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IT IS NOT ENOUGH TO CELEBRATE THE TREATIES, WE NEED A TRUE EUROPEAN FEDERATION

The anniversary of the signing of the Treaties of Rome offers us the opportunity to celebrate the journey made by Europe during its long process of integration. Nevertheless, we must not forget that not only is this journey far from complete, but also that the nation states continue to refuse to transfer their sovereignty to Europe. The words *Altiero Spinelli* used to comment on the birth of the Common Market fifty years ago still resonate today:

*“Wanting Europe means wanting a European government which manages the affairs of the European people; it therefore means striking at many things and many interests, but above all the position and privileges of the holders of national power: the ministers with their bureaucracies, the parliaments, the national parties. All these people defend themselves with skill and tenacity. Their unavowed and sometimes unwitting, but firm intention, is to keep as far away as possible the bitter cup that is the loss of a substantial part of their powers; and creating European unity means precisely this. When they find themselves having to discuss European problems together, their purpose therefore always consists of researching what needs to be done and said, so as not to create Europe. And when they manage to do so, they rush to cover their misdeed with a great pro-European veil. In the case of the Common Market we have once again witnessed this mockery” (Altiero Spinelli, *La beffa del Mercato Comune [the mockery of the Common Market]*, 24 September, 1957).”*

Today, the mockery is the claim to be solving the European crisis by agreeing on a treaty which has been ambiguously called “constitutional” precisely to try to please, in one go, both the supporters of a politically stronger Europe (to which the term “constitution” is aimed at, evoking as it does the State and popular legitimacy) and the countries which have an exclusively economic vision of the integration process, and which can rely on the substance of the treaty. The reality is that Europe, after the creation of the Euro and after enlargement, is paralysed by the irremediable contradiction between these two different approaches that are inherent within it and that make it impossible to continue as the Twenty-seven towards unification.

As Spinelli warned, the fact that we have lived for a long time through continuous stages of progress and success, as the European situation has been in the last half century, does not mean it is permanent. Europe, despite the steps taken, is still unable to contribute to peace and security in the world, or to promote a more equitable development, and it cannot support the growth, competitiveness and innovation of its own economy, just as the Euro, albeit a significant factor of cohesion between some European countries, remains a stateless currency, which cannot develop its full potential and whose very survival is at stake in the current framework.

Therefore this is not the time for rhetorical celebrations. The time left for completing the European unification process is running out. We urgently need to return to the inspiration of the Founding Fathers and to resume the project of a political Europe, which means creating a European federal state with a government endowed with full sovereignty in matters of foreign policy, security and defence and in economic and fiscal policy. The only chance of this happening is if a group of countries acts as a vanguard and shows the others the way ahead.

The historical responsibility for all this weighs particularly heavily on France and Germany and on the other countries which founded the first European Community. Therefore theirs is the task of taking the initiative and proposing a Federal Pact so as to share the respective national sovereignties and to create the first core of the European Federal State, open to any country that wants to join. Only this core will be able to show Europeans the road to unity and to act as a magnet for any countries that want to join in a subsequent phase. And only in this way can European citizens go back to being masters of their own destiny.