

PROPOSAL FOR A RESOLUTION [1.2.] OF THE UEF CONGRESS “MULTI-LEVEL FEDERALISM AS A GUIDING PRINCIPLE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION”

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1 The Union of European federalists is firmly convinced that federalism understood as multilevel
2 governance is a universal and guiding principle, which includes all political levels with tasks, they can
3 deliver best according to the conditions of subsidiarity.

4 The general advantages of multi-level governance compared to a centralized political system are well
5 known:

- 6 ▪ policy making is closer to the citizens while at the same time the possibility to set common rules
7 where and when necessary,
- 8 ▪ decentralization of power (“checks and balances”),
- 9 ▪ more identification with the political system, due to the fact that voters who are in opposition to
10 the government at the upper level may support a governing party at the lower level(s),
- 11 ▪ possibility to try out and to test new political solutions and concepts and as a result a
12 competition of the best solutions,
- 13 ▪ chance for formation and recruiting of personnel with solid political and administrative
14 experience at the lower levels.

15 Those advantages can be attributed to all political levels: the local, the regional, the national, the
16 European and the world level.

17 **The European Union provides the appropriate framework to solve important problems but**
18 **has to be reformed in a federal way**

19 The EU is an important instrument for addressing important needs and challenges. It guarantees
20 peace and democracy and it serves to economic and social welfare of the citizens. Open borders and
21 the common currency are among the outstanding achievements.

22 But there is a growing need for reforms in various aspects: The Economic and Monetary Union is not
23 completed, the options for action in the field of foreign and security policy are weak and the need for
24 unanimity decisions in important fields prevent reforms. Moreover there is a need for a common
25 asylum and immigration policy based on solidarity and a more effective common border
26 management. The federal character of the EU has to be strengthened by a more efficient decision
27 making with majority voting in all important fields – where appropriate with higher thresholds of
28 three quarters or four fifth, including future reforms of the Treaties.

29 **The contribution of the regions to European integration**

30 Multi-level governance is an important feature of the European Union. Nation-states alone do not
31 have the power and the effectiveness to solve important political problems. Urgent political aims –
32 like those of the Europe 2020-strategy (increasing the employment rate, increasing combined public
33 and private investment in R&D, climate change and energy targets, reducing school drop-out rates,
34 increasing the share of the population having completed tertiary education, lifting at least 20 million
35 people out of the risk of poverty and social exclusion) - can only be achieved if they are supported

36 and implemented by all political levels – European, national, regional and local. And this is the reason
37 why the regions have to play an important in the EU.

38 Subnational entities have a growing influence in selected fields. Especially in bigger member states
39 the European Union needs for many reasons strong regions:

- 40 ▪ Regions are close to the citizens and may contribute to a higher degree of acceptance in the
41 European Union.
- 42 ▪ Regions have been the beneficiaries of the structural funds (1/3 of the European budget) since
43 1988 at least.
- 44 ▪ In many cases regions are responsible for the implementation of EU-regulations.
- 45 ▪ The involvement of regional experts in the EU decision making contributes to efficient solution,
46 they know best the conditions for functioning solutions at home.
- 47 ▪ Regions in many member states are responsible for culture and education. They may introduce a
48 strong European dimension in the curricula of school and universities.

49 With the instruments of regional policy and territorial cohesion the EU has developed direct links to
50 the regions. Thereby the administrative capacity of the regions has been strengthened even in
51 centralized member states. The status of the regions including their right for self-government is
52 accepted by the EU and the EU procedures offers a certain influence for the regions in the European
53 decision making and to act at the European level. Regional and local representatives are members of
54 the Committee of the Regions. Many regions have established liaison offices in Brussels.

55 The European Union needs strong and pro-European regions. From the citizen's perspective
56 European integration and regionalization can be viewed as complementary processes: On the one
57 hand power goes further away from the lower to the upper level on the other hand power comes
58 closer to the citizens. Moreover regionalism is a method to solve problems and to minimize conflicts.
59 From a regional perspective in a system of multi-level-governance the predominance of the nation
60 state has diminished and as a result regional conflicts may lose importance. Northern Ireland, Tyrol
61 and the Basque region are meaningful examples for this. It may be possible that regional conflicts
62 could be prevented if EU-states internally were structured more federally.

63 **European integration strengthens regions, but regionalism does not mean separatism**

64 Regionalism in the European Union is positive. But regionalism does not mean that regions may claim
65 for becoming independent nation states. It is neither the aim nor a promising concept to create a
66 multitude of small new nation states and by doing so to increase the number of member states in the
67 EU.

68 Separatism is not and cannot be the aim of regionalism in Europe. One of the predominant aims of
69 European integration after WW II was - and still - is to frame the influence of independent nation
70 states and to draw back the dangers of an exaggerated nationalism by creating a supranational
71 Community based on democracy and the rule of law. In this regard, the UEF has no sympathy for
72 unilateral attempts to enforce independence.

73 **The Union of European Federalists emphasizes:**

- 74 1. Federalism understood as multi-level governance is a universal and guiding principle for
75 all political levels.

- 76 2. The European Union provides the appropriate framework to solve important problems,
77 but has to be reformed in a federal way.
- 78 3. Regions and municipalities are important actors in order to cope efficiently with political
79 tasks; therefore they have to play an active role in the European Union.
- 80 4. Growing regionalism is a positive tendency in Europe, but regionalism does not mean
81 separatism.
- 82 5. According to the concept of federalism, important tasks - such as peacekeeping,
83 development cooperation, and humanitarian aid - should be addressed at the global
84 level because of their global structure. Unfortunately the Instruments and procedures of
85 the United Nations today are too weak to cope efficiently with those tasks, so that the
86 EU has to balance the deficit as much as possible. In order to tackle universal problems
87 in a better and more efficient way the structures of the United Nations have to be
88 strengthened.

Underlined the latest amendments introduced by the Resolution's sponsor