



Manifesto by the ELEC-LECE Central Committee on the European Union

Brussels, December 9th, 2024

Given the current situation of the European Union and its uncertain international context, the Central Committee of the European League for Economic Cooperation (ELEC), a pro-European civil association with a long-standing tradition since the origins of the EU treaties, wishes to express its position regarding the urgency of strengthening European capacity and autonomy. We urge Member States and EU Institutions to expedite decisions that prepare Europe for a new stage, preventing it from remaining entrenched in the economic, social, and political contexts of recent decades that are being outpaced by the current times.

Key Legislative Period

The new 5-year legislative period (2024-2029) will be critical for adapting the European Union to changing internal and international contexts. Key factors shaping this new reality include:

- **Internal Demographic Aging Population**
- **Loss of Competitiveness of the European internal market and growth of Asian economies**
- **Growing Gap in R&D compared to the United States of America and China**
- **Completion of the Banking Union and Capital Markets Union, essential for bridging competitiveness and productivity gaps with the USA and China**
- **Tangible Progress Towards a Common Fiscal Policy, aiming for “an ever-closer Union” as a political aspiration**
- **Effects of Climate Change**
- **Growth of Uncontrolled Immigration**
- **Emergence of New Exponential Technologies and AI**
- **Wars and Conflicts around the EU**
- **Risks of Excessive Energy Dependence and the need for Enhanced Interconnection of Critical Infrastructures**
- **Dependence on Food Supplies and Components from countries outside the EU**
- **Poor Integration of the European Internal Market**
- **Atomization in the Technological Field and lack of large global digital operators**

- **Complexities of European Governance, requiring strong, agile, effective leadership of EU institutions**
- **Excessive Bureaucracy**
- **Geopolitical Changes with autocracies at the forefront**
- **Absence of a Clear European Security and Defense Policy**
- **Need to Strengthen European Foreign Policy and develop an effective autonomous defense policy.**

If no decisive action is taken, the future of Europe and the democratic model of law and social welfare are at risk. Therefore, it is of utmost urgency that Member States undertake a determined process during this legislative period to adapt the EU/27 to these new times and prepare for emerging challenges.

External Influences

The recent American elections, notably the election of President Trump and his proposed policies, pose additional risks for Europe, further emphasizing the need for Member States to promote structural decisions aimed at safeguarding the interests of citizens and European security.

Major global players like China, Russia, and other autocratic nations seek to weaken the position of democratic Europe in the world, jeopardizing the collective European project and our societal model. The ongoing Ukraine conflict and growing tariffs on European products exported to the USA further heighten the uncertainty for the European economy.

Historical Context

Since the end of the World War II, the journey towards a European Union has been marked by integration among democratic states, enabling collective responses to evolving challenges. The experiences from Maastricht (1993) and the EEC (1957) have equipped us to address these threats more effectively.

European civil society expects political institutions, states, and governing parties to adopt necessary measures across various domains, preparing Europe to face its future with increased capacity and security—prioritizing supranational interests over national interests.

Call for Ambition and Self-esteem

We advocate for greater ambition and self-esteem to navigate this pivotal moment. The European Economic Space, inclusive of nations seeking EU integration, alongside the UK, represents one of the most advanced and diverse economic aggregates globally. The EU's collective GDP is higher than that of China and comparable to that of the USA. The 450 million inhabitants of Europe expect their leaders to confidently assert Europe's role in the global context and adapt to immediate future needs.

Principles for Action

To achieve these goals, we require decisive action from our political leaders:

- The adoption of collective commitments at the European level.
- Strengthening the European Political Union to increase the EU's influence in the current geopolitical landscape.
- A comprehensive Political Declaration of European Constitutional Principles and Values to reinforce the European project and the sense of belonging among diverse societies.

We urge European authorities to expedite decision-making processes, commit to adapting the European single market, and enhance Europe's strategic autonomy, moving towards a more federal Europe with better coordination and governance.

Conclusion

Europe has a profound responsibility to exemplify its model of free and democratic society to the world. The European Union must successfully navigate this transformational cycle and establish itself as a global reference point, all the while maintaining our social market model and democratic values.

The ELEC/LECE Central Council Committee wishes for the new European Commission, political leaders and legislators to embody confidence, ambition, and decisiveness in adopting essential measures through dialogue and resolution. The time for action is now, as we collectively reinforce our commitment for the European Union to be a reference for the rest of the world.

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