



On Thursday 18th Jan '07, Archbishop Diarmuid Martin addressed the Forum on Europe in Dublin Castle, on the 50th Anniversary of the Treaty of Rome.

### 'The Values Underpinning European Integration'

The European Union is a remarkable achievement. It is the most developed model of shared sovereignty to materialize since the emergence of the nation State. As such the EU is inevitably going to create hesitation among some and indeed it is also inevitable that mistakes in one direction or the other will be made along the process of European integration.

The project of European integration is a complex and an on-going project on which people can legitimately take different positions. Whereas the majority of Europeans, according to the European Values Study, applaud Europe's integration, there are others who strongly oppose it and as the *Atlas of European Values* notes "very few experience really warm feelings when seeing the [EU's] blue flag fluttering".

Let me say first of all that my views on Europe are not part of the infallible teachings of the Church. Some people may have been surprised at the strength with which Pope Benedict XVI in his recent Encyclical *Deus Caritas Est* stressed the distinctive role of politics from religion. Here are some extracts: "The just ordering of society and the State is a central responsibility of politics... The Church cannot and must not take upon herself the political battle...; Building a just social and civil order, wherein each person receives what is his or her due, is an essential task which every generation must take up anew. As a political task, this cannot be the Church's immediate responsibility..."

These texts which stress the legitimate autonomy of the political order do not represent an abdication of social responsibility on the part of the Church. I quote again from Pope Benedict: "The Church... cannot and must not remain on the sidelines in the fight for justice". The Church's primary mission is that of preaching the message of Jesus Christ, but that message is a message relevant to the vision we have of society.

In the context of the debates about the EU it is interesting to remember that Catholic Social teaching if anything has been traditionally cautious about nationalism and any ideology of the nation-State. The two most disastrous wars in human history arose, as the present Pope wrote some years ago, "when nationalism, elevated to an ideological barrier, had shattered the nations of the old continent." Catholic social teaching tends to look rather, on the one hand, at the obligation of the State to foster subsidiarity and respect individual and family rights in a participative society and, on the other hand, to underscore the unity of the human family and international solidarity rather than any narrow nationalism.

I think that all of us agree that there is the need to reflect on and develop the democratic framework within which the European vision must be developed. Yesterday I read further reports of the claim by a former German President that the EU is "threatening parliamentary democracy in that 84% of the legal acts in Germany over a five year period emanated from Brussels and that a great number of these decisions are the work of the European Council". Then in the same newspaper I read an article on the new European Parliament President which states that the Parliament "has the power to approve nearly 80% of legislation proposed by EU institutions". Probably both are true. If there is confusion on such simple matters of fact how can citizens in the EU be expected to feel they can influence policy on complex scientific and ethical issues? The procedures and mechanisms involved in addressing admittedly complex questions of bio-ethics and national sovereignty seem to put the debate beyond the reach of interested parties.

It is not just a problem of structures. It is about the way those structures work. We need to improve the level of interaction and debate between MEP's and their constituents. We need to develop our systems of information and the formation of public opinion on EU issues on an EU-wide basis. European civil society is developing, but lobbying in Brussels, and even more setting up a representation there, is a costly affair that even larger NGO's are finding more and more difficult to maintain. All of this could lead to a lack of a sense ownership of the Union by the people of the EU. Lack of sense of ownership can give rise to indifference or even hostility. The institutions of the Union need attend to such questions urgently to avoid frustration and misunderstanding arising.

I belong to those whose judgement on European Union is on the whole positive. I believe that we have enjoyed extraordinary peace and prosperity within the EU countries for these past fifty years. Nations which were traditionally enemies have become linked into and integrated into a common project. Listening to those nations on some days you might think the opposite, but the thrust for integration with respect has assumed a dynamic that is not going to go way.

Some may want to move more quickly to greater integration. It is not going to be easy to get unanimity among twenty seven countries and there will be on-going pressure for more majority voting. I have enquired however from friends in Geneva on how the day-to-day EU coordination is working in the International Organizations there since enlargement. From various sides I get the impression that the process has not become significantly more difficult.

But the EU is not a Super State. The mention of any even distant dream of European Union style "single statehood" or the showing off of the blue flag or other trappings of Statehood which the EU at times adopts sends quivers down some people's spines. But I think that the time is a very long way off when Europeans will triumphantly come to International Organizations proudly announcing that their integration has come so far that they have renounced the twenty seven individual votes of the member States in favour of one single EU one!

Europe enjoys unprecedented peace and prosperity. Of course no one single factor can be pointed to as having on its own created that climate of peace in Europe. NATO - not the favourite organization of all - played a significant role in the integration of defence systems and still does so today. The division of Europe along ideological lines kept certain traditional antagonisms temporarily in the freezer. But the European ideal of its founders still represents for me a potent force for peace and prosperity through a process of the coming closer of peoples.

Others will say to me that it is precisely the style of prosperity created within the EU that has brought about a climate of materialism and rejection of Christian values. For me, taking huge sectors of the European population out of poverty and precariousness is an achievement about which the Christian must only rejoice. If such prosperity has been accompanied by a change in belief patterns within the EU then this may be due to a lack of dynamism in the Churches' own pastoral structures for evangelisation in a cultural climate that is changing, just as much as due to the EU.

But our estimation of where religious values are going within the current EU should be determined by proper research rather than by the ideologies of either side. The European Values Study urges a certain caution in presuming that we have gone "all secularist". The *Values Atlas* sums it up: "one thing is certain, the old continent is not as secularised as it seems", just as the same *Values Study* points out that European do not find marriage and faithfulness as outdated institutions or values. Recently published studies of the Iona Institute here in Ireland indicate similar convictions about the family.

Religion plays a large role in the personal life of most Europeans. The growing religious

pluralism in Europe has brought home to those who had thought that religion's days were past that religion is indeed an important social factor also.

In the contribution of the Bishops of Europe to the preparation of the Berlin Declaration to be adopted on the fiftieth anniversary of the Treaty of Rome, we noted how "for many of its founders the Christian imprint on the European factor has been an indisputable fact", quoting an interesting comment of Paul-Henri Spaak, by his own admission an atheist.

Whereas I clearly would prefer to see a reference of this kind in the European Constitution, I feel that the best way to counteract those who would play down the significance of the Christian contribution to Europe in history is not so much decrying their viewpoint, but by witnessing to the significance for today's EU of those perennial values which have always been at the root of that Christian contribution. It is useful to recall that the rejection of the appeal for an explicit mention of the Christian heritage of Europe was not some sort of a pan-European plot against religion, but *de facto* the result of the rigid and immovable objection principally of one or two European nations.

What are the values which underpin European integration? Values are not simply religious or personal values. When speaking of the EU I tend to begin not with the controversial issues of personal and conjugal morality, but with institutional and economic values. Certainly I would not like the EU to be reduced just to a purely economic organization but it is important that its economy be based on sound economic values. What is at stake here are the livelihood and prosperity of EU citizens, especially its weakest citizens. Such economic values include fair competition practices, good corporate governance, sound fiscal policies, and the rejection of corruption, the avoidance of the exploitation of national interest or narrow particular interests to the detriment of the common good.

Ten years ago Pope John Paul II wrote his third Social Encyclical. I remember well how, as the protest which was to bring down the totalitarian systems in Central and Eastern Europe grew stronger, Pope John Paul was not primarily in triumphant mood. He was concerned about how it would be possible for those countries to move rapidly from centralised economies to market economies while ensuring that the population did not have to pay a disproportionate price. On more than one occasion he called together leading economists to enlighten him on the questions involved. The reflection led into more general reflections on the nature of a modern economy truly at the service of all.

The nature of the modern economy has indeed changed. In a knowledge-based economy people are the central driving force. If this is so then the economic values which are important today must include the enhancement of people, their inclusion and their participation. Economic activity is only one dimension of human activity and cannot be sustained in an ethical and legal vacuum. There are human needs which cannot be attended to just by the market, indeed they are values and needs which should not be just bought and sold just like commodities.

If we are to look at Ireland's recent economic devolvement we can see that the education system - especially our teachers - provided a vital catalyst which produced that extraordinary brand of creativity and ability for innovation which was our hallmark for success in a knowledge-based economy and society. It would be short-sighted to think that Ireland can continue in its leadership role at the cutting edge of economic growth within Europe without intensive and focussed new investment in education for the years to come, aimed at maintaining the same focus on creativity, while reaching out to people in every corner of the country, geographically and in terms of social situation.

There has never been social progress without sustained economic growth but sustained economic growth on its own can never achieve social progress. The EU as it becomes enlarged should be developing models which aim at fostering at the same time economic progress, social

equity and integration. The European experience based on integration should place Europe in a special position to develop such models and make them a dimension of its interaction with other world regions.

Some of these values which must underpin the new Europe will be best developed at local level. The principle of subsidiarity is vital here. I can see what is being done to prevent the emergence of racist or xenophobic tendencies daily in our Catholic schools, where for example in North Dublin the majority of children may have been born outside Ireland. Even the youngest children can tell you that this is the Lithuanian flag or the South African Flag not because they have a good geography teacher but because it is the flag of their friend. These children are the ones who change the feelings of the parents. These are the one who build up a future of a Europe which is respectful of different cultures.

It is to be hoped that an Ireland which benefited immensely from the generosity of European donors in the area of infrastructures will be in the forefront in pressing for similar preferential treatment for newly acceded countries which find themselves in the situation in which we were some years ago. European investments in Irish infrastructure benefited Ireland and benefited the Union through enhancing the level of our participation. Improving infrastructures in the poorest regions of the newly acceded countries can bring similar benefit to them but also to us. Development policy likewise should promote integration and inclusion rather than dependency.

There is a striking short sentence in another Encyclical of Pope John Paul (*Ecclesia in Europa*, #111). The Pope says that "saying 'Europe' must be equivalent to saying 'openness'". He went on to say that "Europe cannot close in on itself. It cannot and must not lose interest in the rest of the world. On the contrary, it must remain fully aware of the fact that other countries, other continents, await its bold initiatives, in order to offer to poorer peoples the means for their growth and social organization, and to build a more just and fraternal world".

There is a sense in which a Europe based on the concept of integration can never be satisfied to work only within its own boundaries. Its sense of responsibility must always be outward looking. This does not mean that it can just embrace every country as a member and that it must open its borders indiscriminately to all. European Union expansion is a complex matter. Studies have shown that those countries of Central and Eastern Europe which have been most successful in their search to become modern, democratic nations with a flourishing free market are those which had to go through the exercise of adapting to the norms of EU integration. The process itself has its own value. There is no short cut along the path of the economic and democratic reforms needed to join the European Union., but countries which take this step - I am thinking for example of Croatia - should not be kept on the long finger.

Similarly my hope is that measures introduced across the Union to temporarily limit the freedom of labour for citizens of Member States will be precisely that: *temporary*. I would hope that citizens of Bulgaria and Rumania will soon be welcomed here in Ireland with the same embrace of equality as citizens of other EU States. Immigration has indeed brought overall positive results to Ireland. It has brought an injection of new initiative and creativity to our economy and our society, as well indeed as to our Church community.

Europe has responsibilities worldwide. It is not the task of the European Union to become a "mini superpower", but to be maxi and super in its spirit of solidarity. There is however a growing tendency of the EU in international negotiations to adopt some of the trappings of a superpower, especially in trade negotiations. Once again the EU positions in trade negotiations, especially in agriculture and textiles and intellectual property rights, are very often subject of pressure from national governments and particular national interest groups. The Union is often held back from more enlightened positions by national interest.

Europe cannot stand alone. It belongs within the global world of interdependence and solidarity of our day. The EU, if it is to be true to its history, should be in the forefront of the promotion of peace. I believe that we are at a turning point here. The war in Iraq has brought home to us all the limitations and, at times, the utter failure of military intervention as a means effectively to resolve conflict.

Too seldom is it noted that the situation in Iraq also represents another failure of non-military means to address the question of regimes which wipe out their own citizens. Where were we when Saddam Hussein was killing his people? Where are we with regard to Darfur? Where are we in Sri Lanka? We need a new strategy for peace, for conflict prevention, for building up true democracy as opposed to maintaining national strategic interest. We need UN reform. We need courage and honesty in the Security Council. We need an effective network of international instruments to foster arms reduction. We need an international culture of respect for commitments made to the poor. This is not idle moralism. Fostering peace built on justice and respect for creation in its integrity is for me the ultimate in *Realpolitik*, because it is about survival. The EU wishes to be present in these areas, and is indeed present. I believe it can and must do much more and that this should be a priority activity for the future.