

Sandro Gozi Speech

“WAKE UP EUROPE!”

Our Europe is, again, at a turning point.
It has been so several times in the past.
But the point in which we are at now is a particularly important one.
This time is different.
Very different.

And it is so, because never before has the European project been under so much threat, so many attacks while, at the same time, it has never been more important for us all.

And, let me say without exaggeration, and without being Eurocentric, for the rest of the world.
Because not since the 1930s has the world needed Europe and the European method of peaceful management of relations between peoples and countries more,

And this is the political paradox we're facing.
On the one hand an unprecedented global need for Europe, while on the other existential attacks against Europe both from the inside as well as from outside.
And this dear friends has me worried.

For the first time, I fear for the future of the our common projet.
For the first time, I fear Europe is at risk.
For the first time, we must seriously act against european disintegration.

It is absurd, one might think. And it is so, especially if you look at what our Union still represents to the rest of the world....!

I'm just back from a mission to Tokyo, where I had the chance to discuss how to rebuild trust in democracy. I debated with politicians and experts from Japan, Philippines, Indonesia etc. I was with other european, from Paris and from.....London.
It was just after the failure of the APEC meeting, due to the strong disagreement between US and China.

And it is always amazing to me to see how they still look at us with respect and admiration, as the first successful projet of free Regional integration.
And less amazing, but telling a lot about the Brexit mistake, how many values and interests in the global world we share across the channel.
This is why I am ever more persuaded that the only way to “go global” for us, Europeans, is not to leave the Union but to move towards a European Federation.

The only way to take back control is to work for a european sovereignty.

So, the federalist action today is as important as ever.
So, our commitment is the real way forward to have a future as Europeans in the global world.

Yes, the first reason why I present my candidacy is purely and solely federalist, as I think it should be!

The second reason is simply and openly a political one.

Non-partisan, of course, but very political.

Why?

Because we are witnessing a major conflict between two visions for Europe: liberal democracy versus nationalism, rule of law versus intolerance, openness versus closure, multilateralism versus unilateralism.

And each day, this cleavage emerges more and more in the debates in the press, in the talk shows, in the European and national parliaments.

For the first time after the Iraq war in 2003, when so many European citizens were united against the war, we are seeing signs and movements of a European public opinion: on rule of law, on migration, on climate change, on the digital challenges. Europe is more and more at the centre of these societal debates.

there are more and more civil initiatives launched to defend and to reform Europe. free citizens initiative in cities as Warsaw, Budapest, London, Edinburgh, and Turin more recently. we must be in these squares, walk in these streets, at the heart of these initiatives!

What an historical chance for the federalist movement!

Let's seize it.

Let's fight for the Federalist cause!

Spinelli's message has never been so strong and so current: that the new cleavage between federalism and nationalism is more and more at the center of European and national debates.

And in this context, we, European Federalists, must take on all our responsibilities and renew our commitment to the European cause.

What drives people into the hands of our enemies is that they have lost trust in the current system to deliver solutions: therefore without more delay we must get out of this status quo and relaunch a strong process of European reform addressing ourselves to all the political forces sharing our values, our concerns, our goals.

and also trying to act as a catalyst of the several pro-European initiatives launched by the civil society: they are many today, from Pulse of Europe to Civico or Volt to mention just a few. let's connect the dots. let's build up a civic and political critical mass!

Wake up Europe!

This must be our motto, this must be our goal.

Not because we're not aware of the important steps taken in the recent years.

Of the relentless work of the EU institutions, starting from the European Parliament.

And I want to commend all the MEP present here today: I myself, as Europe Minister until June of this year, could witness the great quality of their work in this legislature.

Not because we underestimate the difficulties but because we appreciate the challenges.



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And precisely because the scale of the challenges has dramatically changed is why we must redouble our effort.

We're entering a new phase in European integration.

In recent weeks, important EU leaders have indicated a European Army as a possible and necessary goal.

In the most recent days, the debate on how to reshape the eurozone has been relaunched.

Yes, we wish more and better.

And we must use all our means to persuade, encourage and put pressure on the key decision makers to do more and better, starting from these two initiatives. And we have to do much more to mobilise public opinion around these fundamental choices, using all possible means: from parliamentary debates to daily action on social networks, from dialogue with the key European leaders to open debates with all the interested political and civic organisations with which we must aim and create a strong network for a stronger European mobilisation.

We have an immediate very important job to do, as also this Congress is showing.

More generally, we, as UEF, have an important role to play in uniting all democratic political forces to defend the European idea from the illiberal challenges and to provide ideas for European solutions and a European reform agenda.

And for us, the next European elections will be a litmus test of our capacity to have a non-partisan but highly political influence on the European debate.

We'll have to address ourselves, with our Federalist choices to all the political parties running up to the elections: proposing our agenda to them, asking them to take a clear position on it, and laying down the basis of a possible federalist agenda for the next European legislature.

We will also have to act as a civic actor: we have to raise the awareness of our European citizens on the importance of exercising their voting rights, especially the youngest who vote for the first time, aiming to do our part to increase the turnout in May 2019, offering our cooperation in the different countries to promote initiatives together with the Commission and the Parliament to explain the importance of the next European elections.

I do believe that this could also act as a boost for all our national sections.

The third reason for my candidacy is a personal one, an obvious continuation of my European and professional path.

As I had the opportunity to explain in the letter which I sent to you all, I am a committed European, with academic and professional experiences in at least 7 European countries. Experience in practically all the EU institutions as well as in organised civil society.

I am pro-European and pro-civil rights. I'll always be very grateful to the governments, universities and associations which wanted to recognise my commitment: from the French and Maltese Presidents to the Fribourg University or the Harvey Milk San Francisco Foundation to mention just a few.

In my last experience as a European minister I have always pushed for a stronger Europe. Let me mention just a few initiatives which I took first, since 2014: dialogue and new conditionality on the rule of law, increase Erasmus and European Youth Initiative funds, the focus of the Rome Declaration on Europe of Defense, Social Europe and the possibility of going ahead for a more dynamic group of willing countries, the proposal of using the parliamentary seats left empty by Brexit to introduce the transnational lists in Bratislava, informal general affairs council of July 2016.

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With these experiences, over the years I have basically lived Europe from many different perspectives, as an active citizen, as a professional and through my several political and institutional experiences. I thought therefore that I was now well placed to put my convictions, my commitment and my experience at the service of our common endeavour as UEF.

But if you ask me where my strong European convictions stem from, it was not when I went to Berlin just after the Fall of the Wall, although it was like a dream for me and I still have a piece of the wall at home..

Neither was it when I did the Erasmus programme in Paris and studied in other 4 countries. Nor was it as a student when I campaigned in France for the OUI to the Maastricht treaty, or when I was in the "grande amphithéâtre" of La Sorbonne, following the debate between François Mitterrand and Philippe Séguin in September 1992.

No, the real moment was when as a diplomat I witnessed the siege of Sarajevo, under the shots of the snipers from Pale and I worked for its reconstruction afterwards.

It was in those moments, where I met so many young people of my age without a leg, on their wheel chair, massacred by another bloody war between Europeans, victims of the madness of another ethnic cleansing in our continent.

Young people just like me, only born on the wrong side of the Adriatic in that moment.

That was the only difference between us.

But it was our Union which made that difference.

That was the moment.

Since then, in all my life I've always fought and will always fight for the European cause.

No matter what happens.

No matter what the immediate political advantages may be.

No matter how unpopular it may be in certain moments.

Yes, for us, the Europeans, "le nationalisme c'est la guerre", Mitterrand was right, as Adenauer, De Gasperi, Schuman, Spinelli, the many participants to The Hague Conference in 1948 were right before him.

I don't say this because my grandfather or my father told me about their experiences during the First or the Second World War.

And I don't say that this is the most effective way of promoting the European project today.

I say it because I've lived it personally.

I say it because it could happen again.

But let's look at our future.

Why a Federal Europe?

A Federal Europe is a multiplier of opportunities, securities and protections for all.

A multiplier of the future especially for the young generation.

And we must work a lot on the young generation.

They are the generation who live more as European and who are more at risk because of the risks of the European project.

They're the generation which in the last years have mostly lived Europe as a multiplier of deceptions and constraints.

I don't want to say that this is necessarily the true story.

But this is what they feel.

This is what they perceive.

And we need their support.

A Federal Europe because in this new global disorder, there are more and more actors that want to divide us, to weaken us, to manipulate us. There is a golden thread, and probably even something more, between the neo-nationalistic forces in some European countries, starting with my country, Italy, the challenges of Putin and the links with extremist anti-European movements, the victory of Bolsonaro, the stances of Trump, the strategies of China.

We must defend and reform multilateralism: this is the real, serious way of celebrating 100 years from the end of World War, having Europe as a legitimate global actor.

To this end, we must work to favour truly transnational politics. Yes, if we want to give Europe the power and the strength to take control on transnational issues, such as immigration, terrorism, climate change, finance or digital innovations, if we want Europe to become a real security and global actor, we must also work more on the democratic legitimacy of the Union. In my belief, a federal democracy must rely on transnational political and civic movements. Starting from the European elections.

Yes, we must relaunch the proposal of the transnational lists which must become a reality in 2024. Without a truly democratic Europe we will never get the Europe we need and we will put at risk the national democracies we have!

I am well aware of the very good job which has been done so far, on one hand, and I honestly want to greet and commend the work and the leadership of Elmar Brok! Dear Elmar, you've done a great job and, be ready, because I'll need your support and your advice if the Congress decides that I will succeed to you. Thank you for all the work you've done!

And I'm also fully cognisant of the organisational challenges that we face on the other.

For the Federalist movement to play a successful role, we need to redouble our efforts to deliver for national sections, to encourage the smallest sections to grow, and to intensify our advocacy at the European level. UEF must become a real opportunity for all the national sections to expand our common European initiative.

In light of previous discussions you held, and of my first analysis, we should be able to immediately develop some aspects of our strategy: to promote events and projects with a new added-value and able to meet the new funding priorities of our potential donors. I feel that this is a concern shared by many national sections and on which I am willing to commit through the collective action and a clear strategy of the new Executive Bureau. We must do all we can to secure our financial situation and to diversify our donors. To this end, Bureau members should identify clear advocacy priorities and take ownership of tasks and responsibilities to reach our common objectives.

Last but not least, I will be always open to ideas, concerns and proposals from all the national sections. Within this well-defined context, I am ready to use my experience and networks to strengthen the presence of UEF and represent the UEF positions in the political debate at the European level in this very delicate and decisive phase of European integration. We need to show determination, commitment, and team spirit. Above all, we need to show courage, in our ideas as well as in our actions.

You already know that music is one of my passions. And as a former DJ, I often derive inspiration from songs. A very good song by an American band which I strongly recommend to you all, the Rogue Wave, is "What is left to solve?".

This should be our starting point.

Not with the presumption of having all the solutions, but with the respect for the work which has already been done and with the determination to contribute to the success of our movement! Ah, for those who are interested, the album is of 2016 and California Bride is also another excellent piece....

"What is left to solve" is also a way of paying respect to those who have worked and fought for our cause before us.

Not only the famous founding mothers and fathers.

And among the mothers, i would like to specifically mention Simone Weil, whom i personally knew and whom Président Macron paid a special and well deserved tribute last year at the invalides and then at the Panthéon.

But also, I will always insist on this, the many unknown Federalists, active citizens, civil servants, politicians who have given so much to our European project away from the limelight. And let us recall what some of them used to say and write at the beginning of this incredible European adventure -yes, it was Walter Hallstein -and which still holds true even more for us today: "...tut etwas Tapferes...", it is time for an act of courage.

It is time for a European Federation.