



STEERING COMMITTEE

The Brexit wake-up call: time for a Europe of Citizens

The UK has made its decision and it has to be respected. It is seismic and it is sad. We believe it to be short-sighted and all of us will lose as a result in the short term.

This vote has been the opportunity for many to voice their anger and distaste for those who have control - what has become known as the 'political establishment'. And it was mainly directed towards the UK political elites, not the EU. It is the 'anti-politics', the true face of political disenfranchisement.

This vote has made even more visible how divided the UK is: along age, class, level of education and regions. People do not only feel left behind, in a country that has stopped investing in health and education and policies to improve social mobility, they have been left behind.

We shouldn't spend too long though wallowing over the result. We should continue to work with the other progressive forces in Europe to look at how collectively we can further improve opportunities for all citizens to exchange ideas, to travel, to work and to trade.

Let's turn this difficulty into an opportunity. We do not have all the answers, but we know for sure that this has to be our wake up call.

Cooperation and not segregation gave us wealth, freedom and peace.

Now Europe experiences one crisis after the other. The reason for the constant crisis mode is not the fast development of the world – but the fact that our institutions don't adapt to the changing environment. Europe as a federation of nation states has failed. You cannot send emails with a fax machine.

“Business as usual” has failed

Our national governments are stuck in “business as usual” mode. They insist on methods that lead to disaster: The governments want to reach agreements behind closed doors, without involvement of their citizens. They insist on their national veto rights – so that even the prime minister of the smallest country can block any decision – in order to secure his/her re-election. This leads to the favourite decision of the 28 national leaders: “Delay decisions into the future.”

Tomorrow the unsolved problems will be ten times bigger. But tomorrow is far away...

Back to yesteryear leads to catastrophe. The enemies of the open society use the indecisions of governments. The alternative that they offer: Back to the dark times of petty segregation from our neighbours.

This is a recipe for disaster. Segregation leads to economic failure, because in today's connected world no one can survive on its own. Petty egoism leads to disputes and new conflicts. How easily nationalism leads to war, can be seen even nowadays: In the Western Balkans, Georgia and the Ukraine.

The two basic flaws of the European Union

These are the two basic flaws of the European Union in its present form:

1. The **EU deals with too many small tasks**, which could be much better solved locally, regionally or at the national level.
2. The **EU fails to solve the big problems, because it has no power**. All real decisions are made by 28 national leaders. If just one of them disagrees, the national leaders often decide to "postpone" problems into the future – usually costing us a lot of money. Every postponed crisis comes back to us with even bigger problems.

The Solution

We Liberals offer a third alternative to „business as usual“ of national governments and „back to the old times“ of nationalists.

We can solve the problems of a connected global community only if we work together. Europeans need to speak with one voice in the world. Only then we can keep our influence and make an impact.

At the same time the European Union needs to concentrate on its core tasks. If the EU tries to interfere in every little decision, then it will achieve nothing. The EU needs to focus on a few core responsibilities and leave all other decisions to the citizens, the local, regional or national level.

The European Union needs to focus on those areas where it can provide the biggest benefit for European citizens:

- Foreign policy
- Defence
- Fiscal policy
- The Euro

and the “four freedoms”: The free movement of people, goods, services and capital

The European Union needs a real European government if it wants to fulfill its role and solve problems. This European government needs the power to act on behalf of all European citizens. Only then Europe will be speaking with one voice. The national governments shall be represented in a Senate and be involved in those decisions that require them to implement European law.

Such power must be legitimated through a democratic process. Therefore such a European government must be proposed, elected and discharged by the European parliament. The European parliament itself must become a full-blown parliament: All laws on the European level are proposed, discussed and voted by the European Parliament.

This way we create a real “Federal Republic of Europe”. With the power to solve problems that concern all Europeans, a strict prohibition to interfere in matters that concern only local, regional or national affairs and a real European government that is legitimated by an elected parliament.

More say for citizens – not less

We need to profoundly rethink the way we do politics: it has to be more open, more grassroots, more participatory. The reaction of many people disliking the result of the British EU referendum is to doubt people's ability to decide what's best for them and discrediting referendums as a means of political decision-making.

Yes, referendums are frustrating because they are black and white decisions, and do not reflect all the preferences of citizens. But, would we give more say to people in the first place and actually care about their opinions, the outcome would be different.

The „**Federal Republic of Europe**“ can only be created by the explicit will of the citizens. The citizens of each EU member country need to decide, if their country shall

- join the Federal Republic of Europe with a common European government, or
- join as ‘associate’, which would include the „four freedoms“ but would not include any say into the decisions of the Federal Republic of Europe.

Time to act!

The time to act has come. The Steering Committee of ALDE Party individual members calls upon all European citizens: Let us show the national governments that we won't accept their strategy to “postpone” problems anymore.

Help us push the national governments to reboot our institutions – so that they can solve the problems of a connected world. Let's build a Europe of the Citizens!

The Steering Committee of ALDE Individual Members:

Julie Cantalou (Chair), Fabio Bauer, Yuri Guaiana, Thalia Ntoka, Chris Pyak

PS: Help us gather the forces for a Europe of Citizens. Invite your friends to [join ALDE Party individual members](#) tonight!