

1. INTRODUCTION TO EUROPEAN HISTORY: TO PROVIDE PARTICIPANTS WITH A BROAD UNDERSTANDING OF THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE EU.

The European Union is a supranational economic and political organization currently made up of 27 European states, including Italy.



Its process of formation and subsequent evolution is long and slow, it has been and still is.

The birth of the EU was in fact characterized by stages of slowdown and acceleration towards the economic and political integration of the member countries.

The idea of a United Europe, economically and politically, has distant roots. Already Charlemagne, Machiavelli, Louis XIV up to Napoleon, Mazzini and Carlo Cattaneo, were bearers of the idea of unification. However, it was especially after the Second World War that a more cogent reflection was carried out and the first foundations were laid for the concrete realization of the project.

In a more formal way in international relations between states, the European unification project begins to be formalized as an issue especially following the Second World War.

Already the **First World War** (1914-1918) had the characteristic of being of intercontinental dimensions. Triggered by nationalistic pressures and imperialistic tendencies cultivated by the European powers starting from the second half of the 19th century, it involved 28 countries and saw the forces of the Entente (France, Great Britain, Russia, Italy and their allies) and the Central Powers opposed (Austria-Hungary, Germany and their allies).

It took on a global dimension also from the point of view of the theaters of battle: it fought not only in Europe, but also in the Ottoman Empire, in the German colonies in Asia and on all the seas. The decisive battles took place in Europe, on 5 fronts: the western one, between France and Germany, along the Marne and the Somme; the oriental, or Russian, extensive and without natural barriers; the southern, or Serbian; the Austro-Italian, in the eastern Alps and in Carnia; the Greek, north of Thessaloniki.

Europe as a whole emerged from the first conflict weakened by victims (around 8 million dead and 20 million injured), destruction and debt. The peace treaties did not overcome the national rivalries that had been at the origin of the war, creating the conditions for further conflicts: the dissolution of Austria-Hungary and the conditions of surrender imposed on Germany poured national tensions on many of the new states.

Relations between the victorious powers and Germany were also full of tensions; political, economic and military conditions were imposed which were so harsh that they soon proved unrealistic.

In fact, at the end of the First World War, with the clauses of the Treaty of Versailles, which placed responsibility for the conflict and the consequent financial and territorial conditions imposed on Germany on Germany and Austria, but also the crisis of '29, constituted a terrain of culture for the revival of German nationalism and militarism.

More generally, the attempt of the League of Nations (established in 1919) to build an organism for a new system of international relations failed.

It was above all the **Second World War** (1939 – 1945) which was characterized as a conflict in which almost all the countries of the world were involved.

The main contenders were the Allies (Great Britain, France, the United States of America and the Soviet Union) on one side and the “Axis” (Germany, Italy and Japan on the other).

It was a total war in several respects: geographical, because it affected all continents; economic, because it forced the countries involved to make an unprecedented production effort; ideological, because it fought for radically opposing ideals; demographic, because it involved the civilian population to the same extent as the military forces.

At the end of the conflict, **the consequences of the Second World War were:**

- 1) The United States of America had definitively emerged from traditional isolationism, bearing a substantial part of the war effort, and had contributed decisively to the Allied victory, ensuring a pre-eminent role in world politics for the future.
- 2) the USSR emerged from the conflict exhausted but with enormous prestige for having blocked German expansion in the eastern direction.
- 3) In a situation in which the other victorious powers were also afflicted by gigantic reconstruction problems, it was around the two great states that world political life was reorganized.
- 4) On the international level, the emergency of the reorganization gave rise to the birth, in 1945, of the United Nations Organization, which assigned a preponderant role to 5 victorious powers: USA, USSR, China, Great Britain, France.
- 5) The wartime Alliance quickly turned into a rivalry leading to a division of Europe and the world into spheres of influence; this new bipolar equilibrium (established in the years 1945-49) would characterize world politics until the disintegration of the Soviet bloc (1989).

In Eastern Europe, under the leadership of the Soviet Union, the various communist regimes were establishing themselves (in Romania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland) which would form together with the USSR an organization of mutual economic assistance, the **Comecon** (1949) and then a real military alliance, with the Warsaw Pact (1955).

On the other hand, the main countries of Western Europe (including Italy) would begin their journey towards European integration and, under the leadership of the United States, united in a military alliance, the NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization, 1949) which was supposed to avert the communist danger with mutual defense. Also in the same year, in a Germany occupied by the victorious forces, the German Federal Republic was born, in the hands of the Allies, and the German Democratic Republic, in the Soviet zone.

The Second World War had practically divided the continent in two, as Churchill said, an "iron curtain" separated Eastern Europe from Western Europe and hence the formation of two opposing blocs.

- 6) in terms of human losses they were even more disastrous than the war of 1914-18. There were 55 million dead out of 110 million participants, 3 million missing, 35 million injured, between 25 and 30 million victims including racial exterminations, air and naval attacks, partisan fighters, other types of deportations. Furthermore, the victims were more numerous among civilians than among soldiers.



This was the result above all of the carpet bombing of vast inhabited areas (just think of Coventry in '40 or Dresden in '45, which were totally destroyed), regardless of the existence of war facilities or strategic military points; even the use of the two atomic bombs, decided by the Americans in Japan (which razed the two cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, causing more than one hundred and fifty thousand deaths), served to outline the picture of an unprecedented "total war".

Without forgetting the genocide of the Jews carried out by the Nazis and fascists. As indicated previously, it was especially after the Second World War that a more cogent reflection was carried out and the first foundations were laid for the concrete realization of the project.

Luigi Einaudi who was the first President of the Italian Republic, as director of the magazine "Riforma sociale (1900 - 1936) and editor of "La Stampa" and "Corriere della Sera", until 1926, in a series of **articles published between 1918 and 1919** suggested, to avoid new wars, the establishment of a European Federation. Subsequently, Einaudi, member of the Constituent Assembly, also here, on 29 July **1947**, pronounced in his speech his thesis against the sovereignty of National States, indicating the nationalisms at the basis of the Second World War and in the socialization of the citizen to the concept of Nation-State, the germ of hatred towards others and the value of supremacy.

Constituent Assembly, afternoon session of Tuesday 29 July 1947

ASSEMBLEA COSTITUENTE

CCVIII.

SEDUTA POMERIDIANA DI MARTEDÌ 29 LUGLIO 1947

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The same rationale supported the **Ventotene Manifesto** whose full title is Manifesto for a free and united Europe which, informed by the federalist movement, was drawn up by **Altiero Spinelli, Eugenio Colorni and Ernesto Rossi** in 1941.

Formally considered the basis and foundation of the idea of a United Europe, it postulates the need for "definitive abolition of the division of Europe into sovereign national states", with the recognition that the fate of the European peoples was united and threatened by the limits of the sovereignty of the states National as reconfirmed with the Second World War.

The idea of a United Europe was therefore born in a historical context, the 20th century marked by totalitarianism and two world wars, an ideal of democratic response, a "gamble for peace". Especially at the end of the Second World War, with the launch of the atomic bomb, we began to understand the importance of peace and that war, both for the vanquished and for the victors, causes death and misery. Spinelli did not hide the difficulty in realizing the ideal of a United Europe and foresaw a long time frame but considered overcoming the National State and the birth of a European Federation, a true political entity, to be the solution.

The process of European unification therefore begins after a reflection on the dangers of nationalism and totalitarian regimes experienced. The process is slow. John Kennedy, addressing one of the greatest inspirers of the idea of a united Europe, **Jean Monnet**, said that for centuries emperors, kings and dictators had tried to impose European unity by force and that for better or for worse he had failed " but Jean Monnet was inspired by two principles:

- 1) the first is a true method reported in his memoirs "I know how to wait for favorable circumstances for a long time. In Cognac you know how to wait: this is the only way to make a good product."
- 2) the second, of great democratic and programmatic depth, a working method based primarily on having the common interest as its object by developing what he called the balance schett, a document which was substantiated in three points: objectives, means for achievement, difficulties to be built in a logic inspired not by a negotiation but by a common work between the States to reach the identification of the common interest through reasoning.

The integration process will be and still is long. It will begin on the principle of (economic) cooperation between states and then arrive, through ups and downs, at political integration as well. It will begin through economic cooperation and the birth of the **OEEC** (Organisation of European Economic Cooperation) in **1948**. The input to the start of cooperation between European countries, in fact, was the post-war reconstruction and the subordination of economic aid for the implementation of the Marshall Plan.

In **1950** West Germany, France, De Gasperi's Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg created the **Community of Six**, giving life to a first unitary nucleus based on economic agreements and constituted according to the principles of the European Convention on Human Rights.

On the proposal of Jean Monnet to Robert Schuman in **1951, the ECSC" (European Coal and Steel Community)** was born from the Community of six, to which Belgium, France,

Italy, the Federal Republic of Germany, Luxembourg and the Netherlands joined. The success of the ECSC gave rise to the idea that the path to European Union could be achieved quickly but the road had setbacks linked above all to the divergent ideas between cooperation and integration. In particular, the French parliament rejected the treaty on a European Defense Community (EDC) which proposed military integration also with the participation of Germany and, secondly, Great Britain did not consider it appropriate to join due to constraints and ambitions linked to the Commonwealth which already established preferential economic relations with the United States.

After the failure of the EDC, the WEU (Western European Union) was created in 1954 which allowed Germany to rearmament and join NATO but within the framework of a European body.

A further stage occurred on 25 March **1957, when the Treaties of Rome** were signed, considered as the birth certificate of the great European family. The first establishes a European Economic Community (**EEC**), the second instead a European Atomic Energy Community, better known as **Euratom**. The EEC was undoubtedly, for the broader purposes of the founding Treaty, the Community in which the greatest developments in the integration process between the member states took place, creating the **common market**.

The **principles** on which the European Single Market is based:

- a) the free movement of goods;
- b) the free movement of workers and the right of establishment;
- c) the free movement of services;
- d) the free movement of capital.

Title 2, however, was dedicated to the common agricultural policy (**CAP**)

The customs union (abolition of customs duties between states), the elimination of obstacles to the free circulation of goods, labor and capital created an economic area extended and protected towards the outside. In ten years, there was the West German and Italian industrial recovery and the development of French agriculture.

Already in the preamble of the founding treaty, the signatories declare: "to be determined to lay the foundations of an ever closer union between the peoples of Europe".

Along this path the introduction of tools: the development of common policies such as agricultural policy (CAP), trade policy and transport policy, the **European Social Fund is also created**, with the aim of improving workers' employment opportunities and their standard of living, and a **European Investment Bank is established**, intended to facilitate the economic expansion of the Community through the creation of new resources.

On the institutional front, the creation of the Commission (later European Commission), a Council of Ministers (later European Council) and a Parliamentary Assembly (later European Parliament) was important in the process.

In **1970**, a further step towards integration was the Council's decision to pass from the system of financial contributions from the Member States to the system of the Community's own resources, introducing a **financial mechanism** called the “**monetary snake**”. The mechanism, aimed at limiting the margins of fluctuation between national currencies, sought to prevent the emergence of currency obstacles to the free movement of goods. With the resolution of the European Council of 5 December **1978** it was then replaced by the European Monetary System (**EMS**), which however Great Britain did not join and only participated in 1990.

The transition from economic cooperation to the creation of political integration occurred in 1984 when the European Parliament by a large majority approved on 4 February 1984 **the preliminary draft treaty for the establishment of the European Union** whose main creator was Altiero Spinelli.

Spinelli, first as a parliamentarian and then as president of the executive commission, therefore proposed the idea of political integration in the 1980s but it was a year after his death, with the work continued by Jacques Delors, that **the Single European Act was born**, entered into force on 1 July 1987. With the Single European Act, legislative cooperation between the Council and the European Parliament begins, qualified majority voting is introduced in the Council, the feasibility of a large internal market arises on the basis of the White Paper and cooperation in foreign policy matters is a fundamental act for the transformation of the Community into a Union.

The final report of the Dooge Committee with the proposal to convene an Intergovernmental Conference for a Draft Treaty of European Union was voted by a majority, albeit with difficulty. For the first time, **an extension of the Community to competences in the field of development policy of European society and not just a single market is sanctioned.**

The reform interventions launched with the SEA gave a more incisive role to the European Parliament, introducing cooperation and assent procedures into the community decision-making mechanisms. In the first case, the European Parliament can influence with its vote the majorities required within the Council for the adoption of community acts. In the second, while in the second case Parliament is recognized as having a real right of veto in some matters.

The aim of the Single Act was therefore to introduce the necessary reforms into the community system to allow the full realization of the single market by 31 December 1992; the objective was promptly achieved by the member states which, in the meantime, had become 12 following the accession, in 1985, of Spain and Portugal.

The European Union Project was followed two years later by the **Madrid Summit** of June **1989** in which it was decided to launch the first phase of the Economic and Monetary Union starting from July 1st, 1990, but in the meantime the **fall of the Berlin Wall** on July 3rd October **1989** brought German reunification and a change in Eastern Europe to the fore.

Precisely these concerns, to ward off fears or possible hegemonic temptations, led Chancellor Kohl and French President Mitterrand to invite the member states of the European Community to prepare an intergovernmental conference on the political union of Europe with reservations raised by the English minister Thatcher who it will confirm Great Britain's never-surpassed opposition to binding commitments but only to economic cooperation.

A second intergovernmental conference was established and the results were approved by the **Maastricht European Council** and the definitive **Treaty on European Union (TEU)**, signed on 7 February 1992, entered into force on 1 November **1993** based on the so-called **three pillars** the Union was born European:

1. The European Community (first pillar)

The Community had the mission of ensuring the proper functioning of the single market and, in particular, a harmonious, balanced and sustainable development of economic activities, a high level of employment and social protection and equality between men and women. The Community pursued these objectives, within the limits of the competences conferred on it, by introducing the common market and the related measures provided for in Article 3 of the EC Treaty and by implementing the economic policy and the single monetary policy referred to in Article 4. The Community's activities had to respect the principle of proportionality and, in areas which did not fall within its exclusive competence, the principle of subsidiarity (Article 5 of the EC Treaty).

2. The Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) (second pillar)

The Union had the task of establishing and implementing, through intergovernmental methods, a common foreign and security policy. Member States were required to support this policy actively and without reservation in a spirit of loyalty and mutual solidarity. Its objectives were: the defense of the common values, fundamental interests, independence and integrity of the Union in accordance with the principles of the United Nations Charter; strengthening the security of the Union in all its forms; the promotion of international cooperation; the development and consolidation of democracy and the rule of law, as well as respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

3. Cooperation in the fields of justice and home affairs (third pillar)

The Union had the task of developing joint action in these areas on the basis of intergovernmental methods, in order to achieve the objective of providing citizens with a high level of safety in an area of freedom, security and justice. It covered the following areas:

- Rules on crossing the external borders of the Community and strengthening of controls;
- Fight against terrorism, major crime, drug trafficking and international fraud;
- Judicial cooperation in criminal and civil matters;
- Creation of a European Police Office (Europol) with a system for exchanging information between national police forces;
- Fight against illegal immigration;
- Common asylum policy.

With the Treaty, the European Union was born which juxtaposes itself to the pre-existing Communities, a supranational structure which includes within it the Communities, characterized by decision-making procedures increasingly based on the majoritarian principle and by a well-defined institutional balance, and two new sectors, the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and Cooperation in the field of Justice and Internal Affairs (CGAI), dictating the times and methods for creating an Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) among member states.

The Maastricht Treaty formally introduced the principle of subsidiarity, according to which "in sectors which do not fall within its exclusive competence the Community intervenes (...) only if and to the extent that the objectives of the envisaged action cannot be sufficiently achieved by the Member States and can therefore, by reason of the scale or effects of the action in question, be better achieved at Community level".

The TEU also established European citizenship, which was added to national citizenship. It conferred, in some matters, a decisive role on the European Parliament which, through the introduction of the co-decision procedure, was fully associated with the Council in the process of forming community legislative acts: the Council of the Union and the Parliament are placed on the same plan, so a regulatory act can only be approved if both institutions agree on the text to be approved.

In a subsequent phase, with the Single European Act (1986) and the Treaty on European Union or Treaty of Maastricht (1992), through the unification of the bodies of the three European Communities, the enlargement to new member states, the enlargement of the areas of community intervention and the strengthening of the powers of the community institutions takes place a progressive valorization of the community method continued with the Treaty of Amsterdam (1997) and Treaty of Nice (2001).

With the Treaty of Amsterdam we have:

-Increase in skills by objectives

At the level of the objectives, particular emphasis was placed on balanced and sustainable development and a high level of employment. A mechanism for coordinating the employment policies adopted by the Member States has been created and the possibility of intervention with community measures in this sector has been envisaged.

The Agreement on Social Policy has been incorporated into the EC Treaty with some improvements. The Community method was then applied to some important sectors that had previously fallen under the "third pillar" such as asylum, immigration, the crossing of external borders, the fight against fraud, customs cooperation and judicial cooperation in civil matters as well as part of Schengen cooperation, the *acquis* of which had been taken over in full by the EU and the Communities.

-Cooperation between Member States in the fields of criminal justice and police cooperation had been strengthened by defining precise objectives and tasks and by creating a new legal instrument similar to a directive.

The instruments of the common foreign and security policy were developed successively, in particular by establishing a new instrument, the common strategy, a new function, the 'General Secretary of the Council High Representative for the CFSP', as well as a new structure, the 'cell of political planning and early warning'.

-Strengthening the European Parliament

With the exceptions of agricultural policy and competition policy, the co-decision procedure applied to all areas where the Council could take decisions by a qualified majority. In four cases (Articles 18, 42 and 47, as well as Article 151 on cultural policy, which had remained unchanged) the co-decision procedure was combined with the requirement for a unanimous decision by the Council. Other legislative areas subject to unanimity did not fall within the scope of codecision.

-Power of control

In addition to the vote of approval of the Commission as a college, the European Parliament also proceeded, on a preliminary basis, to vote of approval of the President-designate of the future Commission (Article 214).

-Election and statute of deputies

As regards the procedure for elections to the European Parliament by direct universal suffrage (Article 190 of the EC Treaty), the Community's power to adopt common principles has been added to the existing power to adopt a uniform procedure. In the same article, a legal basis was inserted that allows the adoption of a single statute for deputies. However, a provision allowing measures to be taken with a view to the development of political parties at European level was still missing (Article 191).

-Strengthened cooperation

For the first time, the treaties contained general provisions allowing some Member States, subject to certain conditions, to have recourse to common institutions in order to organize enhanced cooperation between themselves.

Treaty of Nice which entered into force in 2003, was to make the EU institutions more legitimate and efficient in the perspective of the enlargement of EU membership through changes:

- the composition of the Commission has progressively changed from two commissioners for the largest states (France, Germany, Italy, Spain and the United Kingdom (1)) and one commissioner for the other states, up to a maximum of 27 commissioners, with the right for each Member State to designate a rotating commissioner on a strictly equal basis.

- the President of the Commission and the commissioners will henceforth be designated by a qualified majority within the Council;

- the President of the Commission receives greater powers over the college of commissioners, in particular in distributing and reorganizing the responsibilities of the

commissioners and, with approval of the college by simple majority, in dismissing the commissioners.

- The voting system within the Council of the European Union is redefined: the weighting of votes is rebalanced to better reflect the relative populations of member states; the conditions for obtaining a qualified majority are strengthened by moving to 73.9% of votes needed (instead of 71.3%), and the majority of Member States must represent (if this verification is requested by a Member State) at least 62% of the European population; the use of qualified majority voting is extended to new areas.

- The composition of the European Parliament is revised and its powers are strengthened: the number of seats is increased to 732 members in the European Union of 27 member states; the co-decision procedure (now the ordinary legislative procedure) is extended to almost all areas in which the Council decides with a qualified majority;

- Parliament can refer the matter to the Court of Justice of the European Union in the same way as a Member State or the Commission.

- The Court of Justice of the European Union is radically reformed: it meets in different formations: in chambers of three or five judges, in grand chamber (11 judges) or in plenary session (one judge for each Member State); The competences of the jurisdiction of first instance (today, the Court) are expanded, in particular to some reference categories for a preliminary ruling*;

- the Council acting unanimously can create subsidiary courts to deal in the first instance with special areas of law, such as patents.

- New rules on enhanced cooperation are introduced: it only affects a minimum number of eight member states (not the majority as happened previously); in the "pillar" of the European Community, a Member State no longer has the right to veto the launch of enhanced cooperation. Furthermore, together with the approval of the Commission (always necessary), the assent (or, today, consent) of Parliament is now required if the area of cooperation involves co-decision; the possibility of strengthened cooperation is extended to the common foreign and security policy, with the exclusion of defense in which the veto power of the member states applies in cooperation relating to justice and home affairs, the strengthened cooperation is made particularly flexible: no there is veto power of the Member States and the approval of the Commission or Parliament is not required

- possibility of sanctions against a Member State for violation of fundamental rights by a Member State (introduced by the Treaty of Amsterdam), a preventive mechanism is added in Article 7 TEU.

- The role of Eurojust in the development of judicial cooperation in criminal law is recognised.

- Brussels is designated as the location for formal meetings of the European Council. Starting from the Nice summit in 2001 and the proclamation of a Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (1999), it began with the need to overcome the automatism of economic integration in the direction of an authentic political project and has also established itself in the institutional agenda.

A series of fundamental issues, including the division of competences between the European Union and the member states, the determination of the function of the national parliaments, an intervention to simplify and synthesize the existing architectural structure of the treaties and the status to be attributed to it Charter of Fundamental Rights, have since then become part of the agenda.

After months of negotiations, the final text, called only in progress Draft Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe, was delivered on 18 July 2003 by the President of the Convention, Giscard d'Estaing, to the then President of the Council European, S. Berlusconi, to be subjected to further revisions by the signatory states.

From the time of ratification until the conclusion of 2005, the Constitutional Treaty was approved in only eleven of the twenty-five Member States (Lithuania, Hungary, Slovenia, Italy, Greece, Spain, Austria, Latvia, Cyprus, Malta, Luxembourg) and in the two candidates (Bulgaria and Romania).

The prevalence of votes against in the referendums held in France and the Netherlands (May-June 2005), and the subsequent sine die postponement of popular consultations in Great Britain, Ireland, Denmark, Poland and Portugal, as well as opening up a profound political crisis in within the European Union, have made the outcome of the constitutional process uncertain.

From Maastricht onwards, the path of purely economic integration and intergovernmental agreements was no longer viable and the European Constitution could have created real progress along the path of federative concentration of the Union's powers, but it failed. The bringing back of the European integration process to a unitary entity, the European Union which replaces the European Community, will take place as a result of the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon (2007 which entered into force on 1 December 2009).

The Treaty represents the culmination of a long process of revision of the European treaties, started in the mid-1980s with the Single European Act.

First of all, the need to create the foundations of a European space without borders, to give adequate answers to the problems of the democratic dimension and effectiveness of the European Union, the prospect of enlargement to the countries of Central and Eastern Europe after the fall of the Wall of Berlin have made a broad and profound reform of the European institutions indispensable.

In particular:

- The division of tasks between States and the EU is finally clarified on the basis of the principle of subsidiarity by indicating the exclusive competences of the Union in the fields

of the customs union and the competition rules necessary for the functioning of the internal market, the common commercial policy and the conservation of the biological resources of the sea within the framework of the common fisheries policy, adding the federal competence of monetary policy for the States that have adopted the euro as the single currency.

- In a non-exhaustive list and subject to a flexibility clause which may allow the European Council, with a unanimous decision, to assign new tasks to the EU

- the Treaty takes verbatim from the European Constitution the list of competences shared with the member states, within the limits set by the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality, respect for which is strengthened by the political control exercised by the national parliaments.

- Faced with a possible conflict of powers between the Union and the States, the Treaty opens up the controversial possibility for each member country to exercise the right of withdrawal from the European Union as ultima ratio.

- In principle, the exercise of shared competences by the Union could progressively empty the role of national states, which cannot adopt legislative acts contrary to Union law even if, in the case of research and technological development or of space policy or development cooperation and humanitarian aid, the Union's action cannot impede that of the Member States.

- The major policies of the EU, which complete the original objective of the internal market, are included in the list of competing competences, authorizing the Union not only to develop actions with a strong financial impact but also to adopt measures to harmonize the legislation of the Member States: social policy, economic, social and territorial cohesion, agriculture and fisheries, environmental policy, consumer protection, transport and trans-European networks, energy, area of freedom, security and justice with the sole exception of judicial cooperation in criminal matters, security in the health sector, research and technological development, development cooperation and humanitarian aid.

- In the division of competences, the national governments have decided to leave the Union a task limited to facilitating the coordination of the action of the Member States in sectors considered sensitive for national sovereignties, such as the protection and improvement of health, industrial policy, culture, tourism, education, professional training, youth and sport, civil protection and administrative cooperation.

- Within the framework of the new institutional balances, the European Parliament now has, with some notable exceptions, the role of co-legislator on an equal level with the Council - within which the majority voting method is widely extended - and elects the President of the Commission on a proposal from the European Council which becomes a full-fledged institution of the Union, like the European Central Bank, and is presided over by a full-time president for two and a half years, renewable only once.

- The continuity of the Union's external action is strengthened with the appointment of a High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, who chairs the meetings of the Foreign and Defense Ministers and is the first vice-president of the European Commission. Finally, the functions of the Court of Justice are consolidated.

- An important space is given to active citizenship and participatory democracy with the introduction of a right of popular initiative and the obligation to consult representative organizations of civil society, as well as the right to transparency.

- The rights of citizens and, more generally, of the human person are considerably strengthened with the legally binding value of the Charter of Fundamental Rights (Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union) and the accession of the Union to the European Convention on Human Rights. man and fundamental freedoms (European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms).

- The Treaty introduces the ECI (European Citizens' Initiative), a participatory democracy tool available to European citizens to have a greater say in the definition of EU policies that impact their lives.

The ECI enables citizens across the EU to mobilize around issues of common interest, foster debate and initiate reform by proposing concrete legislative changes by enabling one million citizens from a quarter of EU Member States to ask the Commission to present a legislative proposal in a sector of its competence.

In Italy, the Department for European Affairs is the national contact point for the European Citizens' Initiative.

Over the last 25 years, the Treaties of Maastricht, Amsterdam and Nice have profoundly reformed and transformed a Union whose size has more than doubled. The Treaty of Lisbon and the ten-year debate that preceded it opened a new chapter in European integration whose potential has not yet been fully exploited.

From cooperation to European integration, a series of achievements have been achieved with the introduction of European policy priority agendas and their implementation through programming; yet, the European Union is still a project in progress which can lead Europe to five scenarios identified as favorable to a United Europe also from a political point of view and Eurosceptic

However, the member states of the European Union find themselves willingly or unwillingly in a process of globalization whereby Gaia, our planet Earth, has become a global village on which, following the information revolution and innovations in the transport and communications, the world economy has created a unified trading system resulting in mutual dependence between countries. The recent pandemic, the wars around the corner and their consequences, with all due respect to the Eurosceptics, show the interdependence of the elements in the structure of the world system.

To date it is clear that for a single State of the European Union, in a complex social system, a global village in which the variable of interdependence is manifest, functional adaptation to challenges, especially from a sustainability perspective, is extremely difficult to practice.