

PROPOSAL FOR A RESOLUTION [1.1.] OF THE UEF CONGRESS “A UNITED EUROPE – NOW MORE IMPORTANT THAN EVER”

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1 For the pro-European forces the time is ripe to stand up, to commit to the successful project
2 Europe and to fight for it. Many reform steps paved the way to the European Union of today.
3 Remarkable progress has been made concerning the Union’s scope of activities, the design of
4 decision making and the number of its member states. The EU was and still is a guarantee for
5 peace and - too often unacknowledged - for the welfare of its citizens. But the competences and
6 structures of the European Union are incomplete and do not cope with the existing challenges
7 and expectations.

8 Six months before the next European election the process of uniting Europe is seriously in
9 danger: Because it had been agreed upon before deepening and strengthening the Union, the
10 great enlargement from fifteen to twenty-eight member states has changed the character of
11 the Union and is still not fully digested. The failure of the Constitutional Treaty in 2005 and both
12 the economic and social crisis that followed the financial crash in 2008 have reduced the
13 confidence and questioned the trust in the European project. For the first time in its history a
14 member state is about to leave the European Union. Nationalist demagogic, populist and
15 Eurosceptic political parties gain support all over the Union and in some member states the
16 common values and the rule of law are under attack. As a result the Union has partly lost the
17 support of its citizens. Therefore there is an urgent need for reform in many respects.

18 **The electoral campaign as a catalyst for the reform debate**

19 The Union of European Federalists welcomes the new discussion about the future of Europe as
20 initiated by the Commission’s White paper and by the remarkable speeches last year of
21 Commission President Jean Claude Juncker and the President of the French Republic Emmanuel
22 Macron which included many fresh ideas and concrete reform proposals. The campaign for the
23 European election in May 2019 must be used to clearly show the advantages and the need to
24 act together in a united Europe. It offers the chance to discuss the future of Europe and to push
25 for necessary reforms.

26 The citizens should have the possibility to decide with their vote on the composition of the
27 European Parliament and at the same time on the EU’s top position but, above all, they must be
28 asked to decide with their vote which future for the EU do they want: if based on more
29 intergovernmental method, as nationalists ask, or if the European Union has to become more
30 effective and closer to the citizens by acquiring new own resources and powers, in order to
31 deliver stronger European policies especially in the economic and migration fields. Therefore
32 the pro-European political parties have to show to the citizens their common will to strengthen
33 the EU and to effectively promote their European programmes. Moreover they have to present
34 their candidates for the president of the European Commission as “Spitzenkandidaten” and to
35 decide on the procedure how to elect one of the lead candidates as President of the
36 Commission and on the political guidelines for reforms he or she has to represent before the

37 European elections. After the European election and before the decision of the European
38 Council they should find an agreement on the next President and commit to that agreement.
39 For future European elections the European character of the elections has to be strengthened
40 by the introduction of transnational lists.

41 **The reform needs**

42 Ever since it has been founded the Union of European Federalists is strongly committed to the
43 establishment of a federal European Union. The aim is not a centralized super-state, but a
44 federation in which states, regions, municipalities and citizens work trustful together. The Union
45 has limited but strong powers and effective, democratically legitimised institutions. More
46 responsibility is urgently needed for the European level especially in the following fields:

- 47 • According to the given structures and the open borders in the EU – which we definitely
48 want to keep - policies of immigration and asylum can only be tackled at the European
49 level. We need convincing concepts and instruments to introduce and implement a
50 coherent and effective immigration and asylum policy at the European level based on
51 solidarity, fair burden sharing and clear respect for the human rights. The Dublin
52 regulations have to be reformed and legal ways for economic migrations have to be
53 established. Moreover we need a system that really works to control the external
54 borders of the Union.
- 55 • The Economic and Monetary Union has to be strengthened. There is a need for a
56 Treasury with its own fiscal capacity. The European Stability Mechanism has to be
57 transformed into a European Monetary Fund in order to contribute to the financial
58 stability of the Eurozone. A substantial Eurozone budget has to be established to
59 support competitiveness and convergence by financing new investments in innovation
60 and human capital: This will substitute for national spending and fill the huge current
61 investment gap. Moreover a social instrument for Euro area member states in trouble is
62 necessary, and it could take the form of a European Unemployment Stabilization Fund.
63 Such a supplementary budget will grow over time as an instrument capable of
64 contributing to macro-economic stabilisation.
- 65 • The capability of the European Union to act in foreign and security policy has to be
66 strengthened. The relationships with the United States, Russia and Turkey are difficult
67 and unpredictable. The European Union is asked to promote, protect and defend the
68 interests of its member states. Separately, EU member states have well-known
69 capacities in world affairs, which they should pool into a common diplomatic power to
70 good effect. If they decide to act together by combining their international experience
71 to the benefit of Europe's common good, the Union can exploit a wide range of
72 instruments and considerable resources to develop its outstanding role in civilian
73 conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict stabilisation. The Commission
74 should take over responsibilities to engage in civil protection, rescue and aid in
75 international natural disasters. But for being more effective majority voting has to be
76 introduced in important fields of foreign and security policy and the capacity to act has
77 to be strengthened. Current treaties provide for this as they are.

78 • To fulfil its obligations the European Union needs fully fledged financial means. For the
79 period 2021-2028 the ceiling of the EU budget of 1,23 % of the gross national income
80 should be exploited. Based on a Treaty amendment or by activating the general
81 “passerelle clause”, the European Council should endow European Union with the right
82 to raise taxes in limited fields, like corporate tax for multinational companies, digital
83 products, financial transactions, carbon dioxide or plastic.

84 Concerning the institutions and the decision-making process the most needed and important
85 reform is the introduction of qualified majority voting as the general principle. For sensitive
86 questions there could be a threshold of three quarters or more, but unanimity should only be
87 necessary in very limited critical and specific cases. Due to the fact that the Parliament and the
88 Council of ministers form the legislative branch, the European Council should fulfil high level
89 representative tasks and refrain from interfering the day to day policy making. The number of
90 Commissioners should be reduced as foreseen in the Lisbon Treaty.

91 We do not need new institutions for the Euro-area like a Parliament for the Euro-area, since the
92 euro is the common currency of the Union. The democratic legitimacy in the institutional
93 system governing the Economic and Monetary Union must be secured by the general rule that
94 the European Parliament is deciding on all matters of the Economic and Monetary Union,
95 including a possible new budget for the euro area; but, at the same time, a new voting rule
96 within the European Parliament must be set up, giving the voting right on matters of the euro
97 area exclusively to those Members of the European Parliament who have been elected in the
98 Member States belonging to the Economic and Monetary Union.

99 Most of the proposals above can be realised within the existing treaties, but some need a treaty
100 change. The Union of European Federalists asks for both: Improvements which can be realized
101 in the framework of the existing Treaties should be immediately implemented; others request
102 Treaty reforms or a new Treaty to be prepared by a Convention implying contributions of the
103 European Parliament, the Member States, the Regions, the local authorities and other
104 representatives of the civil society and the citizens.

105 **The reform process**

106 During the election campaign 2018-2019 necessary changes to the future constituent process of
107 the EU have to be prepared, explained and promoted. If not all member states’ governments or
108 parliaments prove to be ready to take the qualitative step towards a federal union those who
109 are prepared to do so should form a “coalition of the willing”. Under clear conditions the UEF
110 supports the establishment of different levels of integration inside the EU, thus allowing more
111 advanced states to show the way forward for the Union as a whole. This implies that those
112 Member States willing to give birth to a fiscal/economic/political Union must be ready to go
113 beyond the current Treaties, even without the consent of the other partners, as it was in the
114 past for the Euro or the Fiscal Compact and the ESM. But those movements should not disrupt
115 the framework of the European Union or lead to a “Europe á la carte” and it must be always
116 open for others to join.

117 The relationship between the citizens and the European Union needs to be improved. More
118 democratic processes are of uttermost importance for the future of the Union. A possible

119 innovation to be extended both in time and scope could be the concept of Citizens'
120 consultations. In many town hall meetings all over the Union women and men are asked to
121 articulate their ideas on the future and Europe. However, before this concept is transferred into
122 the political reform process, strong evidence is needed that they can have a real impact in the
123 citizens' adherence to the European perspective and the decision-making process.

124 We request the European Parliament to take the initiative and trigger an ambitious
125 constitutional reform. This could take the form of a dedicated Convention implying a wide
126 contribution of the European Parliament, the member states, the regions, the local authorities
127 and other representatives of the civil society and the citizens.

128 The Union of European Federalists is prepared to accompany and to contribute actively to the
129 reform process of the European Union.