

# Towards building a new polity

In the past 60 years of integration, we have built a union of freedom, opportunities and fundamental rights, and we have grown from the Community of Six into the Union of 28. The European Union is facing very tough challenges, however.

We stand at the junction of multifold crises: migration, terrorist attacks, sluggish growth. These crises are providing fuel for the rising tide of anti-EU movements all over the continent.

Each of these challenges deserves an adequate and rapid response and the European Union and its institutions must act with decision and courage to address them. However, tackling the emergency is only part of the equation. Europe has to find a new political momentum. Focus its mission. Possibly reshape its functioning.

First of all, we have to go back to our citizens, who are often scared, sometimes doubtful and who are increasingly losing faith and confidence in the common European approach. There is actually a deficit of credibility among people that is putting at risk our common home and that is often the outcome of a deficit of timely and

effective actions. We cannot afford to give the impression that the EU is all about loose talk and endless summits. We must speed up our decision-making process and strengthen our delivery capacity both at EU and national levels.

Of course, we need to deal with current issues – for instance, the refugee crisis or the completion of the single market – but we also need to tackle broad-ranging, deep-seated problems such as poverty, economic stagnation and climate change. Let us work with a greater sense of urgency on these issues and rediscover the original political ambition of our Union.

The EU has to become the actor that again exports stability rather than imports instability.

It would be opportune now to look ahead of the bend and use external and internal challenges as a catalyst for reform. But we need to clarify the stakes and the respective positions to set off a more ambitious political process. The debate on this has already started.

It was launched last January in Malta with the debate 'From Rome to Lisbon and beyond – the Old Continent, young people and the future of the European project'. It continues in Rome today and will

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go on, in the months ahead, with similar initiatives all over Europe.

We think this is a good way to prepare for the 60th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome that will be celebrated in 2017. This is not just a commemoration. It can be an opportunity to reconfirm and rejuvenate our commitment towards the European project.

The EU requires simplification of its procedures and its rules. It needs to have a competitive economy, to promote greater employment and to exploit fully the real potential of the single market, not only in physical goods but in the 21st century, especially in services and digital goods.

Having said that, however, it would be folly for one to think that a complete redesign of the EU is possible or even on the cards. We will continue to build, one block at a time, on the foundations, concepts and principles that have been established over the past 60 years.

Let us put our cards on the table: when it comes to discussing our future, there is no place for taboos or no-go zones.

What kind of EU do we want? How can we reform and strengthen the EU and its policies so that

they truly live up to our citizen's expectations?

From Rome to Lisbon and beyond, let us continue discussions on this through next year, organising debates to be held all over Europe. However, while we debate, let us simultaneously and collectively act resolutely on the decisions already taken, particularly in the areas of migration, security and foreign policy and implement them fully.

We shall involve our citizens, starting from the roots of European society, by shaping a community that counterbalances the voices of anti-EU movements and that defies the temptations of populism and extremism.

Enabling this kind of debate could be the best way to set the ground for the future, complementing it by political decisions.

We are confident that the EU can develop the sense of vision and in-built flexibility for the European ideal to face its challenges successfully and withstand the test of time.

It will adapt, change shape and evolve to forge a strong, dynamic and vibrant Europe that provides for prosperity, pride and progress for our young people and for future generations.