger of nuclear war and potentially out-of-control AI, few believe that the United Nations Charter, drafted in 1945, is fit for purpose in 2025. So, why hasn't the document been significantly amended? In a nutshell, the member states of the United Nations have long considered transformational Charter reform a non-starter because its text empowers any one of the Permanent Five members of the Security Council to veto such reform. There is no way, the logic runs, that those same Permanent Five states – the United States, China, Russia, Britain and France – who enjoy special Charter-given prerogatives would all unanimously agree to relinquish their privilege. Maybe that logic is correct, but perhaps there is another way.

In 2023 a Commission of Experts convened by the Global Governance Forum set out to draft a revised United Nations Charter that would provide the structure for a more effective problem-solving institution, free of the paralysis and dysfunction that have come to characterize many of United Nations' operations. In 2024 just ahead of the United Nations Summit of the Future, the Global Governance Forum published the results of months of deliberations and drafting: A Second United Nations Charter.

Faced with the perennial reform thwarting concern that the mere prospect of a veto by any one of the Permanent Five countries could defeat their reform project, the Commission drew inspiration from the framers of the United States Constitution. Under the Articles of Confederation, which governed the United States from 1781 to 1789, amendments required the unanimous consent of all thirteen states. This unanimity rule rendered reform virtually impossible. By the mid-1780s, the United States faced mounting crises – economic fragmentation, trade disputes, and internal instability – that threatened its survival.

The founding of the United States

Recognizing that modifying the Articles by resorting to their own amendment provisions was futile, the delegates to the Constitutional Convention of 1787 in Philadelphia took a bold step. They exceeded their mandate to "revise" the Articles and instead drafted a new Constitution establishing a stronger federal government. The new framework retained the same national name, "the United States of America," but conceived a new legal entity. Crucially, no longer bound by the amendment requirements of the Articles of Confederation, it provided that the Constitution would take effect once ratified by only nine of the thirteen states, instead of all thirteen.

This legal and political innovation transformed the United States from a confederation into a union. It demonstrated that when existing amendment rules make reform impossible, states can collectively create a successor organization that preserves continuity while introducing a more functional system.

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Adapting the U.S. precedent

Emulating the American founders, under the Second Charter's acceptance and ratification provisions, the Commission provides that if a General Assembly initiated Charter Review or "Renewal" Conference were to reach broad agreement on reforms, but a permanent member was then poised to veto the outcome, the reforming states would have the option to constitute a new legal entity under the same name, "the United Nations." This new organization would inherit all rights, responsibilities, assets, and treaty relationships of the old one, ensuring continuity of international obligations. In essence, it would replicate the institutional substance of the United Nations but under a renewed constitutional framework reflecting democratic legitimacy and contemporary priorities.

Legally, this approach is sound. International law permits states to establish new organizations and to agree among themselves that the new body will assume the rights and duties of its predecessor. The transition could be managed through established international law mechanisms, as has been the case in the transition from the League of Nations to the United Nations and from the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade to the World Trade Organization. Duly approved legal instruments, for example, could provide for the new organization to become the successor to the old United Nations, transferring its assets and providing for continuity of practices. The Specialized Agencies – such as WHO, FAO, and UNESCO – could renew their agreements with the new United Nations. Provision could be made for existing resolutions and decisions to remain in force.

Once a new Charter text is agreed and ratified by a critical mass of states, it would enter into force as the constitution of a new United Nations, automatically incorporating existing UN members as continuing members. Article 110 stipulates that "all previous members of the United Nations will be deemed to be members of the New United Nations." In this way, the re-founded UN would maintain institutional continuity while introducing reformed governance structures, including greater representativeness, a rebalanced Security Council, and a new Parliamentary Assembly.

The political challenge

The political challenges initiated by the transition would be greater than the legal one. States losing institutional privileges, particularly permanent Council members, might well resist. Yet if two-thirds or more of the world's nations, representing the majority of humanity, were resolute in supporting reform, one could imagine negotiations winning over some powerful countries and leading to the adoption of many of the Second Charter's most consequential provisions.

Of course, initially skeptical powers could well be expected to maintain an ambiguous posture toward the reconstituted United Nations or even remain aloof from it. Nevertheless, enjoying formal membership, they could continue to engage in the organization's institutions and might find it in their interest to maintain diplomatic flexibility and avoid a clean rupture. As with the American states that initially hesitated to ratify the U.S. Constitution, international political dynamics would likely favor eventual integration into the new framework.

A peaceful revolution in global governance

The proposal for a Second United Nations Charter does not seek to dismantle the existing United Nations but to renew it through constitutional evolution. It recognizes that the

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most serious obstacle to meaningful reform is not a lack of ideas, but the structural veto entrenched in the Charter itself. By invoking the precedent of 1787, the proposal offers a way to move forward within the bounds of international law and political realism.

This approach also reflects important philosophical continuity. Just as the framers of the U.S. Constitution acted in defense of the common good when their original compact proved unworkable, today's reformers are guided by the imperative to make global governance fit for the challenges of our century.

The mechanism proposed in the Second Charter is thus both legally elegant and symbolically powerful. It demonstrates that even institutions bound by rigid rules can be transformed through lawful collective initiative. The lesson from Philadelphia remains relevant: when the existing order makes essential reform impossible, those who act together to renew the social contract – not those who block it – carry the mantle of legitimacy.

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From Trump to Federation

Joseph Preston Baratta

What are current political conditions to advance the European Union and to renew projects of world union? Current consensus seems to be that conditions are plainly opposed. Most opposed is the drift to autocracy in the United States under President Trump, but the threat to democracy is seen around the world as the numbers of democracies declines. The Economist Democracy Index reports that the number of full democracies is now 25, flawed democracies 46, hybrid regimes 36, and authoritarian states 60. (The U.S.A. is ranked as a flawed democracy.) Trump's record is not wholly dictatorial, but he persecutes political opponents, stifles dissent and speech, bypasses the Congress, manipulates the law to stay in power, defies the courts, vilifies marginalized minorities, controls information and the news media, tries to take over universities, prepares the military for domestic control, declares national emergencies on false premises, uses power for personal profit, and creates a cult of personality. [1]

Trump does not explain his decisions and policies in traditional ways, but sometimes he links to campaign promises and even to some good. On removing undocumented immigrants, for instance, his policy, though often cruel, is aimed at restoring U.S. immigration law, which had become too porous for years as former presidents winked at the law in accordance with the image of America as a refuge for the tired and poor, "yearning to breathe free." He also gets rid of a few of his "criminals and rapists" who came in with the poor. On the eve of mass migrations caused by climate change and state corruption, America must have working immigration laws to secure its borders. It must solve the "Immigration Problem." Other policies, like higher tariffs, insults to allies, or undoing the post-1945 international order, are harder to justify.

Trump seems to me, as an old marine, to be preparing a coup d'état in 2026, if inflation should threaten him with losses in the Congressional elections, or in 2028, when the Constitution provides for further elections of the president and vice-president. He has refused to say unequivocally that he will abide by the law, which provides that he cannot be elected a third time. He has pardoned all his followers in the January 6, 2021, insurrection (if it was not a coup). He has vilified the leaders of the following impeachment trials, including Representatives Adam Schiff and Nancy Pelosi. He has renamed the Defense Department the War Department, forgetting why the old War Department was renamed in 1948 to reflect the renunciation of the right of war in the new U.N. Charter (Art. 2[4]).

His defense secretary recently assembled hundreds of his top generals and admirals to inform them of policies ending diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), which had become a front for gay rights in the military. Trump appeared at that meeting, warning that U.S. cities should become a "training ground" for the military. That threatens domestic use of the armed forces to pursue his policies. He has purged nine senior officers, one of whom, Admiral Alvin Holsey, commander of S0UTHCOM, resigned lest he have to obey unlawful orders to use force against Venezuela or Colombia.

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Holsey eloquently gave no reasons, in accordance with long-standing military traditions of noninvolvement in politics. Trump threatened Mexico during the campaign. Trump has dispatched the National Guard to Los Angeles, Portland, Chicago, Washington, DC, and other cities on missions to enforce the laws domestically, rather than rely on the courts, as provided in the Constitution.

Recently Dick Cheney, vice-president in the George W. Bush administration, died. He was the leading advocate of the war in Iraq after the 9/11/2001 terrorist attacks. In the lengthy obituaries, he is presented as chief architect of ever more centralized, "imperial"American foreign policy. Cheney claimed that the powers of the presidency had been unduly eroded by Congress in the years after the Vietnam War and the Watergate scandal, which drove Richard M. Nixon out of the White House. The age of terrorism in his mind warranted broader executive powers. "I believe in a strong, robust executive authority, and I think that the world we live in demands it," he told reporters on a trip to Iraq in 2005:

> "I do believe that especially in the day and age we live in, the nature of the threats we face, the president of the United States needs to have his Constitutional powers unimpaired, if you will, in terms of the conduct of national security."[2]

Hence, to prevent future terrorist attacks, Cheney advocated aggressive policies including warrantless surveillance, indefinite detention, and brutal interrogation in intelligence gathering. He charged Saddam Hussein with developing nuclear weapons (unconfirmed by the United Nations) and pushed for the unilateral invasion of Iraq to topple Hussein in 2003. Out of that mistake came the rise of ISIS and wars in the Middle East almost to the present day. But the point is that centralized presidential power has developed for defense of the country in the face of novel weapons in a globalizing world, like hijacked commercial airplanes, small munitions carried by individuals, "smart" weapons of all kinds, electronic subversion, and even nuclear weapons in the hands of non-state actors.

Such executive power is not the result of neo-fascist personal qualities in the president – in international relations, explanation by the psychology of leaders is always a mistake. It is rooted, rather, in responsibility to defend the country. Every president since 1970 has resisted Congressional limits on his war powers. Even Jimmy Carter, the president who presided over the end of the Vietnam War, regarded the War Powers Act of 1970 as unconstitutional, though it was designed to prevent the president from starting a war alone. So it is to the Trump presidency. Trump's assumption of war powers is typical of the drift to authoritarianism world-wide.

There is no way to restrain the executive as long as weapons become more lethal and smaller. In Russia's war in Ukraine, it appears to me, the drone, supported by signals intelligence, is replacing the rifle as the basic weapon of the infantry. As long as leadership in an arms race is seen as the basic method of defense, in place of serious new efforts of disarmament and rule of law, there will be no end to this degradation. National executives responsible for defense necessarily must acquire more power to act. Legislatures, like the U.S. Congress under the domination of President Trump, are prone to paralysis, which is a dangerous situation when terrorism threatens the state. This is the cause, it seems to me, why autocracy is spreading over the whole world.

As many have perceived, humanity under their autocrats now seems threatened by some kind

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of nuclear war. Arnold Toynbee called it the recourse, in declining civilizations, to a knock-out blow when creative solutions have been abandoned. All the treaties that ended the Cold War – INF, CFE, START – have been allowed to expire. The CTB (1996) is stuck with all nine nuclear powers holding out and 44 potential nuclear powers waiting. The NPT (1968) is not leading to nuclear disarmament.[3] Global military spending has reached the $2.7 trillion mark. The United States is embarked on the "modernization" of its nuclear forces, costing up to $1 trillion. Trump recently announced the resumption of U.S. nuclear testing. The new Space Force, established in 2019 during his first administration, threatens the Outer Space Treaty of 1967. The Chinese have a road-mobile, ballistic anti-ship missile, with maneuverable reentry vehicles (MaRVs), capable of striking moving carriers and supporting vessels, the Dongfeng ["East wind"]-21D. It threatens U.S. power in the Pacific.

Deterrence cannot hold forever. Human beings, even Air Force personnel, cannot live with the fate of the world at their fingertips forever. An accident or a policy error, even by "rational" commanders, will set off the weapons. You wouldn't give loaded shotguns to a group of ten-year-old boys. Recently, the Netflix film, Kathryn Bigelow's House of Dynamite, shows quite dramatically what could actually happen if, say, North Korea launched an ICBM to Chicago. None of the Big Three was responsible, but the long awaited WWIII came to pass.

It could start with a Sarajevo incident. Perhaps it won't be the end of the world. If it were stopped after a brief exchange, it would still mark a dividing line in human history. Survivors might not bear to describe it but would refer, like W. Warren Wagar in A Short History of the Future (1999), to the "Catastrophe." It would be an experience so grave that it could never be forgotten.

It is customary, for world federalists, European federalists, and scholars in general, to stop at this point as if their work of prevention is done and no future remains for survivors. But World Wars I & II did not end the human race. We must think the unthinkable. Federalists must imagine how humanity could survive. I think the first step will be to save and reform our national republics by meeting the challenge of strong executives while restoring the legislatures and judiciaries as checks on arbitrary powers. Unions will come later. We cannot just await, with Einstein, WWIIII fought with sticks and stones. Shall we go back to kings and tyrants? The fact is, the Enlightenment is not dead. We must in every land return to the great unfinished project of building the republican (or democratic) form of government. Then the task will be to form regional unions and necessary world federation, for continued international anarchy is a formula for catastrophe. We must not give way to tribal hatreds and injustice. As the young Harris Wofford said at another dark time in 1948,

> "What is proposed is that federalists wake up to the fact that they have stumbled into man's greatest peaceful revolution, and that they are its vanguard. It is the revolution to establish politically the brotherhood of man."[4]

No national federation or republic has been established without war – not the United States of America, not Italy – nor have the first experiments of world government been attempted without heeding the lessons of WWI and WWII. In the United States, there are already hesitant calls for a new U.S. Constitutional Convention to meet the challenge of Trump and the like of "imperial" presidents. It is led by former Senator Russ Feingold, who has written a book aware of the dangers, The Constitution in Jeopardy (2022).

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Professor Jill Lapore of Harvard follows up with the Amend Project. They are aware of past world federalist proposed amendments, but most of their ire is reserved for corporate and Republican opponents, who would limit the convention to reforms not affecting the status quo or even go back to the confederation of the states.

Constitutional conventions provide an opportunity for federalists to exercise their influence. At a time of national and international crises, there will be a search for representatives at the convention who have experience of government and who can – like those at Philadelphia in 1787 – consider the measures that would safeguard liberty while empowering the executive to meet modern threats to security. There will be a search for men and women of "virtue." No doubt, they should convene in secret, as in 1787. The reasons would be the same: to confront the real problems of modern times and to make the necessary concessions of sovereignty, that is, powers emanating from the people and presently captured by the imperialists.

What Constitutional devices could both empower yet limit the president? I imagine that general and complete disarmament under effective international control would again become high policy, as in the Atlantic Charter of 1941. That would lower the threshold for abuse of power. But what do we do with a president who fails to see that the laws be faithfully executed, or forces the courts to abandon cases against him, or massively abuses the pardon power? Can the legislature, as representative of the people, still be empowered to enact the rule of law to check the defenders of national security? Why do we even trust the rule of law? We may have to go back to Blackstone on English law, John Adams of the American Revolution on establishing a government of laws, not men, and Hans Kelsen on international law.

If the president is inclined not to obey the laws, or if the legislature or the judiciary becomes, in his or her judgment, corrupt, the enforcer of the laws, disarmament regimes, international laws, and norms would become the memory of the Catastrophe. Any deviance would be met by the word, "Remember!"

What will be the role of European and world federalists in times of U.S. and other constitutional conventions? I am distressed by the weakness of the current federalist movement. Hardly a single person of great experience or world reputation now expresses faith in unions to establish peace. We are still labeled "utopians," obstructionists in the guise of perfectionists." We do not seem to have the facts or the arguments that could persuade busy officials vested with the responsibility to defend the state. What precedents can we cite for our project to place common trust in say, a novel U.N. Parliamentary Assembly, parallel to the U.N. General Assembly, to advise on or decide such issues as the war in Ukraine or in Gaza? Not, it seems, the Congress of the American Union, the European Parliament, the dispute settlement panels of the International Trade Organization, or the arbitral processes of the Law of the Sea.

Judging by how the Charter of the future United Nations was conceived in the U.S. State Department in 1942-43, written studies and proposals made available to statesmen should again be helpful, since time for original reflection will be unavailable. At the start of WWII, Clarence Streit's Union Now (1939) was the most substantial example, along with a single law article by Grenville Clark and some excerpts drawn from the English federalists.[5] Now we have Clark and Sohn's World Peace through World Law (1958), Joseph Schwartzberg's Transforming the United Nations System (2013), Andreas Bummel and Jo Leinen's A World Parliament (2018, 2024),

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Mahmoud Sharei's The Future in the Past (2025), and Augusto Lopez-Claros's A Second United Nations Charter (2025). Hundreds more exist. These lie on shelves, ready for reading. They assume that the people of the world will be ready after another great failing of the sovereign state system.

We federalists ourselves believe in the necessity of a government to keep the peace, as clearly expressed in The Federalist (1787-88), Nos. 1–6, 15–17, 20, 23, and 51. Europeans have gone farthest in showing the way to a more perfect union among the older historic states. Jean Monnet, father of the European Union, envisioned popular readiness: Nous ne coalisons pas des États, nous unissons des hommes. "We are not forming coalitions between States, but union among people." Federalists in the future will find themselves resisting old fashioned national patriots, who, after the supposed nuclear war, will return to "rallying around the flag." To do so, federalists must uphold a new political wisdom, going back to John Locke, Woodrow Wilson, Franklin Roosevelt, and Albert Einstein. In 1945, Einstein said,

> "The first atomic bomb destroyed more than the city of Hiroshima. It also exploded our inherited, outdated political ideas.… No league system ever attempted in human history could prevent conflict between its members. We must aim for a Federal Constitution of the world, a working world-wide legal order, if we hope to prevent an atomic war."

Federalists in the coming crisis must anticipate a global political struggle to re-establish or establish republican forms of government. We must bring the number of flawed democracies (46) to that of full democracies (25). And of authoritarian states (60) at least to hybrid regimes (36). After WWII many countries, like Germany and Japan, amended their constitutions:

"Germany, Art. 24. Entry into a collective security system. (1) The Federation may by legislation transfer sovereign powers to international institutions.…"

That constitutional process will necessarily continue (total to date: 49). As for international organizations, reform will not be so simple as proposing to abolish the veto in the U.N. Security Council while nations claim the sovereign right to wage war. The whole Charter must be rewritten to establish a republican government of the union. The sovereignty of the people would have to be strengthened as the sovereignty of the states declines. Survivors will want a good government, belonging to the people. Capital, secured by the laws, would have to consent to share its gains. Much stronger, tentative bills of human rights would have to be part of the solution. So would action, however futile, to slow climate change and protect the diversity of life. It's true that some natural disaster like the melting of the Greenland ice cap (also inevitable) might be the crisis that inspires collective action, in place of nuclear war. But when a president or national executive strays from the rule of law, the enforcer of the laws would be: Remember!

1 New York Times, 11/2/2025.
2 Ibid., 11/5/2025.
3 Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty, 1987-2019.
Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty, 1990-2023.
Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, 1991-2026.
Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban (185 parties), 1996- Not in force.
Non-Proliferation Treaty (191 parties), 1968- Extended indefinitely.
4 Harris Wofford, "Dead End: Federalism Limited," Common Cause, 1 (May 1948): 388.
5 Joseph Preston Baratta, The Politics of World Federation, Westport, CT: Praeger, 2004: 98.

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COP30 Marks the Limits of Climate Multilateralism

Monica Frassoni

Without phasing out fossil fuels, rules that move beyond unanimity, and coalitions of willing states, the global climate process will remain stuck.

In Belém, Brazil, in the heart of the Amazon rainforest, COP30 came to a close on Saturday 22 November. Ten years after the Paris Agreement, it was meant to be a moment of truth for global climate action. After an all-night negotiating session, the Brazilian presidency released a final package labelled the "global mutirão" – a Portuguese term evoking collective effort and shared responsibility.

Instead, what emerged with clarity was the lack of agreement on a basic reality: without a rapid phase-out of fossil fuels, without halting deforestation, and without real support for the most vulnerable countries and social groups, there is no safe future for anyone. Growing reliance on unilateral trade measures and persistent gaps in climate finance further exposed deep geopolitical fractures. Logistical failures compounded the picture and negotiations were suspended for hours after a fire broke out, forcing the evacuation of thousands of delegates. From the outset, COP30 showed how long and uneven the road from ambition to action still is.

Despite widespread criticism, COP30 cannot be dismissed as a complete failure. For many analysts and civil society organisations, the Belém conference delivered at least one decisive outcome: it put an end to lingering illusions. The long-standing assumption that global climate action could advance as a genuinely shared endeavour based on the unanimous consensus of nearly 200 states has definitively collapsed. This outcome does not reflect a merely procedural shortcoming, but rather a necessary political reality check. Multilateralism remains indispensable – now more than ever – but it is no longer sufficient on its own. Perhaps it never truly was. What has changed is that the margin for ambiguity and delay has disappeared.

In this sense, COP30 marks a strategic turning point. A growing number of NGOs – from Climate Action Network to E3G, from Greenpeace to Oxfam – converge on a clear message: the centre of gravity of climate action must shift. The COP process cannot be abandoned, but neither can it remain the place where we expect the most advanced and impactful decisions to emerge.

A second, often underestimated, positive signal concerns fossil fuels. Despite weak and inconclusive final outcomes, the phase-out of oil, gas, and coal remained firmly at the centre of the debate for two full weeks, and proved impossible to remove from the agenda. This is a threshold that must now be made irreversible, regardless of what happens at future COPs. The debate is no longer whether to exit fossil fuels, but how, when and with which tools. The political taboo has been broken, even if the wall of vested interests remains firmly in place. Even in countries often labelled as "advanced", the public debate became heavily manipulated by powerful corporate

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actors that have effectively captured both conservative and right-wing politics and the narrative around the transition

A third signal, still fragile yet politically significant, lies in the partial institutionalisation of the concept of a "just transition." While the Belém Action Mechanism remains vague and non-binding, it nonetheless consolidates a crucial shift in framing: the climate transition cannot be reduced to a purely technological transformation. Jobs, inequalities and territories are central to the challenge. For many networks in the Global South and for the international trade union movement, this opens a new political space – one that must be actively shaped. Without credible social policies, climate action will not hold.

Finally, if a real mutirão was visible at all, it was outside the negotiating rooms. The mobilisation of young people, Indigenous communities, cities and social movements brought renewed energy after years of COPs held in repressive contexts. Many observers argue that the true value of Belém lies less in the negotiated texts than in the reactivation of a political ecosystem capable of exerting pressure elsewhere: in courts, elections, local governments and companies. Yet this mobilisation must be organised, sustained and funded – at a time when support for NGOs and social movements, including in Europe, is increasingly under threat.

From this landscape, a relatively clear agenda for the coming year emerges. First, the need to build operational coalitions among countries, regions, cities and industrial sectors willing to move ahead without waiting for everyone else. Plurilateral agreements on energy, steel, cement, transport, cities and finance can deliver concrete results far more quickly than universal negotiations. COPs remain a space of political legitimacy; innovation and action must increasingly happen elsewhere.

Second, climate finance can no longer be treated as a diplomatic file. We must focus on a domestic and EU politics: national and EU budgets, tax systems and public finance. Taxing fossil fuel windfall profits and extreme wealth, reforming aviation and shipping, redirecting public banks, and ending fossil fuel subsidies are indispensable steps. Without them, international pledges will remain empty words.

Third, law and trade must be used explicitly as climate levers. Due diligence rules, anti-deforestation regulations and climate litigation against governments and fossil fuel companies are already producing tangible effects – even as the European Commission has irresponsibly weakened hard-won regulations in the name of "simplification". With adequate information and mobilisation, legal pressure can become one of the most effective tools to counter diplomatic and governmental paralysis, including at EU and national level.

Fourth, and most decisively, the battle is political. Without social consent, no transition will endure. Linking emissions reduction and adaptation to jobs, healthcare, housing and affordable energy is not rhetorical framing – it is the only way to turn climate support into electoral support. This is where the real struggle for a just transition is being fought, at a moment when many progressive parties, in government and in opposition, lack a credible narrative and instead view the climate agenda with growing anxiety, leaving space to illiberal right-wing forces.

Ultimately, COP30 reinforces a conviction long shared within the environmental movement: change will not come from the top down. It will emerge from the interaction between social mobilisation, sub-national governments,

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responsible businesses and determined political coalitions. The UN process remains an indispensable arena, but it cannot be the only horizon for action – not least because the prospects for meaningful reform of the COP system are slim.

COP30 in Belém has left a widespread sense of a missed opportunity. But it has also clarified where the real failure lies today: not in the absence of solutions – which exist – nor in science, which is unequivocal, but in politics. Only politics can turn knowledge and technology into effective decisions. And after Belém, complaisance is no longer an option. Either we translate this clarity into organised, collective action at every level where power can be exercised – or we accept inertia as a political decision, with consequences we already know all too well.

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Beyond Berlin: African Federalism - Between Colonial Wounds and Geopolitical Renewal

Oumar Barry

African federalism emerged as a historical response to the fragmentation imposed by the Berlin Conference, which created artificial borders and fragile states. The Pan-Africanist ideal of Kwame Nkrumah, centered on a strong political federation, encountered structural, geopolitical, and ideological obstacles that limited its implementation. Today, experiments such as the AES reflect a pragmatic version of federalism, adapted to contemporary challenges of security, autonomy, and regional integration.

To understand the concept of African federalism, one must go back to the 1884-1885 Berlin Conference, an event that irreversibly shaped the continent's history. At that conference, European powers – France, the United Kingdom, Belgium, Italy, and Germany – set out to regulate the partition of Africa in order to avoid conflicts among colonial powers. Yet behind this seemingly diplomatic intention lay an arbitrary project of appropriation: Africa was divided like war spoils, without any African representative being invited to participate or negotiate.

One of the most dramatic effects of the conference was the creation of artificial borders, drawn with rulers and compasses, which split apart millennia-old social and cultural realities. Homogeneous ethnic communities were separated across multiple states, while populations historically in conflict were forced to coexist within the same borders. This process of colonial Balkanization produced a fragmented and unstable political map composed of state entities lacking a shared national identity.

The consequences of the conference were not only territorial but also deeply political. The imposed divisions fueled ethnic, linguistic, and religious rivalries that still today hinder cooperation among African states. In response to this fragmentation, the idea of African federalism emerged as an alternative: a political project aimed at overcoming colonial divisions to build a united Africa based on collective sovereignty and shared values. Federalism thus stands as a concrete possibility to heal the historical wounds of colonialism and promote a future of integration, autonomy, and peace.

In a postcolonial context marked by significant political and social fragmentation, Kwame Nkrumah emerged as a visionary and pivotal figure in Africa's destiny. As the first president of independent Ghana, Nkrumah positioned himself not only as a national leader but as the champion of a broader, more ambitious vision: Pan-Africanism. This ideological and political movement sought to overcome the artificial divisions imposed by colonialism by promoting unity and solidarity among African peoples, so that they might confront the new political and economic threats of neocolonialism.

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Nkrumah observed that the independence achieved by individual African states – though significant – was actually incomplete and vulnerable. The newly created states, often small, fragile, and lacking adequate resources, risked becoming pawns in the hands of Western powers that continued to exert masked influence through economic and political tools, that is, neocolonialism. His famous statement, "African independence is incomplete if it is not accompanied by unity," summarizes this idea: formal autonomy could not be guaranteed without deep integration among African states. In his 1963 essay Africa Must Unite, Nkrumah developed this thesis in detail, proposing the creation of an African federation as the only way to build a strong and self-sufficient continent. According to him, only a unified political structure would allow Africa to have an authoritative voice in international relations, coordinate common defense against external threats, and initiate economic development and industrialization capable of freeing the continent from external dependence.

His vision differed from weaker models of inter-state cooperation – such as confederations or loose alliances based on voluntary agreements. He argued that the African federation should be a strong political union with a central government endowed with real powers, a common army, and a coordinated continental economic policy. This model, closer to the United States of America, would ensure the cohesion needed to overcome the ethnic, linguistic, and political divisions inherited from colonialism.

Thus Nkrumah viewed African unity as a revolutionary project, capable of transforming power structures and creating a new geopolitical order grounded in collective sovereignty and total liberation from old and new colonial constraints. His legacy remains a source of inspiration for many Pan-Africanist movements and for those who believe that integration is the key to Africa's development and dignity.

In 1958 the Pan-African dream began to materialize with the creation of the Ghana-Guinea Union, the result of a profound political understanding between Kwame Nkrumah and Ahmed Sékou Touré. Their alliance went beyond simple bilateral cooperation: it was conceived as the first step toward the construction of the "United States of Africa," a federation meant to overcome colonial divisions and restore unity, strength, and international prestige to the continent. In 1961 Mali, led by Modibo Keïta, joined the project, giving rise to the Union of African States, a political experiment intended as an alternative model to the fragmentation of newly independent states.

However, the union quickly revealed its fragility. Ideological differences and diverging national interests undermined the foundations of a still-developing structure. Nkrumah, inspired by strong centralism, believed that only a powerful central authority could ensure the federation's stability and prevent nationalist tendencies. Touré and Keïta, instead, preferred a confederal approach that safeguarded the autonomy of individual states and respected their newly won national sovereignty. These contrasting visions were worsened by economic difficulties, institutional weakness, and the lack of a shared administrative apparatus capable of sustaining such an ambitious project. Within less than a decade, the experiment dissolved, leaving behind disillusionment but also valuable lessons for the future.

The failure of the Ghana-Guinea-Mali Union, as well as of other contemporary experiments – such as the Mali Federation between Senegal and the French Sudan (today Mali) – shows the deep challenges of African federalism in the postcolonial context. First, national

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sovereignty proved an insurmountable obstacle: after decades of colonial domination, the new states considered independence a precious achievement to be guarded, fearing that a supranational authority would limit their autonomy and overshadow their still-fragile national identities.

A second critical factor was the colonial legacy itself. The borders drawn by European powers created artificial states characterized by delicate ethnic, cultural, and linguistic balances. In this context, building a broader federal entity proved difficult: instead of healing divisions, union risked multiplying conflicts.

Another limiting factor was the role of political personalities. Charismatic leaders like Nkrumah, Touré, and Keïta embodied Pan-Africanist energy, but their personal strength became a weakness. Rivalries, distrust, and conflicting visions prevented the emergence of collective leadership capable of guiding the federalist project with a spirit of compromise.

External interference also played a major role. Former colonial powers viewed any unification project that could reduce their influence with suspicion. They often adopted divisive strategies, supporting rival leaders or encouraging fragmentation. Additionally, the Cold War intensified ideological divisions: federalist projects became entangled in the logic of alignment with the Western or socialist blocs, losing strategic autonomy.

In essence, the Ghana-Guinea-Mali Union represents a political laboratory of immense historical value: although it failed in the short term, it highlighted both the potential and the concrete limitations of the Pan-Africanist dream. It revealed that African unity, though widely shared as an ideal, requires not only political will but also solid institutions, balanced compromises, and favorable socioeconomic conditions. These difficulties did not extinguish the federalist ideal; instead, they pushed it toward more gradual paths, later expressed in the Organization of African Unity (1963) and, eventually, the African Union.

In recent years, the idea of African federalism or confederalism has regained momentum with the creation of the Alliance of Sahel States (AES), established in 2023 by Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger. The three countries, each governed by military juntas that came to power through coups, formed a political and defense alliance in response to three major challenges: jihadist terrorism, internal instability, and international isolation due to sanctions imposed by ECOWAS and other regional organizations.

The AES portrays itself as an alternative to what its members perceive as a hostile and ineffective regional order. It takes inspiration from historical federalist visions through coordinated security policies, common defense, potential economic harmonization, and diplomatic convergence. However, unlike Nkrumah's ideologically driven Pan-Africanism, the Sahel Confederation is a pragmatic, regional alliance born out of immediate political and military necessity.

Still, the AES faces many limitations reminiscent of earlier failures: a lack of democratic legitimacy, structural economic weaknesses, international pressure, and persistent ethnic and religious divisions. These factors challenge its ability to evolve from an alliance of necessity into a durable institutional project.

In conclusion, African federalism remains an ambitious political ideal. In Nkrumah's vision, it was the only way to secure economic independence, political stability, and social progress for the continent. But history has

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shown how difficult it is to turn this vision into reality. Rivalries among leaders, national sovereignty, economic fragility, and external interference have repeatedly obstructed progress toward an African federation.

Today, in a world marked by new economic competition, environmental challenges, and regional insecurity, African integration remains a strategic necessity rather than a mere ideal. Institutions like the African Union, the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), and regional alliances such as the AES – despite their limitations – may be viewed as building blocks of a more gradual, pragmatic federalism. The goal is not to replicate Nkrumah's utopia but to adapt it to present conditions, creating spaces of cooperation that strengthen Africa's voice and autonomy on the global stage.

To understand African federalism is to recognize that its starting point is not neutral: it is a response to a historical wound – Berlin 1884–1885 – that continues to shape contemporary governance challenges in Africa. As Kwame Nkrumah reminded us:"Africa must unite – not only for the sake of its peoples, but for the sake of all humanity."

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What the 7th AU-EU Luanda Summit Achieved and the Gaps that Remain

Timothy Namitego

The African Union–European Union (AU–EU) Partnership, formally established at the first Africa–EU Summit in Cairo, Egypt, in 2000 under the theme "New Dimensions to our Global Partnership to the 21st Century", has for 25 years served as a vital platform for political dialogue, economic cooperation, and cultural exchange between the two continents. Over this period, the partnership has delivered tangible outcomes in key areas including infrastructure development, peace operations, education and skills, health, innovation, and climate resilience.

To mark this milestone, the African Union Commission and the Delegation of the European Union to the African Union launched a year-long commemoration under the banner AUEU25, celebrating a quarter century of joint achievements and people-to-people cooperation through campaigns, exhibitions, and dialogues across both continents. Against this backdrop, leaders of the AU and EU Member States convened in Luanda, Angola, from 24–25 November 2025 for the 7th AU–EU Summit, held under the theme "Promoting peace and prosperity through effective multilateralism."

At the conclusion of the summit, African and European leaders adopted a Joint Declaration committing to deeper investment cooperation, enhanced peace and security collaboration, and renewed approaches to migration and mobility. However, while the political intent was clear, questions remain regarding concrete delivery mechanisms and timelines.

The Pillars of the AU–EU Partnership

The AU–EU partnership is structured around four interlinked pillars that guide cooperation and policy alignment.

The Prosperity pillar focuses on building a prosperous and sustainable Africa and Europe through regional economic integration, sustainable trade and investment, and job creation. Cooperation under this pillar supports the green and digital transitions, strengthens health systems, and improves education and skills development.

The Peace, Security and Governance pillar recognises stability, democratic governance, and the rule of law as essential foundations for sustainable development. The AU and EU collaborate through civilian and military missions and by strengthening the African Peace and Security Architecture to support conflict prevention, management, and post-conflict reconstruction.

Under the People pillar, the partnership prioritises human development through cooperation on migration and mobility, education, culture, social inclusion, humanitarian action, and youth and women empowerment, grounded in respect for human rights, gender equality, and justice.

The Planet pillar underscores the AU and EU's shared commitment to multilateralism and environmental sustainability. Representing

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over 40% of UN membership, both Unions work together to strengthen the multilateral system, advance climate action, and protect the planet through global initiatives and coordinated diplomacy.

Why the Summit Matters Now

The Luanda Summit took place at a critical moment shaped by intensifying geopolitical competition, an accelerating global investment race, and renewed emphasis on the EU's Global Gateway strategy. For Africa, these dynamics intersect with pressing development, security, and climate challenges; for Europe, they reflect evolving security threats, supply-chain concerns, and strategic competition.

Recent policy analyses also highlight the growing importance of AU–EU security cooperation (see SWP, 2025). Through initiatives such as the African Peace Facility, which mobilised approximately €3 billion to support African peace missions and institutional capacity building, the AU–EU partnership has long prioritised peace and security cooperation. Yet, despite these efforts, Africa has experienced a recent surge in conflicts involving non-state armed actors. At the same time, Russia's war against Ukraine has reshaped Europe's security priorities, while its spillover effects particularly on food security and economic stability have disproportionately affected African countries. These realities underscore the urgency of a renewed, balanced partnership.

Key Outcomes of the Luanda Summit

The Joint Declaration adopted in Luanda reaffirmed commitments across several priority areas, most notably investment, peace and security, migration, and climate action.

A central focus was the Global Gateway Africa–Europe Investment Package, with leaders welcoming significant progress in its implementation. Valued at €150 billion, the package aims to leverage public and private finance to stimulate sustainable investments, improve the business climate, and support green and digital transitions, job creation, and stronger health, education, and training systems. (Council of the European Union, 2025).

On peace, security and governance, leaders reaffirmed that sustainable peace is essential to prosperity on both continents. The EU, as Africa's main security partner, reiterated its support through the European Peace Facility and ongoing Common Security and Defence Policy engagements. To date, the EU has launched 12 civilian and military missions in Africa, alongside initiatives addressing terrorism, transnational crime, cyber threats, misinformation, maritime security, democratic governance, and humanitarian protection.

The summit also advanced a comprehensive partnership on migration and mobility, grounded in shared responsibility and respect for international law and human rights. Commitments included preventing irregular migration, combating smuggling and trafficking, strengthening border management, and ensuring dignified return and reintegration. At the same time, leaders acknowledged the importance of expanding legal pathways, particularly for students, academics, and researchers. Since 2022, EU funded mobility partnerships have facilitated exchanges involving over 30,000 Africans and 18,000 Europeans.

Voices from Civil Society and Youth

At the summit, civil society organisations and youth representatives played a significant role in shaping summit discussions. Their joint declaration called on leaders to invest in

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national action plans on peace and security, strengthen good governance and democratic institutions, and prioritise youth leadership through quotas, gender parity targets, and civic education. They also urged increased investment in youth education, skills, and economic empowerment to address the root causes of conflict.

On prosperity, civil society actors emphasised accelerating the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area and ensuring Global Gateway investments deliver tangible benefits for local communities. On migration, they advocated for streamlined visa processes and the establishment of an AU–EU mobility window to facilitate youth mobility.

Looking Ahead

Leaders agreed to develop an implementation plan for sectoral cooperation within six months, strengthen monitoring through existing AU–EU structures, and establish a permanent follow-up mechanism to ensure sustained progress toward the Joint Vision for 2030. They also welcomed continued engagement from civil society, youth, business forums, and parliamentary institutions.

The partners further agreed to reconvene in Brussels for the 8th AU–EU Summit, where progress will be reviewed and future priorities defined.

Overall, the Luanda Summit represented a necessary political reset for the AU–EU partnership. Yet, its long-term success will depend on effective implementation, adequate financing, and a stronger focus on local value creation informed by the voices of civil society and youth to ensure that commitments translate into meaningful impact on the ground.

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80 Years after Hiroshima and Nagasaki: Abolish War

Klaus Schlichtmann

Many Japanese people who support Article 9 have allies in other countries who would like to learn more about it. How can we convey the message of Article 9 to them? Even if these allies are not peace activists, bringing this message to their attention would create awareness of how peace can be achieved. Peace is possible by sharing important information.

This issue must be discussed very seriously. Nuclear weapons have not been abolished, and the threat of another world war is real. Article 9 could be the key and our best option for avoiding catastrophe. Not only is it consistent with the UN Charter, which requires member states to refrain from the threat or use of force in their international relations, but having already accepted limitations on their national sovereignty under Article 24 of the Charter, Article 9 paves the way for giving the United Nations the sovereign authority it lacks.

Many Japanese who support Article 9 argue that it would be easy to spread the idea around the world if other countries emulated the provision, as Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir has repeatedly declared. But Malaysia itself has not done so. It is a rather useless and misleading idea. On the other hand, nominating Article 9 or people associated with it for the Nobel Peace Prize is not a bad idea.* In any case, many countries already have provisions in their constitutions that allow them to follow up on Article 9 by delegating sovereign powers to the United Nations. Here is a list of some of these provisions that follow up on A9 to achieve collective security and disarmament:

1946, FRANCE: On condition of reciprocity, France accepts the limitations of sovereignty necessary for the organization and defense of peace. (Preamble to the Constitution of October 27, 1946, reconfirmed in the Constitution of October 4, 1958).

1948, ITALY: Italy renounces war as an instrument of aggression against the freedom of other peoples or as a means of settling international disputes and, on conditions of equality with other states, accepts the limitations of its sovereignty necessary for an organization that ensures peace and justice among nations, and promotes and encourages international organizations established for this purpose. (Article 11 of the Constitution of January 1, 1948).

1949, GERMANY: (1) The Federation may transfer sovereign powers to international organizations by law. (2) In order to maintain peace, the Federation may join a collective security system; in doing so, it shall consent to those limitations of its sovereign powers that will bring about and guarantee a peaceful and lasting order in Europe and among the nations of the world. (3) For the settlement of disputes between states, the Federation shall adhere to agreements providing for general, complete, and compulsory international arbitration. (Article 24 of the Constitution of May 23, 1949)

1953, DENMARK: The powers which, according to this Constitution, belong to the authorities of the Kingdom may be transferred, by means of a bill, to a specifically defined extent, to international authorities established by agreement with other States to promote inter-

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national legal order and cooperation. (Article 20, June 5, 1953)

1971/1994: BELGIUM: The exercise of certain powers may be conferred by a treaty or by law on institutions governed by international civil law. (Article 34)

1973: LUXEMBOURG: The exercise of powers reserved by the Constitution to the legislative, executive, and judicial branches may be temporarily entrusted by treaty to institutions governed by international law. (Article 49 A. of the Constitution of October 17, 1968, amended on July 10, 1973).

1976: PORTUGAL: Portugal recommends the abolition of all forms of imperialism, colonialism, and aggression; general, simultaneous and controlled disarmament; the dissolution of political-military blocs and the establishment of a collective security system, with a view to creating an international order capable of ensuring peace and justice in relations between peoples. (Article 7 II., of April 25, 1976).

SPAIN: An organic law may establish authorization for the conclusion of treaties that attribute to an international organization or institution the exercise of powers derived from the Constitution. It is incumbent upon the Cortes Generales or the Government, as the case may be, to ensure compliance with these treaties and with the resolutions issued by international or supranational organizations that have been authorized by this transfer. (Article 93 of the Constitution of December 29, 1978).

1981: AUSTRIA: By law or by a treaty of state that must be ratified in accordance with Article 50 (1), specific sovereign rights of the Bund [federation] may be transferred to intergovernmental institutions and their organs, and the activity of foreign status organs in Austria as well as the activity of Austrian organs abroad may be regulated within the framework of international law. (Article 9, paragraph 2, of the Constitution as amended on July 1, 1981).

There are many other similar constitutional provisions, mostly European, that could serve as a follow-up to Japan's Article 9. It is very strange that these provisions, designed to empower the United Nations and implement the UN collective security system and achieve general and complete disarmament under international supervision, have been almost completely forgotten and neglected!

I have just finished writing a book of about 120 pages, in German, on the German Constitution of 1949. The title is "Article 24 of the Basic Law: A PACIFIST MANIFESTO - A Brief History of Peace Constitutions." The model for my booklet is the book by Italian author Luigi Bonanate, "Art. 11 - Italian Constitution." The Italian Article 11 has political significance in the context of the Italian pacifist movement that rejects war. In February 2003, for example, over 3 million people took to the streets in Rome, Florence, and Milan with banners reading: "Italy repudiates war - Article 11." In many schools and universities, Article 11 is cited on "Memorial Day." Article 9 of Japan is also well known in Italy: Italians consider Articles 9 and 11 to be "sister constitutional articles."

If a European country were to take legislative action with the aim of assigning primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security to the United Nations, this would be the most important approach to promoting Article 9 and bringing it to the world's attention.

I would like to say something to the Japanese people who support Article 9, because I am not sure that everyone understands the purpose and profound meaning of Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution. It would be wonderful if

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all my Japanese friends who have connections abroad could share these two important approaches that can achieve peace and abolish war. There is another, perhaps even simpler, approach to promoting Article 9 and making it known to the world.

This simple approach is based on a principle that has been proven to work even in small groups. In our case, we will apply it to our campaign to promote Article 9. The idea is that Article 9 should be submitted to the United Nations Assembly for debate and decision as a constitutional motion, that is, as a formal proposal. In effect, the Japanese people, with their overwhelming support for Article 9, have presented the international community with a proposal for the abolition of war.

Usually, a formal motion can be presented to an assembly, legislative body, or peace organization to support a particular purpose described in the motion. I have done this several times at peace meetings. The motion is then distributed, read, and discussed by all participating members. Before any action is taken, however, another person (other than the one who submitted the motion) must second the motion, which means that it has been decided that the motion will be considered by the group. The group can then discuss and vote on the motion. Amendments may also be proposed, and in the end, a simple majority may decide to accept the proposal by voting.
In our case, the appropriate assembly to consider the proposal would be the UN General Assembly. Since Japan has officially and legally proposed the abolition of war in its Constitution, it is sufficient for another UN member state to accept the proposal and declare its support for the motion. This would automatically initiate a debate on the issue of abolishing war as an institution.

NOTE: The Hague Peace Conferences of 1899 and 1907, in which Japan also participated, are less well known. Disarmament and the establishment of a world court for the peaceful resolution of international disputes were the two main topics of discussion. At the second Hague Peace Conference in 1907, only five European countries out of the 44 participants voted against the establishment of a court with binding jurisdiction. It was understood that without it, disarmament was not possible! The countries that voted in favor included the United Kingdom, France, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, the Netherlands, Ireland, Greece, Spain, and Portugal.

* By right, the 2019 Nobel Peace Prize should have honored Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution and been awarded to those individuals and organizations that were nominated on its behalf. Norwegian Nobel Peace Prize expert and lawyer Fredrik S. Heffermehl, in his new book Shall We Never Get Rid of War?, argues that Japan, with its Article 9, shows the way forward and that the UN must realize the collective security system managed by the Security Council, as established in the 1945 UN Charter. This author, as a German scholar who argues that Article 9 is the key to changing course and achieving international peace based on justice and order, had also been nominated.

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Iranophobia

Haggai Ram

Haggai Ram, author of Intoxicating Zion: A Social History of Hashish in Mandatory Palestine and Israel (Stanford University Press, 2020).

Why did you write this book? / How did you come to writing this book?

"For the greater part of my career, I have been a social and cultural historian of modern Iran. In due time, I became increasingly aware that methodological nationalisms may not be the most appropriate approach to doing history, because – to quote Sven Beckert's Empire of Cotton (2015) –"by assuming national perspectives, historians have often underemphasized connections that transcend state borders, settling for explanations that can be drawn from events, people and processes within particular territories." Realizing that this kind of compartmentalization of history means that the parallels, entanglements, and connections that contributed to shaping the modern world cannot come into view, I set out to research Israel's understandings and conceptualizations of pre- and post-1979 Iran through a cultural transnational approach. This research culminated in my 2009 book Iranophobia: The Logic of an Israeli Obsession (Stanford University Press). Inspired by works that read metropolitan and colonial cultures as zones of encounter, the book demonstrated that Israeli anxieties about Iran have been fashioned and comprehended on the basis of what the Israeli dominant classes believed to be the (dis)ordering of their society at home.

In the meantime, I accidentally came across historical scholarship on various stimulants – cannabis, opiates, cocaine, but also tobacco and coffee – in several spaces and temporalities. Part of what historian Paul Gootenberg described as "the new drug history" emerging since the 1990s, these interventions explored the history of drugs (as well as the practices, ideas, and persons associated with them) as intrinsic to larger connected realms of cross-border politics, economics, and culture that cannot be studied adequately if we privilege the state as the exclusive category of analysis. Having taken some more time to thoroughly acquaint myself with this literature, I discovered that it offered exciting observations about societies across the Americas, Europe, Asia, and Africa; and that of late there has been a barrage of monographs, articles, and dissertations on drugs in different Middle Eastern and North African contexts. Yet to date, no historical study of drugs in Palestine-Israel has been undertaken. Although we know quite a lot about the history of criminalized drugs in other parts of the British Empire (most notably India and Egypt), we know very little about this history in Mandatory Palestine. Similarly, very little academic attention has been paid thus far to the links between hashish use, trafficking, and regulation in the State of Israel. My book, then, is the first study to fully explore the history of hashish as a criminalized drug in Palestine-Israel, and it presents a first-of-a-kind window through which one can explore broader political, economic, social, and cultural change."

What did you learn from writing this book?

"I learned several things, but mainly three: First, that the transition from the Ottoman Empire to the Mandatory period, and then to the State of

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Israel, were not epochal breakpoints in history. In addition to the persistence of the political and cultural horizons of the country's Jewish and Arab inhabitants (discussed in earlier scholarship), there were trends of continuity in the workings of regional drug networks, criminality, and drug culture which survived these transitions, albeit in transfigured forms.
Second, that the forces at play in the rise of hashish culture in Palestine-Israel cannot be separated from extraneous processes across the world – in the Levant, Europe and the U.S. Palestine-Israel was situated in the region and the wider world; and the latter two, in turn, reached deep into it, penetrating and shaping it in matters concerning hashish commodity chains, hashish consumption, and the understandings of the drug itself.

Third, that our understandings of hashish (in Palestine-Israel and beyond) are ridden with class, racial-ethnic, and gendered desires and anxieties that date back to the late nineteenth century; that biased and fanciful colonial agendas and worldviews, often couched in "neutral" scientific language, played a pivotal role in determining global positions and policies regarding cannabis. With respect to Palestine-Israel, the prohibition of hashish was based on perceptions of hashish as a form of backwardness linked to living among Arabs in the Middle East, a vice that would expose Jewish bodies most perilously to the temptations of an alien space."

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Georgia: One Step Away from Dictatorship

Lorenzo Ricci

In my last days in Tbilisi, Georgia, where I was based until December 22, 2025 to produce a documentary on the country's ongoing democratic crisis, I had the opportunity to interview Professor Sergi Kapanadze. Together we reconstructed the anti democratic path followed so far by the ruling party, Georgian Dream, as it has worked to erode Georgia's institutional order. Kapanadze speaks as a political observer, but also as a man of institutions. He served as Deputy Foreign Minister until 2012, and later sat in Parliament in the opposition from 2016 to 2020, as the opposition's Deputy Speaker. Today he is the founder and director of the GRASS think tank. From this insider, and disillusioned, perspective, he retraces the trajectory that, in his view, has brought the country close to a point of no return. Kapanadze does not mince words. Georgia, he argues, is sliding toward a single party dictatorship. What makes this diagnosis even more alarming is the underlying paradox. According to public opinion surveys cited by Kapanadze himself, between 70 and 80 percent of Georgians continue to hold a European identity and pro EU aspirations. And yet, how can one account for the growing disjunction between popular sovereignty and the political will of the governing elite?

The rise of georgian dream and opportunistic europeanness

Georgian Dream came to power in 2012, led by its founder and undisputed leader, the Georgian billionaire Bidzina Ivanishvili. Ivanishvili presented himself as a liberal oriented toward Brussels, a convincing face promising Georgia a future of reforms and progress. For Kapanadze, however, Georgian Dream's pro Europeanism was often a predatory, short term oriented Europeanness. It was opportunistic Europeanism tied to tangible electoral gains, such as trade agreements and Schengen visa liberalization, more than to the deep democratic structural reforms required to meet the standards for European integration. In the period from 2012 to 2021, while Georgian Dream waved the European flag from Lisbon to Kraków, enlargement toward Tbilisi was not a concrete item on the European Commission's agenda, particularly under the Juncker Commission. In essence, Georgian Dream could present itself as pro European at a time when there was still no real window of opportunity to join the EU.

The 2022 turning point

The turning point emerged when EU accession became a realistic goal and the Union accelerated the integration process. In 2022, Brussels began demanding radical institutional reforms. At this stage, Kapanadze confirms, the government not only decelerated the reform process but actively obstructed the implementation of EU conditionality, in order to avoid destabilizing the consolidating oligarchic power structure. One example was the first attempt to introduce the so-called

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Russian laws, especially the law on foreign agents, proposed in 2023 and ratified in 2024, despite massive street protests. This is a coercive legal instrument modeled on the authoritarian regulatory frameworks introduced by Putin's Russia and Lukashenko's Belarus, and is designed to financially marginalize and delegitimize actors engaged in the promotion of pluralistic information ecosystems and liberal-democratic processes. According to this reading, Georgian Dream's objective in 2023 was to prepare the ground for reforms that would soon be demanded, crushing free information and internal dissent, and sending a signal typical of a democracy beginning to transform into an illiberal system. And yet, Kapanadze notes, Georgia still obtained EU candidate status. Not as a result of governmental compliance or reformist credentials, he argues, but rather due to geopolitical calculations and, above all, the sustained pro-EU mobilization of Georgian civil society.

How a pro eu majority is neutralized

Kapanadze identifies two main tools through which power is neutralizing a society that remains largely pro European: police violence and propaganda. Georgian Dream's approach, he declares, does not aim to turn pro Europeans into anti Europeans. Rather, it seeks to dilute that social bloc, pushing one part toward conformity with conservative, Christian Orthodox norms, in opposition to the civil, center left progressivism of European countries, while discouraging the progressive component from actively participating in Georgia's political life through repression. Those who attend demonstrations have a high likelihood of identification through one of the extensive facial recognition systems deployed across the urban space, coupled with the risk of arbitrary detention or coercive practices by riot police units. If someone also works in the public sector, the possibility of being fired, or seeing their career prospects immediately wiped out, becomes very real. The second element is the more classic combination of oppression and propaganda. Pressure, intimidation, and the relentless narratives of state television, amid the absence of an effective media counterweight, push citizens, especially older people and residents of rural areas, to underestimate the seriousness of the authoritarian drift.

Fear of war as a political lever

A third element fits into this reasoning: the fear of war. With the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, the hypothesis of a Russian invasion as retaliation for Georgia moving too close to the Union has become more credible, especially in the country's interior regions. Georgia still carries the trauma of the 2008 Russian aggression, when it formally lost control over about 20 percent of its territory in the separatist regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. It is easy to exploit this trauma to discourage mobilization and feed the idea that stability, even at the cost of freedom and pluralism, is the only rational choice.

The erosion of democratic safeguards

Georgian Dream's authoritarian drift, according to Kapanadze, did not emerge overnight. A decisive phase, he declares, was the period from 2016 to 2021, when Ivanishvili's party promoted a new constitutional architecture and a series of institutional reforms capable of progressively weakening checks and balances and steering the system toward an oligarchic model. The process was not completed through a single dramatic provision, but through a series of interventions that reduced the weight of guarantor bodies: a less incisive presidency, a judiciary more exposed to political pressure, and the gradual hollowing out of independent institutions, such as the ombudsman and

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other oversight bodies. The result, he argues, is an increasingly unbalanced system in which political competition still formally exists, but spaces for pluralism and oversight are progressively emptied of real effectiveness.

A red thread between Moscow and Tbilisi

On relations with Moscow, Kapanadze deliberately avoids the definition of a proxy party when referring to Georgian Dream, in order not to fuel speculation. He says he cannot prove direct control, no instruction in an envelope, no evidence that the party is directly controlled by the FSB. But he adds what he considers an unequivocal political fact: look at the facts, they are serving Russian national interests. To argue this, he lists choices and behaviors: saying no to NATO, saying no to the Union, importing laws and authoritarian practices reminiscent of Russian governance, relying on propaganda and disinformation, and intensifying vote buying through the weaponization of poverty. Whether it is a proxy party or not, he observes, if one looks at domestic reforms and Georgia's international conduct under Georgian Dream over the last ten years, it is striking how this set of actions aligns with the needs of Vladimir Putin's Russia.

Brussels' responsibilities

Kapanadze does not spare criticism of Brussels either. In his view, the Union sinned by being naïve. It underestimated the emerging dictatorship and gave the government too much credit, hoping the drift would not be completed. Hope, he says, is the worst strategy. In this sense, the 2021 mediation promoted under the leadership of Charles Michel is an emblematic example. It was launched to unblock the political crisis following the 2020 elections, when part of the opposition boycotted Parliament alleging fraud. The Union managed to secure the signing of an agreement, A way ahead for Georgia, which provided for judicial and electoral reforms, depolarization measures, and a clause linked to the outcome of the 2021 local elections. According to Kapanadze, however, it was mediation with bare hands. The agreement relied mainly on the Union's political weight, without credible pressure tools or incentives capable of ensuring implementation. When the government pursued controversial decisions, particularly on judicial appointments, the agreement began to crumble quickly, and Georgian Dream ultimately pulled out, exposing the fragility of a compromise lacking operational leverage. to counter authoritarian drift, Kapanadze points to very limited and largely symbolic measures: the suspension of a diplomatic passport of negligible political relevance, and sporadic targeted sanctions against a handful of key government figures, adopted unilaterally by individual member state. A reactive, not preventive, and largely ineffective approach, hampered by EU decision making mechanisms based on internal consensus.

On the threshold of no return

The democratic crisis in Georgia has now, according to this analysis, reached the threshold of no return. With the introduction of the Russian-style legislative framework in 2024, the operational space for think tanks, civil society organizations, and critical media outlets has been severely curtailed. Moreover, through measures adopted on May 13, 2025, a Parliament overwhelmingly dominated by Georgian Dream approved amendments to the organic laws governing political parties and the Constitutional Court, significantly broadening both the grounds and the legal instruments for declaring a political party unconstitutional. On October 16, 2025, an additional legislative package was passed

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allowing for the restriction of political participation for individuals associated with parties deemed at risk of dissolution. Finally, on October 28, 2025, Speaker Shalva Papuashvili announced an appeal to the Constitutional Court seeking to outlaw three major opposition blocs: Coalition for Change, the United National Movement – founded by former president and now imprisoned Mikheil Saakashvili – and Strong Georgia. Georgia, therefore, is not merely a technical dossier within the European Neighborhood Policy. It constitutes a crucial political stress test for Europe's capacity to defend, through tangible foreign policy instruments, a society that overwhelmingly self-identifies as pro-European.

An European knot: security, enlargement, credibility

Ukraine has shown that EU foreign policy, until now exercised through free trade agreements, economic integration, and diplomacy, that is, through the enlargement process, is no longer sufficient on its own. The military lever, this perspective argues, should enter the European leadership's toolbox. Guaranteeing security has become an essential prerequisite for rendering future enlargement credible. As classical international relations theory reminds us, power vacuums do not remain unfilled. And the vacuum generated by EU inaction in Georgia has once again been filled by the imposing imperial neighbor beyond the Caucasus.

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A New European Defense Community

Pier Virgilio Dastoli

To address Europe's security needs, it is essential to establish strategic autonomy and a common defense framework, supported by a supranational budget and democratic oversight.

September 4, 2025

On August 19, 1954, Alcide De Gasperi passed away, and many commentators wrote that his death marked the inevitable end of the European Defense Community (EDC). The EDC's original purpose was to enable the reconstitution of the armed forces of the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany) within the framework of a European Political Community (EPC). The alternative would have been its reconstitution under American hegemony, opposed to the Soviet empire.
The French proposal in the Pleven Plan, announced in October 1950, was not aimed at creating a European pillar of NATO, nor at planning a war against the Soviet Union. Rather, it sought to lay the foundations of what we now call "European strategic autonomy," which at the time meant creating an integrated European army to replace national armies – an idea initially met with skepticism, if not outright hostility, by the United States.

However, the EDC could only have been viable within a European political and democratic framework – namely, a genuine federal European Political Community, as proposed by Alcide De Gasperi on Altiero Spinelli's advice through Article 38 of the EDC Treaty draft.

The EDC collapsed, along with the EPC, due to the short-sightedness of French nationalist parties on both the right and the left, and also because of Italy's apathy in postponing treaty ratification.

Today, discussions focus on security guarantees for Ukraine – primarily strengthening its armed forces and, secondly, ensuring European security through naval, land, and air forces ready to respond (using UN terminology, for peace enforcement missions under Chapter VII of the UN Charter) should Russia fail to honor peace agreements – not merely after a ceasefire, but following a fair and lasting peace settlement. These guarantees must also extend to neighboring independent and sovereign states.

Since NATO cannot provide such European security guarantees, and because these concerns primarily involve European interests, the coalition of thirty-five "Willing States" formed last March at the initiative of Macron and Starmer goes far beyond the EU framework. It is therefore worth considering the model of a new EDC, created in parallel with the European Union – similar to the Schengen Agreements, negotiated and concluded outside the then European Communities between 1985 and 1999 to abolish internal border controls.
Defense, deterrence, and peace enforcement activities must be established with the essential condition that military decisions are not left to chiefs of staff but entrusted to a supranational political body.

These agreements, which also involved non-EU states and which we celebrate today on their fortieth anniversary, served as a genuine laboratory that led to the creation

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of the "Schengen acquis," later incorporated into EU law through the Amsterdam Treaty of 1999. A similar path was followed years later with police cooperation under the Prüm Agreements and, most notably, with the Treaty on the European Stability Mechanism (ESM), which remains outside the EU framework but was deemed compatible with the Treaties by the Court of Justice (Pringle judgment).

The key element in creating a defense laboratory negotiated in parallel with the EU is recognizing its instrumental role in achieving the objectives of Article 21 TEU within the framework of a Common Foreign and Security Policy, ultimately leading to a common defense. In this perspective, it would be entirely logical to foresee the use, in appropriate forms, of EU institutions – including the Court of Justice – and to provide for an article analogous to "42.7" for mutual solidarity, consistent with Article 51 of the UN Charter, similar to the provision in the Treaty on European Union, while also incorporating contributions from third countries such as the United Kingdom and Ukraine.

Defense, deterrence, and peace enforcement activities should be binding under the new EDC, with the indispensable corollary that military decisions cannot rest solely with chiefs of staff but must be subject to a European democratic political authority, supported by a supranational budget – not a mere sum of national budgets – thus overcoming unanimity constraints within a system of shared sovereignty.

The new EDC/EPC could initially be entrusted to a High Authority, as was the case with the ECSC, whose head would report regularly to the European Parliament and its Defense Committee, just as the Eurogroup President and the ECB President periodically and transparently engage with the Parliament's Economic and Monetary Affairs Committee, involving delegations from national parliaments.

Since the European defense dimension must be accompanied – or better, preceded – by a strong signal of European commitment to peace, justice, and fundamental rights, the European Union and its three political institutions (European Parliament, European Council, and European Commission) should revive the proposal presented by President Sergio Mattarella to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe: convening a second Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe through a joint interinstitutional declaration, fifty years after the signing of the Helsinki Final Act.

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Message from President Mattarella on the Occasion of the first European Conference of Ventotene for Peace and Democracy

Sergio Mattarella

On the occasion of the first European Conference of Ventotene for Peace and Democracy, the President of the Republic, Sergio Mattarella, sent the following message to the Vice-President of the European Parliament, Pina Picierno:

"Ventotene, once a place of confinement and oppression of human beings and a symbol of the absolutism that weighed upon Italy under the Fascist regime, has long since become one of the places that inspired the affirmation of the values of peace and democracy that define what has become the European Union.

A place where the seeds of freedom and of that federalism were planted – values that enriched the debate among the peoples of Europe as they advanced toward the goal of a union of independent and free nations.

Building Europe meant overcoming the logic of conflict and war, preventing the oppression of human beings by their fellow human beings, and reaffirming the dignity of every human being, of every person. This was the powerful message that came from the anti-fascist figures imprisoned on the island, whose life lesson remains an example for younger generations.

The training and dialogue initiatives that continue to unfold bear witness to the enduring relevance of what was born in Ventotene amid the hardships of political exile.

It is a task that must be taken up anew by every generation: to give concrete meaning to the values of freedom that guided the struggle of the founders.

To all participants in today's event, I extend my best wishes for fruitful work."

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A Great European Anti-fascist: Franca Trentin

Silvia Romano

Youth and education

Francesca, called 'Checca' in her family, was born in Venice on 13 December 1919, the second child of lawyer Silvio Trentin and Giuseppina 'Beppa' Nardari.
In 1924, her father joined the Ca' Foscari Institute of Commerce in Venice as a professor of public law, after a brief but intense parliamentary experience as a member of the Venetian Social Democratic Party and teaching at the University of Macerata as a professor of administrative law. However, due to growing tensions generated by the fascist regime, and following the issuance of a decree depriving civil servants of their political and intellectual freedoms, Silvio Trentin resigned in January 1926 and left Italy with his entire family. After a long journey, the family crossed the border in early February and settled in Pavie (in France, near Auch), where Franca began primary school with the nuns.
In Auch, their second place of exile after the bankruptcy of her father's farm in Pavie, Franca attended the Girls' School and obtained her secondary school certificate in July 1934.

At the end of 1934, the family settled in Toulouse, where Silvio Trentin acquired a bookshop at 46 Rue du Languedoc, which became a hub for anti-fascists and intellectuals. It was therefore in Toulouse that Franca attended the Girls' High School and obtained her baccalaureate in July 1936.

At the heart of European anti-fascism
The Spanish Civil War of 1936 was a crucial moment for Franca and her brothers, raising their awareness of the Resistance. Their family hosted young people who had made 'rebellious' life choices by abandoning their studies, work and families to join the fight for the freedom of a people.
After the end of the Spanish Civil War in 1939, Franca often accompanied her mother to Camp de Gurs to bring comfort and relief to the wounded. Her father sent her several times to deliver money and messages to the President of the Spanish Republic in exile, Manuel Azaña Diaz, who had taken refuge in Montauban.
Enrolled at the Faculty of Arts in Toulouse, she obtained a degree in English in 1939 and a postgraduate diploma the following year.

After the German occupation of Paris in June 1940, the Trentin bookshop, already frequented by teachers and students from Toulouse, became an attraction for "new arrivals" to the region. All the Italian exiles and a flood of intellectuals, writers, artists, politicians, Jews, and fugitives from Belgium, Holland, Poland, and Germany also frequented the bookshop. Franca breathed the air of European anti-fascism daily. This would be a fundamental part of her personal and professional development. Her open-mindedness and her ability to see beyond borders would accompany her throughout her life, fuelling her intolerance to nationalism, her desire to engage with others and her openness to the world.
In 1940, Franca acquired her long-awaited French citizenship, but she had to wait two years before she could sit the state teaching exam. In the meantime, she decided to continue her studies, which led to a second degree in October 1942, a bachelor's degree

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in Italian language and literature, marking the start of her academic career as an Italianist.
During those same years, to support herself, she accepted temporary substitute teaching positions, worked as an interpreter and translator, supervised municipal summer camps, and served for a long period as secretary to the dean of the Faculty of Arts at the University of Toulouse. In this role, she was often called upon to deal with bureaucratic and administrative issues, helping students who had fled the capital and wished to continue their studies in what had become the most vibrant, cosmopolitan and welcoming city in the country.

The "shooting star" of Libérer et Fédérer

On 14 July 1942, Silvio Trentin founded the resistance movement 'Libérer et Fédérer' (Liberate and Federate), whose objectives were: "To liberate France and Europe from the fascist and Nazi invasion and to unite the peoples of Europe to prevent further wars. [...] To liberate the people from the yoke of a centralised state, inevitably oriented towards totalitarianism and dictatorship, and to federate individuals and professional or spiritual communities in order to coordinate their activities while respecting their autonomy as much as possible."

For Silvio Trentin, the state must be founded on the 'permanent and pre-existing value' of autonomy, 'understood as the self-realisation of the individual and as self-government" meaning the "self-sufficient organisation of individual groups, whether territorial or not', constituting civil society . The institutional structure must be modelled on the basis of civil society, as defined above. This is quite similar to the French school of thought known as 'integral federalism', which takes up some of his suggestions and whose federalist project is both intranational and supranational. In addition, Silvio Trentin drafted two federalist constitutions, which are among the few examples of texts from that period to mention the 'European republic'.

It is important to note, however, that the work of Silvio Trentin and subsequently of Libérer et Fédérer focused primarily on internal federalism. In his work there is no trace of the influence of the Ventotene Manifesto, which focused on the supranational dimension, even though it arrived in Toulouse in 1942 . The main objective of Libérer et Fédérer's federalism was to prevent the central power from restricting individual freedom and group autonomy in the future, as had been the case in Europe's totalitarian states.

Franca Trentin's role in the activities of Libérer et Fédérer is well recognized, particularly in relation to her numerous missions as a courier in Lyon and Marseille, delivering messages. Some called her the 'étoile filante' (shooting star) of Libérer et Fédérer. As a naturalised citizen, she was able to move around freely and her father entrusted her with these important and dangerous missions.

Although Franca did not develop federalist ideas at that time, or simply took no interest in them (she later claimed to have acted in a "semi-conscious" state), she was naturally driven by a genuine "existential Europeanism". This was the result of the environment in which she grew up, in daily contact with intellectuals and resistance fighters from several countries in her family's bookshop. The aspiration for a free and united Europe was therefore obvious. Libérer et Fédérer ultimately had a circumscribed development, due to its regional presence being restricted to the Garonne valley and its limited financial resources. The departure of Silvio Trentin left the movement without its political mentor. In 1944, Libérer et Fédérer merged with the Lyon-based movement 'L'Insurgé' to form the Revolutionary Socialist Movement, but this now played a minor role.

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When Silvio, Beppa and their two sons returned to Italy in August 1943, Franca, the only member of the family to have become a naturalised French citizen, was unable to leave the country. However, even after her family's departure, she continued to participate clandestinely in local resistance movements.
On 2nd March 1944, she married Horace Torrubia, a young Catalan man who was a hero of the Spanish Civil War, a communist and a member of the French Resistance. Due to the breakdown in communications with Italy, her family was unable to be informed of the marriage, and Franca only learned of her father's death – which occurred ten days later, on 12 March – much later.

After the liberation of Toulouse in August 1944, Franca moved to the city with Horace. She applied for membership in the Association des Résistants de 1940. In 1946, she was awarded the Croix de la Résistance. On 1 June 1946, her son Silvio Torrubia was born in Toulouse.

The post-war period: emancipation through career

It was through her work that Franca found independence, both financially and psychologically. She aspired to become someone in her own right by freeing herself from the role of 'daughter of' and all the conditioning she had grown up with.
After failing the first time, she passed the public competitive examination for teaching Italian language and literature with flying colours in 1951. She was immediately appointed to the Faculty of Arts in Dijon as an assistant professor of Italian.
In 1954, she divorced Horace. In the meantime, she had met Mario Baratto, cultural director of the Italian Communist Party in Venice, then professor of Italian language and literature at the Écoles Normales Supérieures in Paris. They married in 1956 and their son Giorgio was born in 1958.
From 1956 to 1959, as a research fellow at the CNRS (National Centre for Scientific Research), Franca conducted research at the Faculty of Arts and Humanities at the Sorbonne. She was appointed head of the Italian department in 1959 and, from 1961, became a senior lecturer while also serving as a union representative at the Parisian university.
From Paris, Franca and Mario became a point of reference for Italian writers, intellectuals and journalists to introduce to a wider French audience. In addition to promoting cultural events, Franca, called the 'passeuse' (facilitator) in an article published by Le Monde after her death, created in her living room a multitude of crossovers between different worlds and disciplines.

In 1966, while her husband was teaching Italian literature in Italy, Franca obtained a secondment to the Faculty of Languages at Ca' Foscari University in Venice as a lecturer in French language and literature. She followed with determination the initiatives of the Silvio Trentin Study Centre, founded in 1974 in Jesolo, and the publications of her father's selected works, edited by historian Giannantonio Paladini.

Years of political activism: pacifism and feminism come together

As retired from teaching (1985) and no longer a French civil servant, she took part in political activism and several initiatives related to the women's movement and to the study of the Resistance. From 1996 to 2000, she was president of the Venetian Institute for the History of the Resistance and Contemporary Society.

Already close to feminist movements in France, she took part in the major campaigns of the time, including the legalisation of abortion, which led to the adoption of the Veil Law. Once in Italy she continued to take an interest in feminist issues, which she explored in greater depth from a literary perspective by organising

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meetings/training courses such as 'Le madri di noi tutte' (the mothers of all of us) and through associative and political activism. In particular, a recurring theme in Franca Trentin's reflections was women's political citizenship.

Furthermore, it was during the Gulf War that Franca's activism turned towards pacifism. In this context, she took the initiative to create a feminist association for peace called 'Donne sul piede di pace' (women on the foot of peace). Once the war was over, together with the other women member of the association, they decided to explore the complex question of pacifism in the face of the reality of war.
During those same years, Franca played a leading role in the association 'Donne per la città' (Women for the City). Solidarity among women of all ages, professions and 'social classes' was central to her idea of feminism.

Moreover, Franca Trentin wanted her archives to be passed on to women, and she herself chose to donate them, a few months before her death, to the association for women's memory and history 'rEsistenze', of which she was a founding member . The archives are housed at the Casa della Memoria e della Storia (CMS) in Venice, in the same location as the IVESER archives (Venetian Institute for the History of Resistance and Contemporary Society).
Defending federalism from the manipulations of the Northern League

In 1996, the Silvio Trentin Centre for Studies on Federalism was inaugurated in Padua, with the stated aim of providing a space for study and exchange on federalism, paying tribute to the thinking of the great Italian jurist. Among the founders of the study centre were Lega Nord municipal councillor Elio Franzin and University of Padua professor Mario Quaranta, as well as many prominent figures from the Lega Nord, including party leader Umberto Bossi.

It is therefore clear that Silvio Trentin's name has no place among the secessionist and xenophobic demands of the Lega Nord (now Matteo Salvini's 'Lega'). Silvio Trentin's writings, not well known to the general public, have thus fallen into the trap of a political party seeking to build a theoretical foundation to legitimise its secessionist rhetoric, which envisages Northern Italy separating from the Centre-South.

Although Silvio Trentin's three children are all strongly opposed to this association, Giorgio and Bruno leave their sister Franca to fight alone to defend their father's memory. It is at this point that she immerses herself in her father's thinking guided by Professor Giannantonio Paladini.

In letters addressed to the leaders of the Centro Studi sui Federalismi, as well as to the editors of the local press, Franca fought against the 'absurd exploitation' of Silvio Trentin's thinking, which 'has nothing to do with the ideas promoted by the Lega'. On the contrary, as an early anti-fascist in exile in France, Silvio Trentin – along with his family and entourage – had tried to convey an image of Italy and Veneto that 'in no way corresponds to that proposed by Umberto Bossi'.
Professors Paladini and Giovanni De Luna will also take part in the debate to shed light on Silvio Trentin's federalism, which never questioned the unity of Italy . The Treviso branch of the Associazione Nazionale Partigiani d'Italia (ANPI) will also take a stand to defend the memory of Silvio Trentin as a leading figure in the anti-fascist resistance in France with Libérer et Fédérer, as well as in Italy, notably through his actions alongside the 'partigiani' of the Treviso region, which led to his arrest in 1943 .

Franca Trentin died at her home in Venice on 28 November 2010, in accordance with her wishes, and 'anti-fascist' is the only word accompanying her name in the family obituary.

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The Federalist Peace Forum in Ventotene

Federico Tosi, Dvir Aviam Ezra, Younes Ahmad

Federalism as a path, a continuous laboratory, and an ideology capable of offering answers to today's challenges: this is what the Federalist Peace Forum (FPF) set out to present and has begun to show to our community.

Held in Ventotene from 7 to 11 September 2025, the FPF was organized by JEF Germany, Italy, and Europe, together with the UEF and Challenge, a long-standing Israeli-Palestinian conflict transformation organisation that serves as an umbrella for activists on the ground, as the first step of a broader project co-financed by the Council of Europe. The Forum brought together over twenty five participants from Europe, Israel, and Palestine to discuss peace and explore how federalism can serve as a concrete tool to achieve it.

For most of the Israeli and Palestinian participants, this was their first encounter with federalism. This is where the European participants played a key role in mediation and guidance, sharing both theoretical knowledge and practical political experience. As a result, the two emerging groups from Israel and Palestine are now tasked with the long-term objective of building and structuring self-sustainable federalist political movements within their respective contexts.

The FPF was structured around three pillars: peacebuilding, federalism, and capacity-building. Yet beyond the formal sessions, what was experienced in Ventotene made it clear that a federalist approach to the conflict - one that avoids nationalistic lenses - is essential for challenging dominant narratives and exploring both innovative and concrete solutions.

Several significant challenges emerged for the organizers and participants, both in Europe and in the field.

Starting with the role of Europeans, their position as mediators and facilitators immediately clashed with the difficulty of intervening in contexts where the colonial past of the old continent is the primary factor of the ongoing conflicts.

Even without receiving explicit feedback in this regard, acting as a European in post-colonial geographical contexts cannot, and should not, leave one indifferent. In this sense, an approach based on awareness of one's own past, combined with the willingness to turn a page in history, is fundamental, both as a matter of principle and to restore credibility to any prospective European foreign policy.

Within this framework, the European component – widely perceived as credible by both sides, partly due to its internal diversity – was compelled to engage in a process of self-reflection. This resulted in a clear repositioning: not as a provider of ready-made solutions, but as a contributor of questions, ideas, and sustained political effort aimed at de-escalation through care, support, and long-term commitment.

Finally, on the internal side of the European federalists, the main challenge has certainly been the need to translate federalist ideology

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into a context different from that of Europe. While the goal is widely shared within the European federalist community, it has become clear that the tools and doctrine currently available for such an effort still struggle to be consistent and effective. Through these lines, the hope is to reactivate the academic and intellectual effort of federalists to position themselves as an ideology that is both globalist and anti-colonial, universal yet respectful of all local geographical specificities.

On the Israeli side, the main challenge has been organizing effective opposition to the current government and the war in an increasingly restrictive political environment,despite the inherent heterogeneity among participants and within Israeli society as a whole.

This effort goes hand in hand with rethinking the meaning of Zionism: on the one hand, affirming the majority view in Israeli society of Zionism as a legitimate national movement, while on the other hand, confronting the atrocities committed under nationalist interpretations of Zionism, which have led it to be seen as a racist stream of thought among both many Palestinians and progressive political forces worldwide.

Simultaneously, there is a search for a new identity or outlook for Israel's image: notably, participants emphasized their desire to preserve unique Jewish cultural and national identities, while also highlighting the need to find an inclusive identity that could pave the way for a federalist framework.

As one might easily imagine, many challenges also arose on the Palestinian side. The main difficulty was certainly discussing peace in the context of the situation in Gaza. Reconciling a federalist perspective for the region while acknowledging the unbearable humanitarian catastrophe and the profound collective trauma experienced by Palestinians was highly ambitious, yet necessary.

Clearly, the main obstacle was the potential accusation of normalizing the enemy, which the project sought to counter by emphasizing its aim to redefine coexistence based on justice, shared rights, and mutual accountability, rather than domination or denial.

This also reaffirmed that Palestinian liberation and self-determination need not be framed in exclusive or ethnonational terms. Through a federalist lens, sovereignty can be reimagined not as separation but as shared governance. To address the challenge of aligning this idea with the legitimate needs and demands for self-determination, a special focus was given to demonstrating that the federalist concept does not contradict this principle. This included explicitly incorporating recognition of the State of Palestine into the federal plan.

Finally, as a team, participants faced many collective challenges and shared fears across all three countries. Above all, the fear of returning to one's home context with new ideas, radically transforming the existing paradigm, was central for both conflicting groups, and also raised concerns on the European side. For the Israeli and Palestinian participants, this fear stemmed mainly from apprehension toward their own authorities and social environments. For the Europeans, however, it was more about an awareness of the current extreme polarization of the public debate, often devoid of sustainable proposals and driven by rigid ideological positions. In this sense, European federalists will face the challenge of completely reshaping the narrative around conflict resolution, while still incorporating the demands and concerns of European (and global) public opinion, which must become their primary counterpart in the process.

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In general, participants left the island with the awareness that the desire for dialogue between the two sides is, and must remain, stronger than all the difficulties. Understanding how this dialogue is made impossible by the restrictions on the movement between Israel and Palestine highlights the lack of real political will to find sustainable solutions within the current paradigm. This is why creating neutral spaces for people to meet is essential. This awareness was the compass of the three days in Ventotene, helping participants grasp the significance of what they were doing. They knew they would not agree on everything, that the road ahead is long, and that the political, personal, and emotional challenges are immense, yet the will to engage in dialogue remains stronger. With this spirit, on the final day of the seminar, the two groups unanimously voted for a starting document, neither exhaustive nor final, giving written form to this commitment. Thanks to the commitment of the European partners, the results achieved in Ventotene were presented to the Italian Senate on 12 September, in the presence of several members of Parliament. This event is part of the broader European effort to publicize the project and its ideas to the widest possible audience of European policymakers, who are considered key actors in influencing the course of the conflict.

The abovementioned challenges were tackled successfully. Despite difficulties, participants came together, deepened their understanding of Federalism and agreed on a common vision outlined in the FPF concluding declaration. As mentioned before, there were challenges on Ventotene itself, including heated discussions, mutual disappointments and complaints, and emotionally charged moments. These were overcome by the participants with the support of the facilitators.

It is evident that the challenges faced in Ventotene were significant, just as organizing such a historic event was a major accomplishment. The parallel with the prisoners of 1941, who wrote about a united and democratic Europe free from nationalism, and the experiences of this September is direct and emotionally powerful.

The path has been set, but it requires continued work and strong support.

As a federalist network, we are called to play our part, united, in supporting this initiative, and potentially similar efforts in other regions of the world. With this in mind, the organizers also launched the Expert Track of the FPF. This group, which also met in Ventotene, is intended to continue working online, offering support and recommendations to participants, helping to disseminate the work, protect those involved, and contribute to political thinking on conflict resolution.

While the present may seem dark, as federalists we must be ready to set the agenda for a future beyond the nationalistic paradigms, the very world in which we are called to carry out our transformative project.

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Borrell Slams Proposed EU Sanctions on Israel as 'a Joke'

Inés Fernández-Pontes

Former EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell described the European Commission's proposed sanctions on Israel as "a joke", telling Spanish public broadcaster RTVE on Wednesday evening that the measures come "40,000 deaths too late".

Borrell compared Israel's actions in Gaza to Nazi crimes during the Second World War, saying the EU's "indifference" had given Tel Aviv"free rein to do whatever it wants".

The Commission's proposal, unveiled on Wednesday, includes suspending preferential trade concessions on Israeli goods and imposing sanctions on far-right ministers and extremist settlers in the occupied West Bank territories.

"It's such a minor move that they might approve it just to get rid of the problem," Borrell said.

The veteran socialist politician has been one of the most outspoken European figures on the humanitarian cost of the Gaza war, regularly criticising the EU's lack of decisive action. Commission President Ursula von der Leyen had"spent fifteen months ignoring those of us who told her that action needed to be taken," he added.

His comments also followed criticism from his successor, EU foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas, who last week accused him of inaction during his 2019–2024 mandate. "He did nothing," Kallas told journalists.

Asked about her remarks, Borrell said it was "a rule of good behaviour not to criticise either your predecessor or your successor", but admitted he had failed to secure Council approval for sanctions on Israel. "At least I proposed it,"he said.

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Israel-Palestine: from Separation to Federation

Emanuel Shahaf

For three decades, the Israeli–Palestinian peace process has rested on a single foundational premise: that separation is the only viable path to peace. The initial Oslo plan gestated into a vision of two states living side by side with minimal contact, clearly demarcated borders and political autonomy based on territorial partition. This logic shaped diplomacy, military strategy and the worldview of the international community. It became the unquestioned default approach to resolve the conflict.

The assumption of separation collapsed on October 7, when Hamas's attack exposed the profound interdependence of Israelis and Palestinians. Walls, fences and surveillance systems proved incapable of keeping the two societies apart. Israel's subsequent military campaign in Gaza, the massive displacement of Palestinians and the deep trauma within Israeli society have underscored that the conflict is too geographically entangled, economically interwoven and emotionally charged to be managed by physical or political disengagement.

October 7 did not only expose this interdependence; it revealed the mutual vulnerability that accompanies it. Israelis discovered that even the most fortified borders cannot insulate them from instability in Gaza. Palestinians learned once again how total is their subjection to Israeli political and military decisions. Interdependence is structural, but vulnerability is systemic and neither side can escape it.

At the same time, Israel's political reality has shifted dramatically. The electorate has moved sharply to the right, driven by fear, insecurity and disillusionment with negotiations. Many Israelis now reject the two-state paradigm not out of ideological extremism but because it no longer appears feasible. The impact of October 7 has accelerated this trend. The attack struck at the deepest layers of Israeli collective psychology, reinforcing a belief that territorial concession is dangerous and withdrawal invites catastrophe. This mindset now permeates not only traditional right-wing constituencies but much of the political center as well. Any proposal that fails to offer credible security arrangements and long-term stability will be dismissed out of hand.

On the Palestinian side, the Palestinian Authority has lost legitimacy and coherence, while Gaza has suffered catastrophic destruction. The credibility of separation has faded for Palestinians as well: statehood feels beyond reach, the status quo unbearable and the political horizon nonexistent. Yet despite this bleak landscape, Israelis and Palestinians continue to live in what is increasingly a single geopolitical space: one economy, one electrical grid, one water system and one overarching security domain. The question is no longer whether they share the land; they clearly do. The real question is how the political system that governs this shared space should be structured.

Recognizing the collapse of the separation paradigm does not mean embracing a

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singular alternative. Instead, it opens space for multiple models that accept the territorial and demographic interdependence of both peoples. These include confederation proposals, rights-based one-state models and cantonization schemes. What unites them is the acknowledgment that a rigid partition is no longer feasible.

Among these emerging pathways, federation stands out because it directly addresses the core contradictions of the current reality. The federation does not seek to erase national identities or impose artificial coexistence. Rather, it offers a framework where two national communities maintain self-government within a shared constitutional structure. Each community manages its internal affairs while joint federal institutions handle issues that are inherently cross-border: security, economy, infrastructure, environment, natural resources, mobility and last not least, Jerusalem.

This logic mirrors what already exists on the ground. The region functions today as a de facto single system: one labor market, one customs regime and highly integrated supply chains. Palestinian workers remain essential to Israel's construction and agricultural sectors; Israeli control shapes every aspect of Palestinian economic life. These are not conditions that can be undone by diplomatic declarations; they are structural realities. Yet these ties exist without shared governance, producing permanent vulnerability: Palestinians remain exposed to Israeli power without representation and Israelis remain exposed to the consequences of Palestinian despair and political fragmentation. This unstable asymmetry is one reason why the conflict repeatedly erupts into crisis.

The current Israeli government shows little interest in partition. But they also cannot permanently maintain unequal control over millions of Palestinians without inviting international isolation or internal moral crisis. Palestinians, meanwhile, cannot achieve statehood under present conditions. Both sides are locked in a system neither controls nor can escape, unless a new paradigm is introduced. Federation offers one such paradigm: shared governance tailored to deep interdependence and shared vulnerability.

Comparative experiences from Europe offer valuable lessons. The Swiss, Belgian and German federal models show that political structures can evolve to accommodate profound diversity. The European Union demonstrates that sovereignty is not a zero-sum asset; it can be shared and distributed in ways that reduce conflict. Crucially, these federations emerged from conditions of low trust and high fear. Switzerland's federal compromise developed among groups that once fought open wars; Belgium's federalization addressed deep linguistic divides; Germany's design protects minority regions. These examples show that federations succeed when they provide mutual guarantees, institutional checks and flexible autonomy. For Israelis and Palestinians, such guarantees may offer the only realistic alternative to perpetual crisis.

A federation in Israel–Palestine would likely begin with asymmetric arrangements, allowing both sides to exercise significant regional autonomy while gradually building shared federal mechanisms. This is not a one-step leap but a phased process, much like European integration. First come practical cooperative institutions, economic coordination and shared mobility protocols. Only later do robust federal bodies emerge. My own proposal, rooted in existing Israeli regional councils and Palestinian nafot (administrative districts), envisions a bottom-up federation built on local identities. Regions remain culturally distinct while participating in federal decision-making on matters no longer manageable

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within divided frameworks. The aim is to institutionalize shared living that already exists in practice.

In the aftermath of October 7, the urgency of such thinking has only increased. The attack shattered Israeli confidence in separation as a security doctrine. The war's devastation deepened Palestinian despair and eroded faith in old diplomatic formulas. A wounded Israeli society leans further right, demanding absolute security; Palestinians face unprecedented hardship. In this environment, traditional two-state proposals seem detached from reality. A new architecture is required, one that acknowledges fear without capitulating to it and offers dignity without demanding uniformity.

If October 7 taught anything, it is that unmanaged interdependence generates unmanaged vulnerability. Israel cannot secure itself while Gaza collapses, just as Palestinians cannot achieve dignity while living under indefinite Israeli control. Any future political architecture must address not only rights and identities, but also the shared vulnerabilities that bind the two societies together. Presenting a federation does not require dismissing other alternatives. Confederation models, rights-based one-state models and revised two-state proposals all deserve examination.
What federation contributes is institutional clarity. It recognizes that Israelis and Palestinians are two national communities embedded within a single territorial system. It provides tools, regional autonomy, federal guarantees and power-sharing, that translate coexistence from a volatile fact into a consensual political arrangement. It reframes sovereignty not as exclusive control but as shared responsibility.
The question is not whether separation can be revived; it cannot. The political right in Israel has ensured that territorial fragmentation is irreversible; the center has largely adapted; the left lacks the strength to challenge it. Palestinians remain physically fragmented but territorially inseparable from Israel. The fiction of a clean partition has expired.

The real question is: How do we transform an involuntary one-state reality into a voluntary, stable and just political framework? How do we design institutions capable of protecting both national identities and individual rights? Federation does not promise harmony; it promises structure: a system designed for conflict management and mutual constraints. It offers a pathway away from absolutist narratives and into institutional imagination, the kind that built postwar Europe and allowed historical enemies to live together under shared rules.

In the end, moving "from separation to federation" is about realism - the realism of recognizing that Israelis and Palestinians aren't going anywhere. They already share one land, one economy and one fate. The challenge is to create a political system that reflects this reality rather than denies it. Federation is one such system, worthy of serious consideration at a moment when the old paradigm has collapsed.

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Declaration of the Federalist Peace Forum in Ventotene

Federazione Levantina Subito!

Federalist Peace Forum Participants.

We, young Palestinians and Israelis, endorsers of federalist principles, together with our European allies, recognizing the deep historical and national connection that both our peoples have with their shared land – and acknowledging the undeniable reality that neither national group will cease to exist as a collective identity – declare the following:

We call for an immediate end of Israel's war on Gaza which entails, but is not limited to, the following measures:

- return of all remaining hostages;
- the full reconstruction of the Gaza strip in a manner that ensures the material wellbeing of its residents;
- the dismantling of all armed groups operating outside of officially recognized structures, such as Hamas, in order to allow for a civilian autonomous government in Gaza where human dignity prevails.

In this context, we condemn:

The Israeli government, for prolonging the war, causing mass civilian deaths in Gaza, and contributing to the humanitarian crisis and starvation in Gaza. For its continued occupation of the West Bank and the failing to prevent settler violence against local Palestinian communities; for the mass arbitrary and illegal administrative detention of Palestinians in its prisons; and for its de-facto

Hamas and its allies, for the brutal October 7th attacks involving mass killings and kidnappings of Israeli and Foreign civilians; for their continued rejection of Israel's existence supported by deadly actions for its destruction; for prolonging the war for political purposes; and for their role in deepening the humanitarian crisis in Gaza.

We recognize the right of both parties for national self-determination, which entails the full recognition of the State of Palestine and an immediate end of the occupation.

Toward a Federal Political Framework between Israel and Palestine

We demand a federal political framework with both parties. In this framework, all the entities will be organized in a federative structure with Jerusalem as the joint capital. This federal framework can be extended to the wider Levante.

The federal framework will be made up of joint democratic institutions including a federal government, parliament and court of justice. A joint central bank will ensure the monetary policy of a common currency.

The federal political framework will have a joint army, with equal representation. A joint security council with veto power for both parties will ensure a coherent foreign policy. Within the federal political framework there will be no physical internal borders and guaranteed freedom of movement. The

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external borders are agreed upon by both parties according to international norms and jointly guarded. The European Union will act as a third party impartial arbiter in order to ensure the federal political framework and the required operational trust.

The federal political framework will be established according to a binding roadmap of three years. In the case of non-respect of the roadmap, proportionate financial penalties will apply.

The federal political framework will ensure equal rights for equal citizens, the right to a life in safety for all, freedom of movement for all the people in the land and freedom of religion, including respect for the holy sites which have to be accessible to the faithful.

It will furthermore ensure a just solution for the Palestinian refugees, including the right for both parties to come and live everywhere in the federal entities.

As young Israelis and Palestinians, together with our European allies, we therefore commit to jointly work toward the goals outlined above and to organize a federalist movement for a just and lasting peace in our shared land underpinned by a constitutional commitment to equal rights and human dignity.

FEDERAZIONE LEVANTINA SUBITO!

Ventotene, September 10, 2025

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Pondicherry Declaration

Provisional World Parliament (PWP) delegates, acting under the authority of the Earth Constitution, declare a planetary emergency and move forward to establish a World Parliament to replace the unworkable UN Security Council and obsolete UN Charter. – Roger Kotila

We, the delegates of the 16th session of the PWP, after serious deliberation and intense reflection, do hereby declare a STATE OF PLANETARY EMERGENCY. Humanity is facing a civilizational crisis. The global system is broken beyond repair. There is no global governance. The existential threats to human existence continue to escalate with the world dysfunction itself driving the escalation.

Dire climate change warnings have been issued by thousands of climate scientists since the 1970s, and yet the response of nations, peoples, and economies worldwide have failed miserably at taking seriously this global threat to the very future of humanity.

The tempo of climate destruction has accelerated every year far beyond most predictions and expectations. As a legion of environmental economists have declared, the current global economic system is based on a linear model from extraction to manufacture to consumption to disposal. This model is suicidal for our finite planetary ecosystem within which everything is circularly dependent on everything else. A great number of economic and climate scientists have declared: YOU CANNOT HAVE ENDLESS GROWTH ON A FINITE PLANET. We urgently need global cooperation for a circular economy to restore, regenerate, recycle, replant, reuse, and repair worldwide interdependent nodes of activity, integrating innumerable ecosystems throughout the holism of our planetary biosphere.

The cultures, peoples, and nations of the world continue instead to cling to human and planetary FRAGMENTATION. Every year, it is a focus on me, mine, and us ("my nation, my religion, my wealth, my survival at the expense of the whole") – each fragmented identity acts for itself in a struggle for domination, exploitation, control of natural resources, global markets, or local autonomy within a framework of ever shrinking water resources, natural resources, and rapidly diminishing ocean resources.

Astonishingly, the nations and peoples of the world have simultaneously buckled down on FOSSIL FUELS. The economic survival of entire nations across the globe remains dependent on coal, gas, and oil. The sustainable (non-greenhouse generating) level of CO2 in the atmosphere for millennia was 350 ppm – whereas today it is 426.68 ppm, increasing daily! Fossil fuels are coveted as an essential element for their capacity to generate wealth and to make WAR.
Superstorms, floods, wildfires, droughts, increasing desertification, shrinking ice caps, melting permafrost regions, rising ocean levels, irregular growing seasons, and dying ecosystems are now pervasive planetary phenomena, increasing in severity each season. CLIMATE DISASTER IS NOT ONLY INCREASING, IT IS CASCADING.

But the nations of Earth have not only buckled down on fossil fuels: they have tied their fate

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(and that of humanity) to MILITARISM AND WAR, including a race to militarize space. The annual spending on militarism and war reached an astronomical 2.7 trillion US dollars by 2024. Weapons and arms are flooding the world – making wars, rebellions, genocides, and terrorism ever more likely and deadly. The result is a global chaos in an ever-present "security" emergency that supersedes in every instance climate action, human rights protections, and the fight against extreme global poverty. The United Nations, a mere treaty of fragmented, sovereign, militarized nations, remains entirely helpless on all these fronts. Yet the infrastructure of the UN could serve as an energizing foundation for a true Earth Federation.

The RISKS OF NUCLEAR HOLOCAUST HAVE MULTIPLIED. The treaties so carefully worked out (with inspections) that included the Limited Test Ban Treaty (LTBT, 1963), the Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT, 1970), the Strategic Arms Limitations Talks (SALT I, 1972), the Antiballistic Missile Treaty (ABM, 1972), the Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (START, 1994), and the Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms updated treaty (START II, 2002), have all been ignored or abandoned. The race for nuclear weapons and unstoppable delivery systems has resumed, throwing all human existence into a condition of DAILY RISK OF PLANETARY DESTRUCTION AND DEATH.

What is urgently required are new holistic values founded on our common humanity, on our common planetary ecosystem, and our common origin out of the Cosmic process. We must begin with new values for civilizational change and democratic practices, values embraced by mature human beings everywhere and embodied in the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948: One Humanity, One Planetary Ecosystem, and One holistic Earth Constitution.

The gigantic struggle between a unipolar world dominating the planet from the West and a multipolar world from the East and South dividing the planet into a fragmentation of "equal" sovereign nations, remains an omnicidal struggle from both directions. Whichever force wins, humanity and its future will lose. The multiple intersecting crises described in this declaration dictate only one viable course of action – that humanity unites under a single constitutional framework.

It is absolutely imperative to immediately establish a world system dedicated to protecting the wonderful diversity of humanity, while simultaneously uniting humanity under a common constitutional authority. Only such a unified federal authority can disarm the world while taking the emergency measures necessary for climate survival. Only a world federal system culminating in a unified planetary authority can be dedicated to the common good of all and to the survival and flourishing of future generations. Today, digital technologies can put the entire planet on an integrated track beyond any previous era in human history. True unity in diversity is now possible.

The Constitution for the Federation of Earth (aka Earth Constitution) provides the holistic integration of humanity and all nations that is the key to addressing our civilizational crisis. The World Parliament represents all people and nations in three houses: the House of Peoples, the House of Nations, and the House of Counselors. It includes an effective World Judiciary, World Enforcement System, World Executive, and World Ombudsman for protection of universal human rights. For the first time in human history, the people of Earth have a voice through their representatives in 1000 World Electoral Districts. It has long been known that the vast majority of people everywhere want world peace, world climate

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protection, and an end to extreme poverty, the three necessities for survival and flourishing that the present world-disfunction is utterly incapable of providing.

This session of Parliament accomplished THREE IMMENSE STEPS toward addressing our STATE OF PLANETARY EMERGENCY: (1) It called the nations and peoples of Earth to a 5th Constituent Assembly to update and ratify this Constitution for the Federation of Earth before it is too late. (2) It reactivated a revised Earth Emergency Rescue Administration (EERA) so that (even before final ratification of the Constitution), the nations and people of Earth possess an effective instrument for spearheading the emergency conversions necessary for planetary survival and flourishing. (3) It established a Permanent Secretariat for the PWP to promote planetary conversion toward a sane and sustainable world system and a ratified Earth Constitution.

And so, at this very moment in history, the most fragile and most decisive, we call upon every human being on Earth to break the indifference that the system has taught, to rise above their own biography, and to consciously and irrevocably assume responsibility for the destiny of the world. There is no longer 'another' who will save humanity. A savior will not come, a benevolent government will not come, an external force will not come. Humanity will discover its supreme dignity only when each of us recognizes that, if the planet dies, we die with it; and that, if there is a future, it will be because we chose it – together – against everything that fragments us. This is the moment when the human soul is called to its ultimate duty: to leave behind fear, apathy, and nationalist illusion, and to affirm, for the first time in history, the courage of unity. Whoever signs this declaration is not signing a document: they are signing the very rebirth of humanity.

In addition to the immediate signatories below, we provide online for persons everywhere to add their signatures to this STATE OF PLANETARY EMERGENCY document. We call to the peoples, organizations, and nations of Earth to participate in this monumental Constituent Assembly with the Earth Constitution as a model and guide, to bring the world together for the first time as a global civilization. We delegates and members of the 16th Session of the Provisional World Parliament, meeting in Pondicherry, India, and worldwide online, on this HUMAN RIGHTS DAY of December 10, 2025, hereby do so declare.

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World Citizens Appeal to Uphold International Humanitarian Law

René Wadlow

The armed conflicts in the Middle East: Israel-Palestine, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Iran, Yemen have led to increased violations of International Humanitarian Law. Medical facilities and medical personnel have been attacked; civilians have been targeted, educational facilities destroyed. Therefore, the Association of World Citizens (AWC) makes an urgent call for the respect of International Humanitarian Law. This must be a joint effort of governments and Nongovernmental Organizations.

Regular military personnel of all countries are theoretically informed of the rules of the Geneva Conventions of August 12, 1949, and the Protocol Additional adopted in 1977.

When the 1949 Geneva Conventions were drafted and adopted, it was possible to spell out in considerable detail rules regarding prisoners of war and the protection of civilians, in particular Common Article 3 (so called because it is found in all four Conventions) provides that"each Party to the conflict shall be bound to apply, as a minimum, the following provisions: Persons taking no active part in the hostilities … shall in all circumstances be treated humanely without any adverse distinction founded on race, color, religion or faith, sex, birth or wealth, or any other similar criteria."

The importance of Common Article 3 should not be underestimated. It sets out in straightforward terms important protections that all parties to a conflict must respect. In order to meet the need for additional protection, international humanitarian law has evolved to cover not only international armed conflict but also internal armed conflict. Today, international human rights standards are also considered part of international humanitarian law, thus providing additional protection for vulnerable population groups such as women, children, and minorities.

As situations of internal violence and strife proliferate, abuses committed by non-State actors, such as armed militias, are increasing concerns. Fundamental standards of international humanitarian law are intended to ensure the effective protection of human beings in all situations. The standards are clear. [1]

There are two major weaknesses in the effectiveness of international humanitarian law. The first is that many people do not know that it exists and that they are bound by its norms. Thus, there is an important role for greater promotional activities, the dissemination of information through general education, specific training of the military, outreach to armed militias, and cooperation with a wide range of nongovernmental organizations.

The second weakness is that violations of international humanitarian law are rarely punished. Governments too often tolerate these violations. Few soldiers are tried, or courtmartialed, for the violations of international humanitarian law. This weakness is even more true of nongovernmental militias and armed groups.

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In fact, most violations of international humanitarian law are not actions of individual soldiers or militia members carried away by a sudden rush of anger, fear, a desire of revenge or a sudden sexual urge to rape a woman. Soldiers and militia members violating the norms of international humanitarian law are acting on orders of their commanders.

Thus, the only sold response is an act of conscience to refuse an order of a military or militia higher up and refuse to torture, to bomb a medical facility, to shoot a prisoner, to harm a child, and to rape a woman. Conscience, that inner voice which discerns what is right from wrong and encourages right action is the value on which we can build the defense of international humanitarian law. The defense of conscience to refuse unjust orders is a large task but a crucial action for moving toward a law-based world society.

1 For useful guides to international humanitarian law see:
D. Schindler and J. Toman, The Laws of Armed Conflicts (Martinus Nihjoff Publishers, 1988)
H. McCoubrey and N.D. White, International Law and Armed Conflicts (Dartmouth Publishing Co., 1992)

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Time for an EU Declaration of Independence

*Action Committee for the United States of Europe**

The European Union is facing unprecedented challenges at a time in which the U.N.-based multilateral order is under attack. The strategy of appeasement towards Donald Trump – from the NATO Summit to deregulation of digital, artificial intelligence, and environmental rules, including the Turnberry tariff humiliation – is not working. Concessions and accommodation have neither reduced Trump's unpredictability and hostility. On the contrary, they have deepened Europe's strategic vulnerability, have produced an unacceptable capitulation plan for Ukraine, and a political declaration of war on the EU in the form of U.S. national security strategy, in which he calls for a return to a Europe of nations and announces in consequence an alliance with the continent's national-populistic political forces.

Europe must therefore draw the necessary conclusions: its security, prosperity and democracy can no longer depend on the changing will of the United States. Strategic autonomy is no longer an option but a necessity. The European Union must be able to act independently, assume full responsibility for its own defense, and pursue its interests and values on the global stage with sovereignty and credibility.

A more productive and competitive Europe is a precondition of geopolitical power and social welfare. Thus, we must ensure by 2028 full implementation of the Letta and Draghi reports on the completion of the single market, European competitiveness. Furthermore, we need a multi-annual budget that supports further investments, public and private, in key and innovative industries. Thus, we call on the Commission to table a new, beefed-up and more ambitious Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) proposal able to finance European public goods, including new priorities in defense and research, while preserving the social and environmental dimensions, cohesion and agriculture, in respect of parliamentary control and the role of European regions and cities, and financed with real EU own resources.

But regaining competitiveness and modernizing the budget is not sufficient to build a geopolitical Europe. Just like in 1950, we must concentrate on a critical point, which is the establishment of a European Common Defense backed up by a stronger political union. Only a more federal Europe can cope with these challenges, ensuring the respect of our fundamental values and rights, unless we are ready to accept Trump as the world political authority, in ambiguous partnership with Putin and Xi Jinping. Recognizing the security threat that the EU is facing and Trump's open hostility, confirmed by the National Security Strategy, we call on the Member states in the European Council to establish a European Common Defense, as foreseen in article 42 of the Treaty on the European Union, which can also be done through a new Permanent Structured Cooperation by the willing Member States in case of lack of unanimity. This will constitute a European Defense System able

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to coordinate a national armed force in the event of an aggression to any Member State. This requires an EU a Command-and-Control Center.

More generally, EU institutions and leaders must fully exploit the Lisbon Treaty, through a federalist interpretation of it in all domains, as it was done with the response to the Coronavirus pandemic, also following Draghi´s call for a "pragmatic federalism." The EU would not have been a trade powerhouse with this policy subjected to unanimity. We need to overcome the vetocracy in foreign policy, defense, and finances. A stronger EU budget benefitting certain Member States could be made conditional on their support to the activation of the passarelles to move from unanimity to majority voting. In parallel, the European Council must coherently follow-up on the Parliament's proposal to reform the Treaties to abolish unanimity in the EU decision-making system – budget and fiscal, foreign, security and defense policies, and enlargement should all fall within the ordinary legislative procedure – including on future Treaty amendments.

We consider that the European Parliament can play a fundamental role in the implementation of the needed institutional reforms, also in view of the enlargement. First, by conditioning its support for the next annual budgets and MFF to the European Council's acting on the above-mentioned requests. Second, by promoting an Interparliamentary Assembly (Assises) to advocate for the full implementation of those objectives, along with an ad-hoc European Citizens'Assembly to engage the people and the European public sphere at large.

To this end, we support the creation of a renewed cross-partisan and inter-institutional pro-European coalition encompassing the most committed Member States in the European Council, the pro-European majority in the European and National Parliaments, the European Commission, and regional and local institutions, over and above the particular inertias of each institution, and the pro-European organized civil society. We call on them all to mobilize locally, nationally, and transnationally to support these requests for a more sovereign and democratic Union. Regular military personnel of all countries are theoretically informed of the rules of the Geneva Conventions of August 12, 1949, and the Protocol Additional adopted in 1977.

Signed by: Josep Borrell Fontelles, former High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and former President of the European Parliament; Guy Verhofstadt, President of the European Movement International, former Prime Minister of Belgium; Domènec Ruiz Devesa, President of the Union of European Federalists, former Member of the European Parliament; Danuta Hübner, economist, former European Commissioner for Regional Policy; Enrico Letta, President of the Jacques Delors Institute, former Prime Minister of Italy; Dominique Méda, sociologue and philosopher; Javier Cercas, writer; Robert Menasse, writer; Enrique Barón Crespo, former President of the European Parliament; Klaus Hänsch, former President of the European Parliament; Hans-Gert Pöttering, former President of the European Parliament; Paolo Gentiloni, former European Commissioner for Economy, former Prime Minister of Italy; Petre Roman, former Prime Minister; Rosen Plevneliev, former President of Bulgaria; Isabelle Durant, former Vice-President of the European Parliament, former acting Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development; Othmar Karas, former First Vice-President of the European Parliament; Jacques Attali, writer, former President of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and Special Adviser to President Mitterrand;

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Pascal Lamy, former Director-General of the World Trade Organization, former European Commissioner for Trade; Mercedes Bresso, former President of the European Committee of the Regions; Daniel Cohn-Bendit, writer, former MEP; Gabriele Bischoff, President of the Spinelli Group, MEP; Nicolas Schmit, former European Commissioner for Jobs and Social Rights; Andrea Wechsler, President of Europa-Union Deutschland, MEP; Luca Visentini, former President of the European Trade Union Confederation; Monica Frassoni, President of the European Centre for Electoral Support; Moritz Hergl, President of the Young European Federalists - JEF Europe; Brando Benifei, MEP, former President of the Spinelli Group; Daniel Freund, MEP, former President of the Spinelli Group; Sandro Gozi, MEP, former President of the Spinelli Group; Richard Corbett, former MEP, co-rapporteur on the Constitutional Treaty and on the Lisbon Treaty; Elmar Brok, former MEP, former President of the Spinelli Group; Jo Leinen, former MEP, former President of the EMI; Andrew Duff, former MEP, former President of UEF; Pierre Larrouturou, former Member of the European Parliament; Virgilio Dastoli, President of the Italian Council of the European Movement, former collaborator of Altiero Spinelli; Roberto Castaldi, professor, Secretary General of Movimento Federalista Europeo; Francisco Aldecoa Luzárraga, political scientist, President of the Spanish Federal Council of the European Movement; Michele Fiorillo, philosopher, co-initiator of Civico Europa and Citizens Take Over Europe; Slavoj Žižek, philosopher.

[*] This text is based on the declaration "A Roadmap to European Sovereignty" adopted by the relaunched Action Committee for the United States of Europe, 18 October 2025, Jean Monnet House, Houjarray/ Bazoches-sur-Guyonne, France. It was published in El Pais (Spain), La Repubblica (Italy), Le Soir (Belgium), Gazeta Wyborcza (Poland), Le Monde (France), Delo (Slovenia), Dnevnik (Bulgaria), România Liberă (Romania), Diário de Notícias (Portugal) and Der Standard (Austria).

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Declaration of Nice on the Occasion of the 25th Anniversary of the European Charter of Fundamental Right

European Movement

On the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the proclamation of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights in Nice, representatives of European civil society came together to reaffirm their commitment to the founding values of the European Union. In the face of growing challenges to the rule of law, freedoms and fundamental rights in Europe and beyond, they adopted on the 7th of December 2025 this Declaration of Nice following two study days held in Nice on 5th and 6th of December 2025.

Twenty-five years ago in Nice, the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union was proclaimed. Since the Treaty of Lisbon came into force in 2009, its application has helped to strengthen and guarantee the rights of everyone in the European Union. Together with the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, established in 1950, the Charter constitutes a system of rights protection that is unique in the world. It is the constitutional foundation of the European Union, giving full meaning to European citizenship.

The European Movement - International played a decisive role in the drafting of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, its promotion and its signing in the 1990s through the creation of the Permanent Forum of Civil Society, which was behind an ambitious first draft that inspired the German government's initiative. This respected the constitutional content of the Draft Treaty establishing the European Union adopted by the European Parliament on February 14, 1984 ("Spinelli Draft").

At a time when the rights and freedoms guaranteed by the Charter are being called into question, and in the face of internal and external threats to this system of rights protection, we, the undersigned representatives of civil society and supporters of freedom and European unity :

1. Let us call on European institutions, Member States, and civil society to support and apply the European Charter of Fundamental Rights without reservation and to realize its full potential.

2. Let us demand that European institutions take the necessary measures to ensure respect for the rule of law in all countries of the European Union, which is an essential condition for the proper application of the Charter, and in particular commit to making all European funds conditional on respect for the rule of law, democratic principles, and fundamental rights, and to amending the procedure under Article 7 of the TEU to entrust its application to the Court of Justice of the European Union, which is independent of the governments of the Member States;

3. Demand that all European Union policies respect the rights and freedoms guaranteed by the European Charter of Fundamental Rights;

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4. Demand that the European Charter of Fundamental Rights, as well as the principles and values set out in the European treaties, remain mandatory conditions for membership of the European Union ;

5. Let us call on the institutions of the European Union to promote the values of the Union and fundamental rights more actively on the international stage, particularly in international organizations and negotiations, and in partnership agreements with third countries, in order to strengthen the protection of fundamental rights and respect for democratic principles throughout the world ;

6. Call on the European Union to step up its efforts to raise awareness of the Charter and the rights it enshrines for European citizens, to train magistrates and legal practitioners in Europe, to support civil society working to promote the Charter and access to rights, and to promote European civic education;

7. Call on the European Union to accede to the European Convention on Human Rights and the United Nations Covenant, in accordance with the commitments it has made in the past;
8. Let us call for the opening of a democratic and constituent process with a view to the drafting and entry into force, among the peoples and states that so desire, of a new constitutional treaty inspired by the European Charter of Fundamental Rights, the core of common values and principles, with the aim of ensuring the success of future enlargements.

Cherishing the freedom guaranteed by this system of rights protection in Europe, we are committed to working, by all means at our disposal, to defend, apply, and promote the European Charter of Fundamental Rights.

Nice, December 7, 2025

Among the first signatories of the Declaration of Nice:

Guy Verhofstadt, President of the European Movement – International, former Belgian Prime Minister and former Member of the European Parliament

Fabienne Keller, Member of the European Parliament, Quaestor of the European Parliament

Hervé Moritz, President of the European Movement – France

Pier-Virgilio Dastoli, President of the European Movement – Italy

Domenec Ruiz Devesa, President of the Union of European Federalists

Daphne Gogou, President of the Union of European Federalists – Greece

Chloé Fabre, President of the Union of European Federalists – France

Aurore Laloux, President of the Young Europeans – France

Magali Altounian, President of the CIVEX Commission at the Committee of the Regions, President of the Europe Commission of the Région Sud, Deputy Mayor of Nice

Lucia Serena Rossi, former member of the Court of Justice of the European Union

Cecilia Rizcallah, Professor of European Law and Fundamental Rights at UC Louvain

Find the full list of signatories of the Declaration of Nice.

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Preamble to the French Translation of Mario Albertini's Book: Federalism – Anthology and Definition.

Bernard Barthalay and Jean-Francis Billion

Mario Albertini
Fédéralisme. Anthologie et définition.
Ed. Bernard Barthalay. Publisher « Presse fédéraliste », Lyon. Collection « Textes fédéralistes »January 2026, 301 p.

Even in the twenty-first century, federalism remains a source of frequent misunderstandings. The finitude of the planet requires humanity to strive for an"union of differences"(A. Camus) and, at all levels, to move beyond a culture of war.[1]

This culture essentializes the presumed superiority of each sovereign nation over all others and continues to expose peoples to its lethality – even within the European Union, where democratic integration gave way at the beginning of the century to disintegration through wage, fiscal, and social competition among Member States. These forms of competition, imposed and distorted by the States themselves to the detriment of their peoples, reflect an Orwellian reversal: so-called "free and undistorted competition."

To overcome the prevailing confusion and to shed light on its causes, books are indispensable. The French-language federalist bibliography is already substantial. Yet one book was missing: a work capable of presenting the sources of federalism and tracing the real historical development of this social and political form since its modern invention at the Philadelphia Convention (1787), thereby offering a definition to French-speaking readers. Mario Albertini (1919–1997) – political philosopher, professor at the University of Pavia, and President of the Movimento Federalista Europeo (1966–1993) and of the Union of European Federalists (1975–1984) – filled this gap as early as 1963 by publishing in Paris a collection of major texts from this school of thought.[2]

In 1979 and again in 1993, the author published two new Italian editions with the publishing house Il Mulino (Bologna), expanded with additional authors' texts, a new introduction and sectional presentations, a sixth and entirely new section, and a revised critical apparatus of notes. The aim was to offer a more fully developed definition of federalism within the historical context of the end of the bipolar world. What we publish here is the French adaptation of the latest edition, that of 1993. The French translation of the introduction, the presentations of the first five sections, two texts absent from the 1963 edition – one by historian Ludwig Dehio, translated from German, and the other by federalist Altiero Spinelli, translated from Italian – as well as Albertini's own sixth and new section (European Identity and the Crisis of Reason), is the work of one of us, Bernard Barthalay, who had already translated another major work by Albertini, The National State (Fédérop,"Federalist Texts"series, 1978).

Albertini's anthology brings together texts – often little read – by authors who are sometimes little known, and which together help establish what, within a heritage of remarkable breadth, deserves to be retained for the purpose of definition. Albertini explains what can legitimately be understood by the term federalism: a contribution to the understanding of historical processes, approached from a materialist perspective – wars between states and class struggles; unity and division; concentration and dispersion of power; and crises of national and colonial state systems.

The publication of this anthology in France comes after the centenary of the birth of a mutual friend,

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our comrade Bernard Lesfargues (1924–2018) – writer, Occitanist, translator, and publisher, and editor-in-chief of Le Fédéraliste (1961–1974 and 1984–1988), the French edition of Il Federalista, the political journal founded by Albertini in 1959. Likely the translator and editor of the 1963 anthology, Lesfargues was the inspiration behind, the co-founder of, and later the sole driving force of Éditions Fédérop, based first in Lyon and later in Périgord (1975–1999). Tribute is owed to him, as well as to two other companions of our publishing endeavor: Jean-Pierre Gouzy (1925–2017) – a close collaborator of Resistance figure Henri Frenay, founder of Combat and co-founder of the Union of European Federalists (1946) – almost an exact contemporary of Lesfargues, who acted as intermediary for Albertini with S.E.D.E.I.

[1] Albertini, M., "Culture of Peace and Culture of War," *Il Federalista*, 26th year, 1984; French edition *Le Fédéraliste*, 1984, no. 1, p. 9.

[2] Albertini, M., *What Is Federalism?* Paris, S.E.D.E.I., 1963

Two Foundational Texts of European Federalist Thought finally Available in English

Luca Alfieri and Gideon Ong

Altiero Spinelli
The United States of Europe and the Various Political Tendencies Marxist Politics and Federalist Politics
https://www.ywf.world/post/altiero-spinelli-essays

With the collaboration of other federalists belonging to the Young World Federalists (YWF), we have undertaken the translation of the two essays "The United States of Europe and the Various Political Tendencies" and "Marxist Politics and Federalist Politics", written by Altiero Spinelli and added to the 1944 edition of the Manifesto of Ventotene. These texts are now available for the first time online in English on the YWF website and social media channels.

These texts, previously accessible only to Italian-speaking audiences, contain fundamental reflections on European unity and federalism whose relevance remains strikingly intact. Current historical circumstances make it urgent to make federalist writings available to a wider audience, without waiting for official translations that might still take years to appear.

Our use of artificial intelligence tools on the translating process was systematically complemented by revisions and cross-checks carried out by other federalists, ensuring an outcome of decent quality. We are nevertheless open to receiving comments and suggestions for possible improvements.

Of particular significance is the supplementary set of explanatory notes accompanying the texts, which we designed for readers who may not be familiar with Italian and European political history.

At the same time, we have openly pursued an additional objective: to address and counter certain recent distortions that have emerged in public debates concerning Spinelli's thought. In this respect, the essay on Marxism and federalism is especially valuable, as it enables readers to clearly understand the profound theoretical and political differences between these two approaches to the social and political transformations of our time.

These writings serve as a reminder that federalism is grounded in rigorous theoretical reflection rather than arising solely from pragmatic or contingent necessities. Making them accessible to the world through today's international lingua franca means allowing this reflection to contribute to current debates on the future of Europe and

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the world – at a time when European integration and international institutions are under attack from forces that seek not their improvement but their destruction.

This project also demonstrates a practical approach that could be applied to other untranslated federalist writings. Beyond Italian texts, important works in German, French, and other languages remain inaccessible to English-speaking audiences. For larger projects, such as complete books, the experience we've gained here suggests that organizing teams or groups of collaborators would be essential.
Throughout this process, we learned that successful collaborative translation requires a careful balance in scheduling. Deadlines cannot be overly rigid, as participants typically have their own jobs or studies to manage, but neither can they be too loose, as this risks projects becoming endless. The approach we adopted – working incrementally, section by section – allowed contributors to perceive tangible results while maintaining momentum toward completion, followed by a comprehensive final review.

Finally, it is essential to emphasize that such projects require more than the involvement of native English speakers alone. The extensive explanatory notes accompanying these essays demonstrate the importance of including contributors capable of elucidating historical, political, and cultural references for readers unfamiliar with the original context. This combination of linguistic competence and contextual expertise ensures that translated texts become not merely available, but genuinely accessible.

We express the hope that these unofficial versions will pave the way for future professional editions – and perhaps inspire similar collaborative efforts to unlock the broader federalist intellectual tradition for a global audience.

Henri Frenay, Resistance fighter, Minister, European federalist

Théo Boucart

Altiero Spinelli
Robert Belot, "Henri Frenay. Textes politiques et fédéralistes (1944-1979)", coll. « Textes politiques », Lyon, Presse fédéraliste, 2025, p. 293.

In his latest book published by Presse fédéraliste, historian Robert Belot offers an annotated compilation of texts – some of them entirely unpublished – by Henri Frenay. This body of work constitutes an invaluable source of information for understanding the intellectual and activist trajectory of the great figure of the French Resistance, a former Minister and a committed European federalist.
Today largely overlooked, the figure of Henri Frenay (1905–1988) nonetheless left a profound mark on the political history of the Second World War and the first decades of the post-war period. Raised in a Catholic, conservative, and nationalist family, Frenay arguably experienced his most decisive encounter in the 1930s: that with anti-fascist activist Berty Albrecht. This meeting enabled him to better grasp developments taking place across the Rhine and to understand the threat posed by Nazism.

From this encounter stemmed his political and activist commitment: his involvement in Combat, the principal Resistance movement in France; his vision of a united Europe in which a defeated Germany would play a leading role in preventing any future desire for revenge; and his discovery of European federalist movements, which eventually led him to preside over the Union of European Federalists several times

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between 1949 and 1955. Until the introduction of direct universal suffrage for elections to the European Parliament in 1979, Henri Frenay remained an intellectual reference point in the process of European integration. His legacy was still sufficiently vivid for François Mitterrand – who had known him in the aftermath of the Second World War – to pay tribute to him at Les Invalides upon his death in 1988.

Following a remarkable work on Henri Frenay's youth and Resistance activities, Robert Belot now invites readers, through Henri Frenay. Political and Federalist Texts (1944–1979), to explore his post-Resistance career – one marked by both hope and disillusionment.

The Resistance as a Catalyst for Political Change

This latest work by Robert Belot opens with a series of texts that provide a nuanced understanding of Henri Frenay's aspirations at the end of the war: namely, his desire for the Resistance to replace traditional political parties, without itself becoming a party. This idea – largely idealized – was met with skepticism. Léon Blum warned him of the indispensable role of political parties in a democracy, while Raymond Aron cautioned against the illusion of a "Resistance party." These reservations were borne out by the growing divergences between communist, Gaullist, and "third way" currents – the non-communist left, of which Combat was the main movement.

The creation of the National Liberation Movement (MLN) in January 1944, alongside figures such as Albert Camus and François Mitterrand, allowed Henri Frenay to believe in the possibility of a unifying structure for the Resistance. However, distrust from the Communist Party, combined with what Robert Belot describes as the "ontological ambiguity of this 'movement,' neither party nor movement," condemned the MLN to electoral insignificance. Frenay ultimately left its executive committee in April 1946. Other organizations co-founded by Frenay – the Democratic and Socialist Union of the Resistance and Socialism and Freedom (the latter scarcely mentioned by Frenay in his archives) – met with similar failures. The rejection of "revolutionary illusion" in the face of a return to pre-1939 normalcy, along with highly ambiguous political positioning, prevented these groups from securing a place within the political landscape.

Yet Henri Frenay was not entirely inexperienced in politics. Between September 1944 and November 1945, he served as Minister for Prisoners, Deportees, and Refugees in General de Gaulle's government. Although this period is absent from the texts collected in the volume, it was deeply traumatic for Frenay, given both the immense scale of the task and the relentless hostility he faced from Communist forces.

A reading of the texts reveals a gradual evolution in Frenay's thinking toward an increased emphasis on the necessity of a united socialist Europe. This idea had never truly left him – given his writings during the years of the Resistance – but it had become more subdued in the immediate post-war period.

European Federalism: Sincere Activism and a Path to Political Redemption

Henri Frenay began from a foundational observation shared by European federalist movements: Europe was caught between two great powers – the United States and the Soviet Union – whose societal models (capitalism and collectivism) were incompatible with a European culture rooted in humanism. For Frenay, "only a European federation on a socialist basis, including Germany, can avert war." The place of Germany – whose people he was careful to distinguish from Nazism – was a central motivation behind his federalist and pacifist commitment, as clearly demonstrated by his Appeal to the German People. The Franco-German partnership – France being, in his view, "the key to the European situation" – was thus the driving force behind the construction of an autonomous European geopolitical space, ultimately envisioned as the "Socialist United States of Europe."

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The European idea enabled Frenay to abandon the revolutionary radicalism that had characterized his earlier engagement. In 1947, he encountered the Union of European Federalists in Amsterdam and joined the organization at the Montreux Congress in August of that year. His letter to Marceau Pivert that same year marked a decisive turn toward federalism, subsequently reinforced by texts such as The Urgency of a European Federal Pact and the Project for an International Campaign in Favor of a European Constituent Assembly in the early 1950s.

Henri Frenay served as president of the UEF in 1948–1949 and briefly again in 1955. The failure of the European Defence Community (EDC) in 1954 dealt a severe blow to federalist hopes, despite the conviction in 1952 that a "Fiat federalista" ("and federalism came to be") moment was within reach. Frenay then focused his efforts on the European Federalist Movement, the French section of the UEF, continuing to believe in a federal leap increasingly regarded as unrealistic. His correspondence with Jean Monnet nevertheless warned him of the largely illusory nature of popular enthusiasm for Europe, in contrast with the powerful symbolism of nation-state culture.

Texts from the late 1950s and early 1960s highlight another pivotal moment in French political history: the return of General de Gaulle to the political forefront. Despite having criticized de Gaulle during the debates over the EDC, Frenay supported his return to power, viewing him as a "bulwark of democracy."Torn between European federalism and political Gaullism, Frenay was ultimately relegated to political marginality, leading to his resignation from the leadership of the European Federalist Movement in 1959. His opposition to de Gaulle's constitutional project in 1962 did nothing to alter this outcome.

Robert Belot's volume concludes with a text on European elections by direct universal suffrage – a rare victory for European federalists since the inception of the European project, and one that Henri Frenay welcomed, having always believed that it was at the European level that states could truly preserve their sovereignty.

The trajectory of a major figure in European federalism, a leading member of the Resistance and a former Minister: this is what Robert Belot offers through this annotated collection of texts, essential for understanding a significant chapter of contemporary history.

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ACTION COMMITTEE FOR THE UNITED STATES OF EUROPE

LUCA ALFIERI
Postdoc Politecnico of Milano, Lecturer in Econometrics. Advisor of Jef Estonia and YWF, member UEF and WFM.

YOUNES AHMAD
Co-founder of the Democracy & Federalism Hub. Geopolitical advisor and reconciliation facilitator.

DVIR AVIAM EZRA
Member of the Executive Board of JEF Europe, co-chair of the Task Force on Global Federalism of JEF Europe, former Editor in Chief of The New Federalist, Lawyer.

JOSEPH BARATTA
Professor of World History and International Relations at the Worcester State College, MA, USA.

OUMAR BARRY
Political refugee and student of International Development and Cooperation Sciences at the University of Turin.

BERNARD BARTHALAY
Senior Lecturer, Jean Monnet Chair in the Economics of European Integration at Université Lumière Lyon 2

JEAN-FRANCIS BILLION
Researcher, President of Presse fédéraliste.

THÉO BOUCART
Member of the Editorial Committee of Fédéchoses.

ANDREW STRAUSS
Dean Emeritus and Professor of Law, University of Dayton School of Law.

PIERVIRGILIO DASTOLI
President of Italian European Movement.

EUROPEAN MOVEMENT

INES FERNANDEZ-PONTES
Spanish correspondent of Euractiv.

MONICA FRASSONI
President of the European Alliance to Save Energy and EU Center of electoral support.

ROGER KOTILA
President of the Democratic World Federalists.

LUCIO LEVI
Honorary editor of the Federalist Debate and former President of UEF-Italy. Professor emeritus of political science at the University of Turin.

AUGUSTO LOPEZ CLAROS
Executive Director of the Global Governance Forum.

SERGIO MATTARELLA
President of the Italian Republic.

TIMOTHY NAMITEGO
Advocate of the High court of Uganda.

GIDEON ONG
YWF member and co-host of the YWF book club. Student at the University of Tulsa.

HAGGAI RAM
Professor of Middle East History at Ben Gurion University.

LORENZO RICCI
Independent journalist and documentary filmmaker. Author of the newsletter Pillole di Vetro and of the documentary "Georgia 2025: How a Democracy Dies" (2026).

SILVIA ROMANO
EU affairs professional, member of the bureau of Presse Fédéraliste and part of the editorial board of the Fédéchoses.

KLAUS SCHLICHTMANN
Doctor of philosophy, Nihon University, Japan. Peace researcher and activist. Former Chairman, West-German World Federalists. Member of IPRA, Peace History Society and World Federalist Movement.

EMANUEL SHAHAF
Israeli activist and former intelligence official. Co-chair of the Federation Movement.

FEDERICO TOSI
Member of the Federal Committee of JEF Europe, Co-chair of the Task Force on Global Federalism.

RENÈ WADLOW
President of the Association of World Citizens.

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