

50th Anniversary of the Signature of the Treaties of Rome ***Gratitude and Hope***

In celebrating, not without emotion, the 50th Anniversary of the signing of the Treaties of Rome on March 25, 2007, the “European Journalists Association-The Communication Network (EJ)” feels first of all the need to express deep gratitude to those courageous and farsighted founding fathers who began a process which turned the history of Europe from a battlefield into a land of peace and prosperity.

We also thank all those leaders and representatives of various organizations that notwithstanding many difficulties have worked very hard and without resignation to face and overcome the numerous challenges encountered on several levels and occasions, from the compromising of national interests for the European common good to the various steps of enlargement, comprising the problems arose after the fall of the Berlin wall.

We have experienced 50 years of successes and failures. Nevertheless Europe has proved to have an important capacity of recovery and revival. Furthermore, considering the history of Europe, often marked by the world’s most horrible tragedies and with small changes requiring high costs, we need to acknowledge that as of today the European Union and we Europeans have achieved goals that were unthinkable not 50 but even 20 years ago. After the upheavals and changes that preceded and followed the fall of the Berlin wall and Central and Eastern European countries entering the European Union, Europe has experienced and is facing unique challenges and opportunities both within the Old Continent and on a larger international scope. Decisions on future enlargement being debated between widening and deepening the EU are also very challenging.

Unfortunately, after 50 years we are celebrating a European Union of European national States who are still too jealous of their national sovereignty and European Institutions which, despite the solemnly proclaimed principles of subsidiarity and proximity are still too far away from the citizens they should work for; without disregarding however the many wonderful projects promoted and supported by the EU Institutions for the youth and the efforts performing solidarity and cohesion.

It is still questionable as to what extent both the EU Institutions and the member states have learned the lessons of the outcome of the ratification of the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe; a European constitution that is an essential condition for a European Union that with its present scope has the responsibility not just of thinking about internal development but also of being an important international actor in cooperating to guarantee worldwide stability and peace.

What we urgently need is a more consistent Europe of citizens: citizens with a real feeling of having EU Institutions belonging to them and working for them.

The Maastricht Treaty introduced the concept of European Union citizenship flowing from national citizenship. It is not enough to have a post-national rights-based Union; we need in Europe an identity and value-based community. This is a condition if we really want to build a European Union which is “Unity in diversity”.

With regards to rights, as journalists and media operators we claim more commitment from the EU Institutions to safeguard the freedom of the press, both within the Union and in other European countries.

The “European Journalists Association-The Communication Network” (EJ) thinks that a new communication strategy should be implemented to better inform citizens about the EU Institutions’ activities and to give the citizens the possibility to express themselves to the EU Institutions. In this context EJ thinks that regional and local communication is of utmost importance.

EJ realizes that the problems that the European Union has to face in a drastically changing Europe and in a globalizing and highly interdependent world are very challenging. Nevertheless, in celebrating 50 years of a New Europe we need to, and are able to, feed new institutional and social enterprise with renewed energy and hope; we need to be aware that a united Europe is not just an opportunity but an unquestionable necessity for facing a future charged with uncertainties. Feeding hope with commitment, responsibility, realism and solidarity, we can still believe in the European dream.