

# Current Concerns

The international journal for independent thought, ethical standards, moral responsibility,  
and for the promotion and respect of public international law, human rights and humanitarian law

English Edition of *Zeit-Fragen*

## The EU is facing an existential crisis

by Dr Bruno Bandulet\*



Bruno Bandulet  
(picture ma)

The fact that the European Union is facing an existential crisis is not an original insight. The crisis has been evident at least since the Brexit vote of 23 June 2016. Up to then, it had been almost unimaginable that the second largest European economy might quit. The vote was a tremendous affront to the elites.

I suggest that this crisis had long been foreseeable, that it is rooted in a wrong decision of 1991 and that by 2008 at the latest it could be seen clearly that European integration had taken a path leading to a dead end.

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**Economic success story before 1990**  
Up to the German reunification in 1990, Customs Union, Economic Community and finally the internal market characterised the main nucleus of European cooperation. Until then, integration was an economic success story. When it became clear that the Soviet Union and the United States would agree to the reunification of Germany, alarm bells started ringing in London, Paris and Rome. The German potential was to be limited and kept under control – and, mainly from a French perspective, the *Maastricht Treaty* agreed upon in December 1991 served exactly this purpose, as by this a monetary union was established and with it the disempowerment of the leading European monetary authority, namely the *Deutsche Bundesbank*. I was convinced already at that time that the monetary union would not work, and that it would serve to divide Europe rather than to unify it. It took until about 2008 for this realistic assessment to be proved correct. With the *Maastricht Treaty*, the EU had undertaken too much for the first time. It has meanwhile exceeded the optimum of its usefulness.

**Centralization in the Lisbon Treaty**  
And then came the attempt at accelerating the pace with a European Constitution. The French and the Dutch rejected the Constitutional Treaty by public votes in 2005. By then at the latest, the elites should have been aware that the European peoples would not allow more centralization and less self-determination to be enforced upon them.

The elites did not by any chance respond to this by a change of thinking, no, they finagled the constitutional treaty – with a few cuts and changes – into the new *Lisbon Treaty*. When the Irish rejected even this by in a referendum in the summer of 2008, they had to repeat the ballot one year later – this time "correctly" – and the Treaty finally became effective on 1 December 2009. Since then it forms the legal basis of the EU with its 28 members.

Now the question arises, where to find the design flaws and deficiencies responsible for today's existential crisis of the

Union. And this quite apart from the well-known fact that the EU not only has a democratic deficit, but as well disregards democratic principles such as the separation of powers, one of the great achievements of European legal history.

**Commonwealth or federal state**  
First, the hybrid construction of this EU must be mentioned. A community of this sort can theoretically work either as a confederation respecting the sovereignty of its members, or as a federal state establishing a superordinated European sovereignty. The latter not only in the French book meant taking it too far. In reality, the Europeans – with the exception of the Germans – are still cherishing the principle of the nation-state. Their vision and their feelings are national. According to the latest surveys, only 36 per cent of the French regard the EU as positive, while in Germany there are only 29 per cent who see it this way. In other words, resistance to centralisation and to the usurpation of power is fast becoming the growing new European consciousness. This is particularly pronounced in and Middle-Eastern Europe, which is reluctant to exchange Soviet hegemony of the past with a new one from Brussels. The EU elites' idea was to pacify the Hungarians, Czechs and Poles by means of enormous net payments. But it became apparent that while they like to take the money, yet they cannot be bought.

**Sovereignty of members vaporised**  
The EU's present condition can be characterised by saying that the national sovereignty of the members has been to a large extent vaporised, without a European sovereignty having taken their place. The nations are defending themselves against the basically Marxist determinism of the Lisbon Treaty, or more precisely against the formula of the "ever closer union".

Secondly, for large political entities nothing is more dangerous than delegitimation. According to *Gaetano Mosca*, the Italian legal scholar, any "ruling class", in our case the EU elite, requires a political formula to justify the existing power

**"The EU is facing an ..."**

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relations. If the formula becomes outdated, if it is no longer convincing, then the power relationships begin to totter. For a long time people believed and respected the formula according to which European integration guarantees peace, although in doing so they confused cause and effect. Because the EEC and later the EC did not guarantee peace in Europe, it was the other way round: They were only possible and successful because peace prevailed on the continent.

**EU instrumentalised for geopolitics**

Quite apart from this, the EU was not able to prevent the wars in the Balkans, Germany became the logistical hub for the US wars against Iraq and Afghanistan, the EU financed the eastern expansion of NATO right up to the borders of the former Soviet Union, and the EU also allowed itself to be instrumentalised for the aims of US geopolitics, especially in the case of Ukraine. It is in any case more than strange that more than 500 million Europeans let 320 million Americans defend them against 140 million Russians. Pride in Europe cannot develop like this.

**Brexit followed by euro exit**

To complete this admittedly incomplete list: In the form of the euro, the EU has thirdly placed a bomb in its own midst. However exiting, the story of how the euro could have slipped down into its current misery must be left out at this point. I will

only observe here that the euro will not last as it is now against the backdrop of the current framework conditions. At some point the Brexit will be followed by the first euro-exit. Just think of the fact that the Italian economy has grown at all since the start of monetary union in 1999, i.e. for 17 years. The explanation is simple: In the 17 years before 1999, the lira was devalued by a total of 61 per cent, and so Italy remained competitive. But also if you add everything together, the euro has had a history of failure. Since 1999, the economy has not grown as little any-where in the world as it has in the euro zone. Incidentally, the proportion of German exports to this currency area has also dropped significantly, from 44 per cent in 1999 to lately 35 per cent.

**Communitarisation of debts?**

What will happen? Either the monetary union will prescribe itself an economic and financial government with any sort whatsoever of debt communitarisation including the establishment of a common security system for bank deposits – or its weaker members will not bear up and hang on; they will capitulate and resign, because their domestic political pressure is becoming too great. Since the outbreak of the 2010 euro crisis, Euro-land is being held together by the rescue packages and especially by the non-contractual policy of the ECB. This is not a permanent solution, as the ECB has only bought politics some time. It depends on Germany whether a complete debt community will evolve. This would mean nothing less than an unimaginable redistribution and a radical leveling of Ger-

man prosperity and also of the financial viability still enjoyed by the Federal Republic today. I doubt that the *Merkel* government or any successor government can enforce this.

**The EU will be eroded**

As regards the EU as a whole, it will initially survive even the Brexit. The British will retain access to the common market, not least because the rest of the EU exports more to Britain than vice versa, and because especially the German export economy does not feel any desire to cut off its own nose to spite its face. I also believe, and this will surprise you, that Brussels will sacrifice the hitherto sacred principle of free movement of people, because London will insist on this concession. This will increase the chances for Switzerland to get a similar deal.

My conclusion is that the EU will not disappear, but only be eroded, in the foreseeable future. A dictator is easy to topple, but a super-bureaucracy with its *acquis communautaire*, which by now counts no fewer than 95,000 pages, clings stubbornly to life. Most likely is a fairly long period of infirmity. The European Union has certainly passed its peak. •

(Translation Current Concerns)

**"Just the right of the Swiss to have the final say in public votes is enough to render an EU membership impossible"**

"The European Court of Justice deforms the right instead of protecting it [...]. Ongoing since 2010, the survival of the euro has been based on breaches of the law. The separation of powers between the executive, legislature and judiciary, one of the great achievements of the European civilisation, is being undermined. Concerning democracy, the EU would run into problems – even while assuming best intentions – because democracy is all the more difficult to realise the larger a state or a state-like entity becomes. The barely concealed aversion of the leading EU circles against Switzerland is no coincidence: Just the right of the Swiss to have the final say in public votes (an attribute of true democracy) is enough to render an EU membership impossible. For European centralism could not work if only one member had the right to reject laws passed in Brussels". (Bruno Bandulet. *Beuteland. Die systematische Plünderung Deutschlands seit 1945*, 2016, S. 206) (Looted Country, The systematic looting of Germany since 1945) (Translation Current Concerns)



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# Future Workshop EU Europe?

## After the Bratislava Summit – and what they think in the US

by Karl Müller

The President of the European Council, *Donald Tusk*, was probably right when he stated, in his 13 September 2016 letter to the members of the Council: “It would be a fatal error to assume that the negative result in the UK referendum represents a specifically British issue”. Instead, the British vote was a desperate attempt “to answer the questions that millions of Europeans ask themselves daily.” For example “questions about the protection of their interests, cultural heritage and way of life”. And: “Today many people, not only in the United Kingdom, think that a membership in the European Union was an impediment for stability and safety.”

### Donald Tusk: Transfer of more powers to the EU is not the way to proceed

In addition, Tusk wrote: “The migration crisis was the tipping point. Last year’s chaos on our borders, new images every day of hundreds of thousands of people moving across our continent without any control, created a feeling of threat among many Europeans. They had to wait too long for action to bring the situation under control, [...]. Instead, all too often they heard politically correct statements [...]”.

Tusk is a staunch EU European. But he does not see an EU with more powers as the solution: “It is a clear result of my talks with the [member states] that the transfer of more powers to the EU institutions is not the way to proceed. The electorate in the member states are demanding more influence on the Union’s decisions. Moving in that direction, however, requires a change of mentality in the national governments’ mentalities towards the European Union as such.”

### But old myths in Bratislava...

The Council President’s letter was to prepare the Council’s summit in the Slovakian capital Bratislava on 16 September. The “Declaration of Bratislava”, however, hardly reflects these considerations. Other narratives and myths – sounding very German – are still dominating. For example that the EU has “secured peace and democracy, facilitating prosperity in our countries” or that the EU “was still indispensable for the other member states”, also after the British exit decision. Or that the EU was still needed “not only to provide peace and democracy but also security for our citizens.”

But the noncommittal manner of the text is surprising. The European Council has set itself three goals:

- First: “We need to improve the communication [...]”

- Second: “Use clear and honest language. Focus on citizens’ expectations, with strong courage to challenge simplistic solutions of extreme or populist political forces.”
- Third: “We committed in Bratislava to offer to our citizens in the upcoming months a vision of an attractive EU they can trust and support.”

### ...for the Future Workshop EU

In a joint press conference together with the French President (also these two politicians are staunch EU-Europeans), the German Chancellor *Angela Merkel* said that she wanted “Europe to become a Future Workshop again”.

Pro memoria: Future Workshops are instruments of change management, designed to force through radical changes planned by the leadership with the help of numerous methods of mass manipulation in a top-down manner. Those affected are made to believe that they had been involved in all decisions and all was according to their wishes (just like the leadership had planned).

The “Declaration of Bratislava” is “psychologising” the citizens’ reaction towards the mass migration since the summer of 2015 and is speaking of a “perceived lack of control” and “fears related to migration” – there is no mentioning of a failure of politics. Thus the European Council is reacting towards these supposed “emotional problems” also not with rational and nuanced arguments but with slogans like “never to allow return to uncontrolled flows of last year and further bring down number of irregular migrants; ensure *full control* of our external borders and get back to Schengen” (italics by the author).

There is no convincing answer, however, to the question how this can be accomplished.

### This is directed against Russia

There is another point. The section on “External Security and Defence” states, quite vaguely: “in a challenging geopolitical environment, strengthen EU cooperation on external security and defence”. The concrete measures in this respect are demanding to “start implementing the joint declaration with NATO immediately”. This is directed against Russia.

### “Spirit” or “spectre” of Bratislava?

After the summit, the German Chancellor has invoked the “Spirit of Bratislava”. Her demonstrative optimism of unity and a bright future of the EU, however, were not shared by all heads of state and govern-

ment. The day after the summit, the Italian Prime Minister *Matteo Renzi* stated in an interview with the “Corriere della Sera”: “I have no idea what Merkel is talking about when she speaks of a ‘Spirit of Bratislava.’” The result of the Bratislava meeting was not more than a steamboat ride on the Danube. There had been no step forward in the question of the future of the EU; there had been no substantial agreements on economic or refugee politics. If things were continuing to develop in this manner, it would be better to speak of a “Spectre of Europe”. But also the Italian Prime Minister is a staunch EU European.

Also the governments of the four central and eastern European Visegrád states Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary have spoken out. Since a few months they have pursued a different roadmap than the German Chancellor and the EU institutions and, although they have approved the “Declaration of Bratislava”, they have come up with their own declaration for the future of the EU.

### The position of the Visegrád group

In their declaration they state that the EU could only be strong if the member states and their citizens had a “strong right of co-determination in the decision process”. For this, the “role of the national parliaments had to be strengthened and the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality respected”. The Visegrád group was rejecting further steps of integration which would not include all EU states (as is the case with the Euro). All EU negotiations should be open for all member states (which questions the numerous meetings of “selected” EU heads of government).

At the same time, the EU needed to respect the diversity of its member states. The EU rules, however, had to be applied in the same way in all states – a clear allusion to the large number of double standards in the EU institutions’ policies in dealing with the member states.

There should also be a chance of diversity regarding the states’ handling of migration. According to the statement of the four heads of state and government, the handling of migration “should be based on the principle of ‘flexible solidarity.’” This implied that the member states should decide on their own on their contribution to the solution of the migration problems and that “every migration mechanism [regarding migrants] should be voluntary.”

At the same time, however, they claim a strict implementation of the rules of the

## Chief editor of the “Zeit” exercises self-criticism

mb. “Zeit”-chief editor *Giovanni Lorenzo* exercises self- and media criticism: The unanimous pro-refugee atmosphere harmed the media sustainably. “The people took offence at this.” He does not spare himself: “In the early stages we made a title that did not indicate the necessary restraint. The line was ‘Welcome!’, and the editorial reinforced it – my own words were then ‘Every refugee is an enrichment for our country.’” Carefully Lorenzo criticised the self-understanding of the media professionals as educators of the nation, when he says: “I believe that for a while we tended too much to be co-creators of the refugee crisis and did not focus on the role

of observation.” ([www.meedia.de](http://www.meedia.de) from 11.7.2016)

### Paternalism with an educational claim

With his confession Lorenzo is trying to regain lost credibility among the population. Many people are turning away from the established media shows – in addition to dwindling subscriber numbers – as is shown by a scientific study performed by *Kim Otto* and *Andreas Köhler* of the Institute of Economic Journalism at the University of Würzburg. According to the study only 51% of German citizens trust the press, which is 4% less than last year. Among those aged of 25-34 years even 62.4% distrust the media, whether press,

radio or television. The first big breach of trust happened as a result of the reporting on the Ukraine crisis, according to *Otto* and *Köhler*. Many people would regard the reporting on the refugee crisis as “paternalism with an educational claim”.

### Free press – indispensable for democracy

Germany was once proud of its free press and free word – and rightly so. For Germany, as for many other European countries, the freedom of press, speech and opinion is the indispensable foundation of democracy at all. Therefore, the citizens’ rejection of the media is a warning sign that should not be overlooked. •

### “Future Workshop EU Europe?”

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single European market which includes unlimited free movement of persons within the EU.

### Foreign Affairs: USA is better off without EU

From the United States are meanwhile substantial voices to be heard that can imagine a different Europe than that of the EU. *Foreign Affairs*, the journal of the influential *Council on Foreign Relations*, published in its edition of September / October 2016 a long article entitled “The Return of Europe’s Nation-States. The Upside to the EU’s Crisis”. Author is *Jakub Grygiel*, a university professor at the *Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies* of John Hopkins University. He regularly publishes in neoconservative magazines and was an advisor to OECD and *World Bank*.

The *Foreign Affairs* article promises benefits from a termination of the EU and the return to the European nation-state – also for the United States. Although the US had relied on a united Europe as the best bulwark against communism in the Cold War against the Soviet Union, but today the United States requires “a new strategy”. More US-American pressure towards European integration, i.e. a stronger EU, could strengthen the resistance in Europe against the United States. Even today, the most successful protest parties in the EU would flirt with Russia.

“Washington need not fear the dissolution of the EU”. More than the EU as a

whole than the nation states would sense the threat by Russia at their borders and take it seriously. The EU would have not more accomplished than sanctions on Russia and the vague calls for a continuation of the dialogue. The European states on the border with Russia had been little supported by the EU. Therefore, these states had called for the assistance of NATO and US troops. Thus applies: “Yet where the EU has failed, individual countries may fare better”. Because: “Only patriotism has the kind of powerful and popular appeal that can mobilize Europe’s citizens to rearm against their threatening neighbors”. And: “People are far more willing to fight for their country – for their history, their soil, their common religious identity – than they are for an abstract regional body created by fiat”.

The United States would need “a better partner in Europe than the EU”. If the EU would dissolve, “NATO’s function in maintaining stability and deterring external threats will increase – strengthening Washington’s role on the continent. Without the EU, many European countries, threatened by Russia and overwhelmed by mass migration, will likely invest more heavily in NATO, the only security alliance backed up by force and thus capable of protecting its members”.

### Conclusion

The EU in its present state is not worthy of preservation. But on the alternative must be thoroughly reflected. Not everyone who opposes the EU position, has something better in mind. And not everyone who speaks out for the nation state, is a friend of free-

dom, democracy, the rule of law and peace. The spirit of discord that has been driven into the EU since a few years, resulted in that the friendship between the states and peoples of Europe has suffered and the focus of attention has been put on differences and conflicts of interests. EU Europe’s so-called elites and their mainstream media have no small share in this development – and think tanks on both sides of the Atlantic vigorously mingle in the background. Cui bono?

Europe really needs a new “constitution”, but a constitution which strengthens freedom and sovereignty of the citizens and their states, promotes peace and friendship in Europe and consciously ties in with the best European traditions of Europe and hereupon builds: natural law, Christianity and humanism, enlightenment and the state-building ideas of power separation, constitutional, social, subsidiary-federal and democratic constitutional state – as an equal member of a European community of peoples and states.

There also will be no way around the matter of a humane economic and financial order. It has to be put on the agenda. The model of the past decades has failed and has developed too many destructive forces, destructive forces that have burdened the social and political life immensely. The quest for an economic and financial order, that leaves the false concept of man – of the homo economicus – behind and focuses on the dignity of man and his social nature, is more relevant than ever.

To be sure about this, is not too early and not too late, even if Europe is currently far away from it. •

# Mass migration and state failure – legal, political and cultural aspects of the refugee crisis

Prof Dr phil Dr h.c. Dr h.c. Hans Köchler \*



Prof Dr phil Dr h.c.  
Dr h.c. Hans Köchler  
(picture of)

I will divide my presentation into three sections. First, I shall discuss the constellation in the Middle East and give a brief historical overview up to the presently witnessed collapse of states in the region.

In a second step, I shall deal with the events that I consider as state failure and destabilisation in Europe. Finally, I shall address the question as to the aims and intentions behind these developments. This concluding section of my presentation could be entitled “New World Order?” (with question mark). Before entering into the details, I would like to make some preliminary remarks.

Looking at the current debates on the refugee and migration issues, I do not remember any situation in which the published opinion was so diametrically opposed to the public opinion. This raises serious questions about the state of democracy in Europe.

Since the facts are widely known, I shall not repeat them here in detail, but rather concentrate on the reasons why we are confronted with state failure hic et nunc – not only in the Near and Middle East, but increasingly also in Europe, both at national and international or, as is often said, “supranational” level. One of the consequences and repercussions of this state failure in the Middle East is to-

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“Looking at the current debates on the refugee and migration issues, I do not remember any situation in which the published opinion was so diametrically opposed to the public opinion. This raises serious questions about the state of democracy in Europe.”

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day’s mass migration, which, in turn, is about to cause state failure also in Europe.

I shall also focus on the geopolitical dimension of these events, and in particular the question of the intended – resp. unintended – consequences. Some of the questions arising in this context are: Is the mass migration to Europe indeed an unanticipated – and thus unintended – consequence of military interventions of the West in the respective areas of the Middle East, including North Africa? Should this be the case, would the appropriate phrase then be that of the “curse of the evil deed”, or – and this is the second possibility – are there coincidences and connections that could be evidence of a larger geostrategic design?

In the subsequent three sections, my analysis will also focus on the following question (and in particular its implications for the European Union): Are the developments that mean that Europe is actually being overrun – including the effective abrogation of practically all legal and safety barriers – happening by design, and if so, to what extent? Or is all of this merely a symptom of a society that is mainly focused on prosperity and fun and has lost the will to assert itself?

As an Austrian, and in view of what happened on a massive scale in front of our

eyes last year, I should also like to ask: Why did the Republic during those long months surrender to the law of the jungle? Without going into the all too familiar details, I just recall here the general fact: The state allowed hundreds of thousands of people to enter, in many cases even without knowing who they were, and subsequently transported the largest number of them to the German border – almost as if it were running a state network of human trafficking.

I would like to make here a terminological clarification: The people immigrating into Europe are, strictly speaking, not war refugees, but migrants – welfare immigrants, to be exact, either because they originally are citizens of safe countries or because the countries they directly arrive from are “safe third countries”. The latter is the case almost without exception. I shall later comment in more detail on the legal implications.

## I. Constellation in the Middle East and brief historical overview

In the first part of my presentation I shall focus on developments in the Middle East. I have been regularly visiting the countries of the region since the 1970s. I do not intend to comment on newspaper reports and commentaries. The basis of my analysis will be my personal observations and the experience of my cooperation with intellectuals, political leaders and civil society organizations all over the region.

### Collapse of artificial order set up by victorious powers

We are presently witnessing the collapse of the order created by the will of the victorious powers, the former colonial countries, after World War I, out of the territories of the Ottoman Empire. Not only the so-called Islamic State (IS) of today has proclaimed the “end of Sykes-Picot”. (The name means the secret treaty on the division of spheres of influence in the region of the Middle East that was concluded between Britain and France and signed by their Foreign Ministers in 1916.)

\* Hans Köchler has served as Chairman of the Department of Philosophy at the University of Innsbruck (Austria) from 1990 until 2008. Today he is Chairman of the Austrian *Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Wissenschaft und Politik*, (Working Group for Sciences and Politics), Co-Chairman of the International Academy for Philosophy and president of the International Progress Organization, which he co-founded in 1972. At this point we are only able to emphasize a few aspects of his very rich work. Köchler’s research focuses are among others Legal Philosophy and Political Philosophy, Philosophical Anthropology, in which his research findings in many points do correspond with the views of the Polish Cardinal *Karol Wojtyła*, the late Pope John Paul II. Since the early seventies Hans Köchler has been issuing numerous publications, undertaking journeys, delivering speeches and contributions to various international organisations; this way he has been committed to the dialogue of cultures, especially to a dialogue between the West and the Islamic World. In 1987 Professor Köchler along with Nobel Prize winner *Seán MacBride* launched the «Appeal by Lawyers

against Nuclear War». As a result Köchler contributed with his advisory opinion so that the International Court of Justice later declared a potential use of nuclear weapons would be a breach of international law. Time and again Hans Köchler commented on the reform of the United Nations and called for its democratization. He especially commented on the question how international law could be implemented and took a stand against the instrumentalisation of the standards of international law by playing power politics.

As special envoy appointed by the then UN-Secretary General *Kofi Annan* to the «Lockerbie Trial» he wrote a critical report which was published as a book entitled «Global Justice or Global Revenge? International Justice at the Crossroads» in 2003. His impression was, that the Lockerbie-Trial was influenced by political guidelines. Therefore he demanded a strengthening of the separation of powers and the complete independency of international criminal jurisdiction. The article published here is based on a lecture Hans Köchler has given on invitation of *Zeit-Fragen* in Sirmach (CH) on 25 July 2016.

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One must also acknowledge here a further historical fact: The political map of the Ottoman Empire – with its historically grown administrative units, or provinces (vilayets) – had been – and I may be a bit nostalgic here – relatively harmonious in comparison to the order that followed it. The Ottoman order was replaced by artificial, often ethnically heterogeneous entities modelled on the European nation-state. This meant that areas of settlement were arbitrarily divided – see the fate of the Kurds – or that mini-states were carved out from historically grown units, so to speak as *domaines réservés* in the interest of the respective great power.

I do not want to focus here on the consequences of the so-called Balfour Declaration of 1917 through which the United Kingdom triggered a development that culminated in the still unresolved "Middle-East conflict." As a result of this Declaration, the historical area of Palestine for which Britain, after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, had received a League of Nations mandate, was disposed of without any attention given to the rights of the native Arab population. It is to be recalled that, in the course of the Arab Revolt of 1916, the Arabs had been given assurances of their right to establish a state on their historical land. The secret mission of "Lawrence of Arabia", a British agent, is falsely idealized in Europe.

**Self-assertion in the context of East-West rivalry**

The inhomogeneous nation-states in the region could resp. can only be kept together by a strong and stable central authority. Everything else is illusion. This is obvious, for instance, in the case of the Republic of Iraq with its complex multiethnic and multireligious composition (Kurds, Arabs, Christians, Yazidis, Muslims, and here again Sunnis and Shiites). It would be dishonest to expect that a state created by outside interference – as it were, according to the will of the victorious powers after World War I – can be held together by means of "liberal" politics which Europe needed centuries to develop. Furthermore, the, albeit precarious, balance of power between the two superpowers in the era after the Second World War was crucial for the maintenance of state order in these countries. This constellation gave the respective governments or rulers in the Middle East a kind of room for manoeuvre amidst the rivalry and power struggle between East and West, enabling them to assert their interests, if need be, by playing both ends against the middle.

**Awakening of Arab national consciousness**

During this era, the awakening pan-Arab national consciousness was an important stabilizing factor. The Arabs were eager to emphasize what was common among all their countries. Arabic language and culture were the glue between religiously and ideologically often very different polities. It was notably the emphasis on the common Arab nation (in the sense of cultural identity), which enabled them to overcome religious rivalries and antagonisms. The role of the (secular) Baath Party must be seen in this context. Founded by a Christian philosopher and sociologist from Syria, the party had been extremely influential in the whole region. In this period (from the 1960s to the 1980s), and not only in Iraq, but also in Syria and in Nasser's Egypt, the people were inspired by the idea of the one Arab nation existing in the form of several political entities – altogether more than 20 states. (However, in the domestic politics of Iraq, a country that is ethnically not homogeneous, this ideology proved controversial as has become evident in the course of the conflict in its northern Kurdish region.)

**The era of a single world power**

When the Cold War ended and communism collapsed in 1989, the Arabs suddenly found themselves at the mercy of a single world power. Incidentally, in the days and months after the disintegration of the Eastern Bloc and the collapse of the Soviet Union, *Saddam Hussein*, the president of Iraq, clearly identified the dilemma for national Arab politics that resulted from this geostrategic change. As early as 1990, he initiated an Arab summit conference to reassess the situation. Yet, in retrospect one must acknowledge that, although he was aware of the problem right from the start, he did not draw the proper conclusions, much to the detriment of his country.

One should not ignore, however, that Arab nationalism, i.e. the emphasis on common heritage and the conviction that the Arabs were one nation – even though existing in different states due to historical circumstances, did fit well into the mood

of the era of decolonization after the Second World War.

**State failure in the Near and Middle East**

This brings me to another aspect, which I would like to describe as "state failure in the Near and Middle East". It was the Americans who introduced the term "failed state" – all too often to justify their own interventions according to the following pattern: You first acknowledge somewhere a situation of state failure so that you subsequently can claim a responsibility to intervene. However, recent history has demonstrated that military interventions all too often profoundly destabilized hitherto relatively stable states, turning them into so-called "failed states".

**Reassertion and renaissance of Islam in response to the ideological monopoly of the West**

As I have indicated earlier, after the end of the Cold War the state systems in the region were no longer able to assert themselves in the face of the political-ideological pressure from the United States, which had suddenly become the sole superpower, indeed the global hegemon. This resulted in a kind of delegitimisation – in the eyes of the inhabitants – of the political systems in these countries. I still have vivid memories of conversations with personalities from all over the Arab world, in particular in Baghdad, Cairo and Damascus, in the early 1990s. These exchanges made me aware that a kind of ideological vacuum was suddenly developing, which – also quite rapidly and comprehensively – was filled by Islam. Even in Iraq, the hitherto strictly secular president suddenly discovered his religious vein. (As for the return to religion and the political significance of this paradigm shift, the process admittedly started much earlier in the Shiite environment of Iran. More or less as a reaction against the obsessive attempt of the Shah of Iran to spoon-feed his people with Western values and life-style, the reassertion of their Islamic identity fuelled a

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"These wars of aggression – more or less convincingly camouflaged as humanitarian interventions, depending on how one sees it – have not only have profoundly destroyed the political order in the affected countries, creating so-called "failed states"; they also – in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya and, to this day, in Syria – triggered a chain reaction at the preliminary end of which stands the uncontrolled mass migration to Europe."

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“As the international public has had to acknowledge by now, civil wars and mass flows of refugees and displaced persons have been the direct consequence of these interventions. It is to be noted that in all the above-mentioned cases we are dealing with cases of state failure that was deliberately and directly triggered by the intervening powers. The phrase of “humanitarian intervention” has become the favoured ideological tool to justify these interventions that seem to be part of a larger strategy of destabilisation. The more recent term for the doctrine, considered to better conceal the real motives, is the phrase “Responsibility to Protect” (R2P).

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popular revolt, which eventually led to the overthrow of the régime in 1979.)

#### **Destruction of stable states by military intervention**

The invasion of Kuwait by Iraq in the summer of 1990 was the traumatic event that brought the end of pan-Arabism. This subsequently led to the effective elimination of Iraq as a regional actor in the course of the Gulf War of the following year. As a result of comprehensive economic sanctions imposed on the country through more than a decade, officially on behalf of the United Nations, but actually by the US and its allies, the process of political “neutralisation” and marginalisation of Iraq continued. To my knowledge, these were the most comprehensive and brutal coercive measures ever enforced in the name of the United Nations Organization. They caused the death of up to a million, if not more than a million, innocent citizens. Even if I cannot talk about it in detail here, one will have to keep this fact in mind in order to understand what is happening today in Iraq and the region around it, especially in Syria. To stress it yet again: these sanctions are historically unique as crimes against an entire nation on behalf of the “international community”.

After the still not fully investigated events a decade later, namely on 11 September 2001, the United States’ now unbridled assertion of power resulted in the dismantling, step by step, of the region’s existing order. In this context, the US, with its allies, undertook military action – whether or not in the name of the United Nations – against key countries in the region. These wars of aggression – more or less convincingly camouflaged as humanitarian interventions, depending on how

one sees it – have not only have profoundly destroyed the political order in the affected countries, creating so-called “failed states”; they also – in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya and, to this day, in Syria – triggered a chain reaction at the preliminary end of which stands the uncontrolled mass migration to Europe. This brings me to the main topic of today’s presentation.

#### **Aspects of state failure in the region**

We must differentiate here between two aspects of the consequences of state failure in the region of the Middle East. (1) People are fleeing because the state sinks into the abyss of war. This has been the case in Iraq, in Libya, but also in Syria and, largely ignored by the West, in Yemen (where – similar to Syria – a foreign-backed and extremely brutal civil war is raging). (2) Another consequence of state failure must be strictly distinguished from the first: The state sinking into chaos becomes the deployment zone, or logistical base, for the immigration to Europe from another region. Libya is a case in point. The coun-

try has been made the de facto staging ground for the organization of mass migration from the sub-Saharan countries of Africa. Notably, we are dealing here with a “state” that has effectively ceased to exist as a sovereign entity – a country with two governments, two parliaments and numerous rival militias and regional authorities, all on the vast territory that was formerly referred to as the “Great Socialist People’s Libyan Arab Jamahiriya”.

If we let these developments pass in review, we must also be aware that there is no effective pan-Arab organization which could establish, or restore, order in the region – and that, in the final analysis, such an organization has never yet existed. Realistically, the League of Arab States, which recently met in Mauritania to discuss the situation, can merely make informal, entirely optional declarations. Although it would be its assigned role – as regional organization and according to its statutes – to exert a stabilizing effect, the Arab League is only able to play the part of passive observer. Regrettably, by its actions, this organization in recent history has instead rather provoked wars of aggression, as has been obvious in the case of what happened to Iraq.

#### **II. State failure and destabilisation in Europe**

This brings me - in the temporal sequence of events – to state failure and political and social destabilisation in Europe. Again, I do not intend to present obvious facts in detail. My aim is, first and foremost, a political, legal and social analysis of the problems we are faced with in Europe.

#### **The European Union turns out to be a political misconstruction**

Regarding the political aspect, we must unfortunately note that the European Union

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“In hindsight, one can today say that the United States tried to seize the moment – after the collapse of the communist empire – to secure once and for all its hegemonic position at the global level. This geostrategic ambition became even more obvious, a decade later, in the National Security Doctrine proclaimed by President Bush junior the essence of which was that the United States will never accept a situation of strategic parity with any other country. Looking at this in the larger context of world history, one might diagnose here a classical case of the insatiable lust for, and self-deception of, power.”

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has proved to be a complete misconstruction. We are dealing here with a colossal state failure in the intergovernmental sphere (in regard to the cooperation between states). In the handling of the "refugee crisis" (I shall speak in more detail later on the use of that term), the European Union acted as a kind of superstructure pretending to be a nation-state, but getting ever more bogged down by its ineffective, inconsistent rules and regulations, indeed a strange mix of national and supranational competencies. It has become increasingly evident that the Union is a dysfunctional entity whose officials and administrators apply conflicting rules as they may see fit, i.e. on the basis of double standards and political convenience. This is the case not only with refugee – or more specifically migration – problems, but with the failed monetary policy as well.

**Dishonest politics and loss of confidence**

As regards the so-called refugee policy, the failure of the Union is particularly obvious in the following facts: First, in a "policy of the wide-open barn door", i.e. the insistence on the continuation of the Schengen regulations (namely freedom of travel between the treaty states) with the simultaneous total neglect of the protection of the external borders of the treaty area. Despite the many declarations and promises by politicians and bureaucrats, this has not changed to this day. So far, there exists no effective protection of external borders (without which the Schengen regime makes no sense at all). It amounts to fraud on the people if one sings paeans to the freedom of movement and, at the same time, places border controls within the Schengen area under a taboo even though the external borders are not in any way secured. As we have seen, a country like Hungary, which last year made a vigorous effort to implement the existing provisions of the Schengen Treaty, was politically sabotaged and denounced all across Europe. Under these circumstances, it is not surprising that people are steadily losing confidence in European institutions, which act so dishonestly. For the sake of fairness it should be added here that Austria eventually, though with hesitation, adopted the position of Hungary – on the initiative of the youngest member of government, namely the Foreign Minister. Austria effectively co-ordinated its migration policy with the countries of the Western Balkan and the Visegrad states (Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Czech Republic), which also meant that Macedonia in particular was encouraged and supported in its measures to secure the border with Greece.

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**"It has become increasingly evident that the Union is a dysfunctional entity whose officials and administrators apply conflicting rules as they may see fit, i.e. on the basis of double standards and political convenience. This is the case not only with refugee – or more specifically migration – problems, but with the failed monetary policy as well."**

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The second aspect of the failure of the European Union – and of the credibility deficit of the European system as such – is the dishonest handling of the so-called Dublin Regulations – under circumstances where nothing at all is done for the joint protection of external borders. This continued omission has made the regulations actually obsolete. The proper handling of arrivals and initial registration of migrants in countries such as Greece, which is in serious economic difficulties, has proved to be illusory. Though at present (July 2016), there is some relief on this front, this is not related to the actual protection of external borders or the implementation of the Dublin Regulations. It is solely due to other arrangements, made in an "ad hoc" fashion. On the one hand we are talking here about the co-ordination of the migration policy between Austria and the Western Balkan states, on the other there is also the attitude of Turkey, which – for reasons I cannot discuss here in detail – is now proving to be quite capable and willing to better control the departure of people from its territory.

**Self-dissolution of state authority through lack of border control**

This brings me to another aspect of state failure and destabilisation in Europe, namely socio-political failure. In the course of last year's events, states that, from a formal point of view, are legally sovereign did not in any way demonstrate the will or ability to effectively exercise their sovereignty. (With regard to Austria, however, there has been, as I said, some change; at the beginning of this year, the Foreign Minister, the Minister of Interior and the Minister of Defense have begun to co-operate – and suddenly one dares to speak, openly and in public, about the necessity of securing the coun-

try's borders. Until recently, people were afraid of being maligned as racists or fascists should they have emphasized that requirement.) According to international law, the ability to exercise and maintain control of its territory is an essential criterion for a state to be recognised as a sovereign member of the international community, which necessitates effective border controls. In view of this basic criterion of statehood, to insist on a policy of "open borders" is deceptive, and the phrase is actually a stupid euphemism. The very term "state" implies the existence of an association of people that is capable of making a distinction between its own territory and that of another such entity. This condition, namely the exercise of effective control over the territory, is currently no longer met in many European countries.

As for Austria, there is now at least an acknowledgement on the part of the Defence Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs that something must be done. However, should it come to a mass rush on the southern border, the country would not currently have the resources to effectively defend its sovereignty. In actual fact, in the course of the past year – up to the agreement with the Balkan countries – migrants were able to enter freely, and this was the case even when they rejected proper identification by the authorities and, thus, prevented their legally required registration. The people who had illegally entered into Austria were then allowed to decide by themselves whether to stay in the country or to proceed to wherever they wanted – the choice was entirely theirs. Police and the military were restricted to the role of impotent observers and providers of humanitarian aid.

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**"According to international law, the ability to exercise and maintain control of its territory is an essential criterion for a state to be recognised as a sovereign member of the international community, which necessitates effective border controls."**

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“Why should the citizens, as subjects of the law, subordinate themselves to the coercive power of the state in which they live, if this very state violates its own laws thousands of times every day, simply following political convenience and, thus, implicitly negating the fundamental right of its citizens to safety and security on the territory governed by the state? Such a state displays total disregard for its central responsibilities vis-à-vis the citizens who are subject to its jurisdiction.”

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#### External and internal delegitimation of the state

I would like to refer to two additional aspects in terms of law and state politics, namely delegitimation and destabilisation. (1) We are faced with a twofold delegitimation of the state – external as well as internal. The “external delegitimation” has become obvious in the effective surrender of sovereignty. A state that refuses to exercise its sovereignty in a central aspect of statehood – namely the border regime – is not taken seriously by the international community and loses its status as a trustworthy partner.

As regards “internal delegitimation”, one may best illustrate the problem with a question: Why should the citizens, as subjects of the law, subordinate themselves to the coercive power of the state in which they live, if this very state violates its own laws thousands of times every day, simply following political convenience and, thus, implicitly negating the fundamental right of its citizens to safety and security on the territory governed by the state? Such a state displays total disregard for its central responsibilities vis-à-vis the citizens who are subject to its jurisdiction.

#### Application of double standards destroys the basis of the legal system

(2) These processes eventually lead to the destabilisation of state order, and in several respects. I shall describe this very briefly.

Firstly, as a result of the application of double standards by the state itself, the legal system is gradually undermined. If, in one case, thousands are simply waved through while in another case the individual citizen entering the country at the airport is subjected to meticulous controls, different – contradictory – rules are applied for crossing the border. Another example of this duplicity is that, on the one hand, the state admittedly punishes the smuggling of refugees in individual and specific cases, but on the other hand as-

sumes the role of human trafficker on a large scale. One does not need to give any details regarding the transfer of illegal immigrants, for example, to the German border with Austria.

#### Disintegration of civil society

There is a second aspect of destabilisation: The presence of an increasing number of immigrants from entirely different cultures and with a different understanding of state and society not only leads to social tensions and conflicts, but also to the disintegration of civil society the preservation of which is indispensable for a functioning democracy. The loss of control over immigration also gives rise to a host of problems in terms of homeland security. The key aspect of all these developments is a dramatic loss of social consensus.

#### Loss of consensus at intergovernmental level

A third aspect of destabilisation refers to the pan-European, i.e. intergovernmental level. Here we are dealing with a loss of consensus among the member states of the European Union. This is reflected in the ever growing divergence between the positions of the “new” and “old” member states on the question of migration, a process that may well lead to the collapse of the supranational construct of the European Union. What we are faced with here is a version of the war of all against all. It is not surprising that an ever-larger number of states have begun returning to nation-state solutions or, according to their specific interests, entering into region-

al agreements outside the framework of the EU. The agreement between Austria and the Western Balkan states – concluded without “permission” from Brussels or Berlin – is clear evidence of this preference. Europe indeed witnesses a steady trend of its politics reverting to the mechanisms of the nation-state. By now, many have realized that it is only at this level that specific problems, which directly relate to the public interest, can be solved effectively. However, after decades of erosion of state authority, this re-dimensioning of policies happens at a substantially lower level because many states no longer possess the necessary resources, for example, to defend their borders.

#### State failure due to imprecise legal concepts – conceptual clarifications

This brings me to the legal implications of destabilisation. In the current European debate, the legal terms related to refugee status and migration are used in a highly imprecise way. This has been a major reason for the actual overextension of state structures, the states’ inability to cope with accumulated obligations, and increasing state failure. A conceptual clarification seems to be in place.

#### The Geneva Refugee Convention

Firstly, the Geneva Convention relating to the Status of Refugees of 1951, which is considered legally binding for all EU countries, does not relate to “war refugees”. This fact is not at all communicated to the population in the member states. The truth is that armed conflict as such is not a reason for refugee status under this Convention. Article 1 (A) (2) of the Convention defines as refugee a person who, “owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country.” It does not automatically follow from this definition that, under conditions of armed conflict between states, the entire population has the right to asylum resp. to apply for asylum. A situation of war means a general threat to life, without

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“The only hope of a geopolitical reversal will lie in the emergence of a multipolar balance of power at the global level. In the medium term at least, this could become a viable alternative to the current rather unstable unipolar constellation.”

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distinction as to religion, ethnicity or ideological association of the citizens. Thus, for persons in the affected countries, the circumstances of armed conflict do not necessarily constitute a specific situation of discrimination or persecution under the Convention. The relevant criteria enumerated in the Convention may, however, apply to many persons affected by civil war; but this is not necessarily so when a country is attacked from outside.

Secondly, talking of legal terms, one must note that, according to Article 31 of the Convention, the thus defined refugees who enter illegally into the territory of a state will only enjoy impunity if they (1) arrive directly from a territory where their life or freedom was threatened in the meaning of the previously mentioned Article 1, and if they (2) "present themselves without delay" to the authorities of the state they have arrived in (Article 31, Paragraph 1). These are the provisions of the Convention. This means, however, that virtually none of those who enter the countries of the European Union by boat or on land are entitled to impunity, and that they cannot claim the right to apply for asylum because they have arrived from countries where they were not persecuted. This further means that no EU country is legally obliged – under the Convention – to allow people to enter. It goes without saying that an intergovernmental organization such as the European Union – or any sovereign state for that matter – is entirely free to opt for a different, more generous solution. A country may, at its discretion, declare that all refugees from all over the world are welcome at any time and that there is no "upper limit" to the number of people allowed to enter. It must, however, bear the consequences of such a policy and must not load the burden on the shoulders of other states. Conversely, it cannot be disputed that every country, in the exercise of its sovereignty, has the right to take precautions against the illegal entry of foreign nationals. By implication, every state also has the right to expel persons who entered in violation of the law. This argumentum e contrario is also implied in the wording of Article 32, Paragraph 1, of the Geneva Convention.

**The Cold War as historical background of the Convention**

The Convention was originally meant for persons who had become refugees before a certain date, namely the 1st of January 1951. The Protocol of 1966 ("Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees") lifted this temporal restriction. A rarely mentioned provision may be of interest in this context: a state may, by declaration upon

accession, limit the geographical scope of the application of the Convention. The Republic of Turkey, for example, has made use of this provision. Due to its declaration, Turkey has continued to apply the Convention according to Article 1 (B) (1) (a), namely only to "persons who have become refugees as a result of events occurring in Europe." In the current situation, it is a supreme irony that the country whose cooperation is of such great importance for Europe is legally only obliged to apply the Convention in regard to refugees from Europe, not from the Middle East or Asia. Turkey has made a further notable reservation, namely that "No provision of this Convention may be interpreted as granting to refugees greater rights than accorded to Turkish citizens in Turkey." In terms of history, it is also of interest that the Convention, as it was applied to refugees from before 1 January 1951, mainly covered persons who had fled to the West in the wake of the political upheavals in Europe after the Second World War so as to escape from persecution in the communist countries. In the situation of the Cold War, support for political refugees was a crucial motive for the drafting of the Convention. It is worthy of note that conventions and regulations on the status of refugees also existed prior to the Convention of 1951. Those related, in the wake of the First World War, particularly to persons from the Soviet Union and Armenia (Arrangements of 1926 and 1928) and, after the seizure of power by the National Socialists, to persons from Germany (Conventions of 1933 and 1938). However, a worldwide and temporally unlimited system for the protection of refugees has only existed since the 1960s.

Whatever the historical constellation may be, under the regulations and definitions of the current Convention, any person who has voluntarily left a "safe third country" is no longer to be regarded as "refugee," but as a migrant. This means that the persons who, under the present

conditions, arrived in Europe and are generally referred to as "refugees" according to the Geneva Convention are, in actual fact and in the overwhelming number of cases, economic migrants. ("Economic refugee" would be a misleading term.) Economic migrants are persons who travel purposefully from one country to another in search of the best possible conditions.

A third legal aspect is also mostly unknown to the public: In accordance with Article 44, Paragraph 1, any contracting state may denounce the Geneva Convention at any time. The denunciation will take effect for the contracting state one year from the date upon which it is received by the Secretary-General of the United Nations. This means, by implication, that the right to asylum is not a quasi-eternal or immutable principle of international law, namely a norm that, in legal theory, would be described as *jus cogens*. Further commenting on the legal status, one might emphasize that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 – that is so often invoked in this connection – is not in any way legally binding as regards the status of refugees and the right to asylum. Article 14, Paragraph 1 of the Declaration states rather generally: "Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution." The Declaration does not further specify this notion. Furthermore, as the title – "declaration" – clearly indicates, this is not a treaty with binding norms, but a kind of consensus document through which the community of states solemnly declared what it understands as human dignity. We are essentially dealing here with a declaration of moral principles or guidelines, i.e. an expression of how the international community that adopted the Declaration expected countries to act. It is worthy of note, in this context, that no provisions for asylum or refugee status are included in the two International Human Rights Cov-

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"Unlike their neighbour on the other side of the Atlantic, the states of Europe, directly affected by the consequences of this development, are destabilising themselves if they put considerations of the moment over reasons of state. They may thus create a situation where the *bonum commune Europaeum* – the common good of all citizens – and continental peace are at stake. In the name of a misunderstood humanity, they might well bring about their own demise – unless civil society mobilizes its forces and counteracts these policies by democratic means."

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enants that "operationalised," so to speak, the maxims of the Declaration of 1948 and drafted them into law. I refer here to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (both adopted in 1966 and entered into force in 1976).

**III. Geopolitical issues**

This brings me to the final, geopolitical, question within the framework of the topic assigned to me today: If we look at the movement of refugees, indeed the mass migration, to Europe, are we dealing here with a process of destabilisation in the name of a "new world order"?

Because of the developments in recent months and the increasing gravity of the situation, we can no longer avoid this question. We should also not let ourselves be intimidated by those who are quick to dismiss critical questions as inspired by "conspiracy theories." Let us not forget that, by definition, every court that passes a judgment in a criminal case must – if there is more than one perpetrator – develop a conspiracy theory in the literal sense of the word. As mature, responsible citizens who shape their opinion independently we must not back down here.

**"New world order and conspiracy theories"**

As regards the notion of a "new world order," I made an effort in the early 1990s to analyse and pinpoint the underlying ideology. In his Address to the Nation on 16 January 1991 – at the start of the second Gulf War, in the wake of the occupation of Kuwait by Iraq – President Bush senior solemnly declared the dawn of a "New World Order". He literally spoke of a system of relations between states "where the rule of law, not the law of the jungle, governs the conduct of nations". He characterized this as the essence of his "New World Order". In hindsight, one can today say that the United States tried to seize the moment – after the collapse of the communist empire – to secure once and for all its hegemonic position at the global level. This geostrategic ambition became even more obvious, a decade later, in the National Security Doctrine proclaimed by President Bush junior the essence of which was that the United States will never accept a situation of strategic parity with any other country. Looking at this in the larger context of world history, one might diagnose here a classical case of the insatiable lust for, and self-deception of, power. The evolution of world politics in the past two decades must be seen in this context. An essential part of this

strategy was the claim of the United States to reshape the entire region of the Middle East in accordance with its own interests, so to speak, *nomine novi ordinis saeculorum* ("in the name of the new order of the ages"). The slogans of "democracy" and "human rights" were instrumental in the propagation of the ideological concept of a so-called "New Middle East". The historical, political and legal facts of the refugee crisis must be interpreted in this historical and geostrategic context, and coincidences and temporal sequences must be considered carefully. I shall briefly demonstrate this by five examples.

First, I shall refer to the destruction of the political order by armed force – in blatant violation of the UN Charter – in Afghanistan (2001), Iraq (2003), Libya (2011), and Syria (a process that has been underway in the country since 2011 and is also connected to the more or less open foreign support of armed Islamic groups on the territory of that state). As the international public has had to acknowledge by now, civil wars and mass flows of refugees and displaced persons have been the direct consequence of these interventions. It is to be noted that in all the above-mentioned cases we are dealing with cases of state failure that was deliberately and directly triggered by the intervening powers. The phrase of "humanitarian intervention" has become the favoured ideological tool to justify these interventions that seem to be part of a larger strategy of destabilisation. The more recent term for the doctrine, considered to better conceal the real motives, is the phrase "Responsibility to Protect" (R2P).

**Use of "new social media" by intelligence services**

Secondly, one must be aware of the manipulation and instrumentalisation of the so-called New Social Media by intelligence services in the course of the Arab Spring of 2011. Here too, the result was political chaos akin to civil war of which the events in Egypt are exemplary evidence. Similarly, the uprising and subsequent civil war in Syria was essentially triggered with the help of these information technologies. It is to be acknowledged, however, that use of the New Social Media was one of many factors that led to chaos and destabilization in that country.

**The "Islamic State"**

The third example is the emergence of the "Islamic State". Its official name is "Al-dawla al-islamiyah fi al-Iraq wa al-Sham", meaning Islamic State in Iraq and Al-Sham (the latter word describing the historic region also including Palestine and Lebanon). This "state" not only claims these territories, but also areas in other states such as Egypt, Libya, Mali, Nigeria, the

Philippines (namely the island of Mindanao), Afghanistan, and in Central Asian states such as Uzbekistan.

The ideological appeal of the Islamic State on population groups in Europe must not be underestimated either. This not only relates to the risks of infiltration due to an uncontrolled flow of refugees, but also to the radicalisation and recruitment of Muslims already living in Europe for the cause of the Islamic State.

In this regard, I want to caution against underestimating the emotional potential of a return to the Islamic tradition, especially among the young. It is also utterly naive to believe that putting their signature under a list of principles will somewhat magically turn asylum-seekers (or, in most cases, migrants seeking a residence permit) into persons committed to a secular understanding of the state in the tradition of European Enlightenment. They will not, as it were, with a stroke of a pen, dispose of their religious convictions. By posing as schoolmaster, lecturing them as "course participants" for a few hours, or at most days, one may succeed in reassuring oneself, but will accomplish nothing tangible.

The fourth aspect I would like to mention relates to the effect of the practices or attitudes I have described under the first three aspects, namely the triggering of mass migration to Europe. To speak – as did the former Austrian Minister of Interior – of migrants "storming the fortress Europe" seems to me too euphemistic. More precisely, one might say that we are dealing here with a rush to the territory of a group of states (the European Union resp. the Schengen area) that no longer protects its external borders – whether out of principle or pure negligence. In this context, the concern is not anymore about a "fortress" that might be stormed, but about an entity that apparently no longer has the will to protect itself and already shows signs of decay.

**Coincidence of events "almost at the push of a button"**

Two coincidences meet the eye in this regard: (1) the temporal coincidence – almost at the push of a button – between the drastic reduction in funding for the refugee camps in countries around Syria (in the summer of 2015) and the sudden surge of the number refugees in Europe. (I am speaking here about the camps managed on behalf of the United Nations Refugee Agency UNHCR in the neighbouring countries, notably Jordan. The authorities of that country have provided precise and detailed information on the conditions prevailing in these camps.) (2) The coincidence of the de facto issuing of an invitation by the head

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of the German government and the drastic increase of the number of migrants (not only from war-torn countries, but from all over the Middle East, Afghanistan, Pakistan and North and Sub-Saharan Africa) towards Europe, which consequently led to an intolerable situation for Hungary and Austria, but also for Macedonia, Serbia, Croatia, and Slovenia – not to mention the country that "issued" the invitation.

**Conflicts at the domestic level**

As for the medium and long-term consequences, a fifth aspect is also of importance. On the one hand we are talking here about a no longer workable multicultural model of society, the failure of which the German Chancellor had acknowledged, even years before the present wave of mass migration, in a speech to the "Junge Union", the youth organization of the Christian Democrats (CDU), in October 2010. With her repeated declarations, she nonetheless now massively encourages the stream of migrants into Europe, seriously aggravating the multicultural dilemma she earlier diagnosed. That cultural and religious conflicts are being imported into Europe is just one consequence of this uncontrolled immigration. The continent is now faced with the danger of Huntington's global "clash of civilizations" becoming a reality also at the domestic level. The fracturing of Europe's autochthonous societies into ideologically irreconcilable camps is another consequence of this development. A polarisation the intensity of which was unimaginable in the decades since World War II has now become a fact of domestic politics in many member states of the European Union. The management – or lack thereof – of the refugee problem by the European authorities has resulted in an increasing delegitimation, with the risk of gradual disintegration, of the European Union, whatever one's personal attitude to this trend may be. The decision of the British people – definitely also influenced by the German Chancellor's refugee policy – is a clear sign on the wall.

**Final considerations****Europe faces political and economic marginalisation**

In a wider geopolitical context, these developments (1) seem to condemn Europe to an ever-increasing marginalisation at the global level and (2) mean that nation-states will be preoccupied with themselves for the foreseeable future. Even the threat of internal unrest and civil war

can no longer be dismissed. The demographic changes and the resulting growing difficulties in financing the welfare state further mean a weakening of economic competitiveness in the long term. The mantra-like assertion of lofty principles is of no use at all in the face of these challenges, just as it will lead to nothing to repeat a hundred times that there exists no "upper limit" for refugees – which, by the way, is completely misleading.

**Confusing normative and factual aspects destroys the credibility of the principle itself**

One must distinguish between an upper limit (a) in the normative and (b) in the factual sense. According to the 1951 Convention, the right to asylum, under the criteria formulated in the Convention, undoubtedly applies to everyone who fulfils these conditions; in regard to the right as such, one cannot exclude anyone. It is also evident, however, that, for instance, the Republic of Austria cannot accommodate, say, two or three billion of the world's population; or, to demonstrate the dilemma in a more personal context: if someone is determined to help refugees because he considers this as his moral duty, his willingness must extend to all refugees without distinction – just as the commandment of charity basically applies to everyone as addressee. This person must, nonetheless, be honest enough to concede that he cannot accommodate in his home thousands who, having taken note of his moral commitment, might respond to his charity. By confusing the normative and factual aspects, one will ultimately destroy the credibility of the principle itself.

**"Unintended" or intended consequences?**

Identifying the beneficiaries of the geopolitical developments – the chain of events since the collapse of the bipolar balance of power, which I have described earlier – may give us some clues whether, and to what extent, we are dealing here with "unintended consequences" of otherwise well-intended state action, or whether these events were brought about intentionally and with the full knowledge of the geopolitical actors.

Since the beneficiaries of such a development obviously hide away from the limelight, they can rather easily use the knockout argument of "conspiracy theory" to discredit inquisitive questions. It is my hope, nonetheless, that the critical observer of events will not let himself be intimidated.

**Multipolar balance of power as viable alternative**

The only hope of a geopolitical reversal will lie in the emergence of a multipolar

balance of power at the global level. In the medium term at least, this could become a viable alternative to the current rather unstable unipolar constellation. As matters stand with the European Union at the moment, it is unlikely, however, that this organization will have a part in such a process towards multipolarity.

One should have no illusions. The situation in the Middle East will not stabilize for several decades to come. Looking at the confrontation between Shiites and Sunnis, we are faced with a situation similar to that in the Thirty Years' War. Western interventions in the region have led to a conflagration that may very well be compared to that European tragedy in the 17th century.

As to the mass migration triggered by these interventions, I am afraid that we may have already reached the point of no return. At this stage, measures taken in the regions of origin to contain, not to speak prevent, the flow of refugees will hardly be successful. In spite of the repeated insistence by Western leaders that the problem must be tackled at the roots, and order and stability must be re-established – in states whose political systems one has effectively destroyed, even the accumulated power and wealth of the West will not be able to accomplish this in the coming decades. As unfortunate as this may be, under the circumstances one must give priority to effective ad hoc measures, i.e. physical precautions for the protection of the borders of Europe.

**Protecting borders to protect continental peace**

The Europeans, first and foremost their political leaders, would be well advised not to import the conflicts raging in neighbouring regions. The politics of emotion – all too often bordering on mass hysteria – should give way to a politics of reason that is based on rational analysis of the geopolitical consequences of the developments I have described. Hypocritically in the name of democracy and human rights, the Arab world has been plunged into chaos. Unlike their neighbour on the other side of the Atlantic, the states of Europe, directly affected by the consequences of this development, are destabilising themselves if they put considerations of the moment over reasons of state. They may thus create a situation where the bonum commune Europaeum – the common good of all citizens – and continental peace are at stake. In the name of a misunderstood humanity, they might well bring about their own demise – unless civil society mobilizes its forces and counteracts these policies by democratic means. •

# Resistance against the dismantling of direct democracy is announced

## To the National Council's decision dated 21 September 2016

by Dr iur Marianne Wüthrich

*On 21 September the National Council as first council began with the debate on the amendment of the Federal Act on Foreign Nationals FNA including the order to implement the by people and cantons adopted constitutional provision concerning the management of immigration. That, what was presented to the Swiss people was a cleverly needled tragedy. That had nothing to do with democracy, in any case.*

The Swiss people certainly doesn't want to join the EU, especially not the NATO. Since the memorable No to the EWR-membership on 6 December 1992 everyone clearly knows that, and that hasn't changed since then. Every Swiss person knows that joining the EU means an Off of the Swiss modell model. Because of this unique model – direct democracy, federalism, communal autonomy, neutrality – Switzerland is stable and sustainable in any case. The strong position of the SME (small and medium-sized enterprises) in the economic region, the deep national debt, the strong franc are the impact of the Swiss model. Behind that you can find the deep-rooted public safety: We are the decisionmakers in this country, we ensure healthy communities, we maintain and strengthen the economic position of the dual vocational training and the identification of workers with their SME operations, by the debt brake imported through people we ensure that our expanding cantonal and federal authorities still have at least one barrier. In every opinion survey we maintain with over 90 per cent the everlasting armed neutrality.

The opponents are not resting. Politicians and all administrative departments in the Confederation and cantons have taken up the fight against the Swiss model and set the course: The small state Switzerland is to be integrated into the EU and NATO and thereby dissolved. Even before 1992, but especially since, they have begun to saw to the pillars: drug policy, education reforms, Bergier report – pure poison arrows from outside, but without a strong 5<sup>th</sup> column inside they would have had little effect. Decomposition of the communal autonomy by the steady weakening of the communes and the strengthening and centralizing of administrations (EU regional policy, mergers, nature parks, metropolitan areas), penetration of the EU-aligned federal administration in every corner of the sovereign cantons (health,

primary school, education generally), replacement of the people's militia army by so-called "Durchdiener" (towards professional army) and undermining of neutrality by an always closer "cooperation" with NATO. Everything passing the people, a steady coup from above against the people.

Direct democracy is the crux for strategists who let themselves integrate from outside in an ever closer network – because of fame addiction? Because they are blackmailed? Because they hope to control the global economy in the "global village" in a better way? But: Up to now nobody can pass the referenda in Switzerland. So you have to attack democracy from above and dismantle it gradually. By the *Curriculum 21* one can accelerate the planned strategy: persons who cannot read and write, are lost for direct democracy: The whole growing generations shall no longer be able to carry the state as mature citizens – an inhuman nastiness without equal.

In order to make it a bit faster, more and more referenda simply don't get implemented. The more than seven-hour last-

ing National Council debate on 21 September to the implementation of Article 121a of the Federal Constitution (immigration control) is a demonstration of the subversive forces against whom a strong response will be necessary.

### "Why crumbled the bourgeois consensus?" "It dissolved."

So answered CVP President and National Councillor *Gerhard Pfister* to the question of *Roger Köppel* in the "Weltwoche" of 8 September 2016.

With the coalition of the big bourgeois parties (SVP, FDP, CVP), the National Council would have carried off a "unilateral protective clause" and a "residents precedence", worthy of its name, and met the people's will, which is codified in the Federal Constitution. In the great show on 21 September in the National Council, this was not the case, which all Councillors already knew before. Because in the preparatory Political Institutions Committee SPK-NR (PIC-NC) the forces were already bundled: all other parties

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### Request for rejection Amstutz from 13 September 2016

*The bill 16.027 is to be rejected to the Political Institutions Committee (PIC-N) connected with the mandate to constitutionally embellish it according to the decree of people and cantons from 9 Februar 2014. The elaborated proposal by PIC-N for the implementation of Art. 121a of the Federal Constitution as well as the appropriate interim regulations is clearly unconstitutional. The constitutional obligation by people and cantons reads:*

#### Art. 121a FC

- 1 Switzerland shall control the immigration of foreign nationals autonomously.  
– unfulfilled!
- 2 The number of residence permits for foreign nationals in Switzerland shall be restricted by annual quantitative limits  
– unfulfilled!  
and quotas.  
– unfulfilled!  
The quantitative limits apply to all permits issued under legislation on foreign nationals, including those related to asylum matters.  
– unfulfilled!  
The right to permanent residence, family reunification and social benefits may be restricted.

– unfulfilled!

- 3 The annual quantitative limits and quotas for foreign nationals in gainful employment must be determined according to Switzerland's general economic interests, while giving priority to Swiss citizens;  
– unfulfilled!  
the limits and quotas must include cross-border commuters.  
– unfulfilled!  
The decisive criteria for granting residence permits are primarily a application from an employer,  
– unfulfilled!  
ability to integrate, and adequate, independent means of subsistence.  
– unfulfilled!
- 4 No international agreements may be concluded that breach this Article.  
– unfulfilled (Croatia-minute)!

#### Art. 197 FC

- 11 Transitional provision to Art. 121a (Control of immigration)
- 1 International agreements that contradict Article 121a must be renegotiated and amended within three years of its adoption by the people and the cantons.  
– unfulfilled!

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

**"Resistance against the dismantling ..."**

continued from page 13

against the SVP. Accordingly, the scenery was constructed in the Council.

Roger Köppel: "On 29 April you said in an interview that there would be a consensus among the bourgeois parties, that one is going to enforce the migration management independently, provided there is no consensual agreement with the EU. Now any autonomy was relinquished. Switzerland must ask the EU for permission at any measure that goes beyond the better use of domestic potential. Why crumbled the bourgeois consensus?"

Gerhard Pfister: "It dissolved. It existed until about one week before the Commission meeting. The FDP intimated that maximum numbers would be absolutely out of question for them, not even in a weakened form. The FDP began to fixate on individual words. At once there were rigid fronts."

Hence, the strategists managed the National Council Debate: not the Swiss way! The Commission proposals were not submitted by the Commission President, Heinz Brand, SVP, but by vice Kurt Fluri, FDP, who had already presented himself in the Commission as an advocate of the EU. The request for rejection of National Councillor *Adrian Amstutz*, SVP BE Bern (see box), in which the breach of the constitution all

along the line was denounced, was rejected with all votes against the SVP. The FDP had decided three-line whip – an extremely outlandish process in the Swiss consensus democracy! Accordingly, some FDP National Councillors dared merely to abstain from voting, there were three of them in the vote on the rejection of request Amstutz (*Thierry Burkart*, FDP AG Argovia, *Benoît Genecand*, FDP GE Geneva and *Hanspeter Portmann*, FDP ZH Zurich). As a protest against the earlier agreed front against the implementation of the people's will, the SVP National Councillors had agreed to become involved with many questions concerning the request Amstutz. So they brought the Council's President *Christa Markwalder*, BE Bern, (who had campaigned for joining the EU since ever) to the verge of rage: "Come to your question!" ... "The question!"

#### Few brave campaigners can change tack

As the only FDP National Councillor had Hanspeter Portmann, FDP ZH Zurich, dared to make a request, which tried to lay the control still in Swiss hands. "Can the Joint Committee (Art. 14 para. 2 FZA Agreement on the Free Movement of Persons AFMP) not agree, the Federal Council requests from the Federal Assembly remedies to unilateral implementa-



tion." (Art.17d para.4bis draft AuG Foreign Nationals Act FNA)

A similar request from Gerhard Pfister, CVP ZG Zug:

"The Federal Council decides in consultation with the Cantons on the remedial measures and their submission to the Joint Committee (Art.14 para.2 FZA AFMP). If within 60 days of the request, Switzerland has no agreement, the Federal Council may decide temporary remedial measures."

Both requests were rejected but only slightly: In addition to the SVP Councillors most CVP councillors and some of the FDP voted in favour.

#### National Council has to fulfill its constitutional duty

Until an independent regulation of immigration is finally finished, all water is under the bridge. Hopefully the Council of States knows better than the large chamber, what it has to do. Otherwise there is still the referendum law.

But the fact remains that the majority of the National Councillors simply has refused to implement the people's will on last Wednesday. If you consider that the termination of the bilateral agreements with Switzerland from the EU point of view is not up for discussion, as *Jean-Claude Juncker* has admitted on 19 September in Zurich – finally the EU would have to lose a lot more than we do! – already the question is before us, what made our "elected representatives" to want to leave Switzerland to a ramshackle construct from which the other states try to escape, before being sucked down to the last penny.

### Press release of the voting committee "Yes to HarmoS exit"

#### Elementary school once again has to be people's concern

The initiative committee "Yes to HarmoS exit" along with a sizeable portion of voters requested the government and the cantonal board of education to put children's interests at the heart of school policy. The "Yes" vote cast by St. Gallen voters for a HarmoS remain is not a free pass to promote more damaging school reforms.

The government as well as the media have put a lot of effort into discrediting the initiative for the HarmoS exit so far. Surely, the massive media (almost) monopoly of HarmoS supporters has contributed significantly to the remain within a HarmoS concordat. We would like to thank all citizens that supported our initiative, and who, despite a massive media campaign voted "Yes" to a HarmoS exit.

The government now will be judged on whether it keeps its promise and is prepared to put the child's interest at the heart of its policy even with a HarmoS concordat, whether it is prepared to strengthen the teacher-child relationship and to give teachers the freedom

to choose their own teaching methods. Also, after a lot of unrest, the repeatedly given promises to have the flurry of reforms subside and calm restored within school politics, now have to be put in effect.

Moreover, HarmoS must no longer be used as a lever for ideological restructuring of the schools. The voters said "Yes" to a sensible coordination of the cantonal schools, but not to a radical change of elementary school. Steps taken towards self-organised learning are to be stopped.

Maths, reading and writing in German are to receive proper emphasis as a foundation once more. The most valuable aspect of elementary school, the student body that is being led and shaped by a responsible teacher, has to be preserved.

We will keep going, we will continue to oppose non-sensical reforms and take action for a strong elementary school St. Gallen.

*Heinz Herzog, spokesman for the voting committee "Yes to HarmoS exit"*

# Elections in Russia – almost 75% of the votes for “United Russia”

## Putin’s policy confirmed by a constitutional majority

by Robert Stelzl, Russia analyst at the “Europäisches Zentrum für geopolitische Analysen – Wien”  
(European Centre for Geopolitical Analysis – Vienna)



Robert Stelzl  
(picture ma)

On Sunday 18 September, elections were held in Russia. The 450 seats of the State Duma were newly distributed under tense global circumstances. One should keep in mind that elections in the world’s largest country face

enormous challenges caused by twelve time zones, 110 million eligible voters and some 90,000 polling stations.

Given the international climate of a western barrage of propaganda against Russia, whether due to the Crimea, Donbass, Syria, *Edward Snowden* or even Brexit, it is all the more surprising that the worst tirades this time largely failed to be forthcoming. What had happened?

### Offensive openness and transparency in the run-up to the elections

After some strident protests had occurred surrounding the 2011 State Duma elections, in the run-up to these elections the highest attention was paid to the incontestable legitimacy and transparency of the elections so as to leave no doubt that the elections will be held in line with the standards of other developed democratic states and according to international law. Thus, at an early stage, the Chairman of the State Duma, *Sergey Naryshkin*, invited the parliamentary representatives of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the parliamentary representatives of the member states of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), the OSCE, the Chairman of the parliaments of the *Mercosur* countries, the interparliamentary assembly of the orthodoxy and so on to observe the elections. Ultimately, more than 1,000 election observers followed this invitation to Russia.

The most important legitimacy factor, however, was the general mood among the population itself, because the elections were perceived as open and fair. Whereas in 2011, according to the independent Moscow opinion research institute “Levada Centre”, 31% of the respondents suspected election rigging probable, this time it was only 13%.

At this year’s State Duma elections, a total of 14 parties managed to reach the registration for nationwide candidacy – more than twice as many as in 2011 – and the hurdle for entry into the State Duma has also been significantly reduced from 7% to 5%. This time, any kind of favouritism or special facilities for candidates of the ruling party was prevented by particularly restrictive provisions. Thus, for example, the case of the powerful State Councillor for the Republic of Yakutia, *Andrey Borisov* (United Russia), who did not manage to register as a candidate because he had submitted too many invalid signatures of support, attracted a great deal of attention. Nevertheless, he was granted no help or leniency whatsoever. Borisov had to throw in the towel.

### Putin’s patriotic policy rather than the “wishful thinking” of Western think tanks rewarded and voted for

With 54.28% of the votes “United Russia” won 140 parliamentary seats and 203 direct mandates. With 343 seats out of a total of 450 seats, the party of the president for the first time won the constitutional majority with three quarters of the seats. Only the Communists, “Fair Russia” and *Zhirinovskiy’s* Liberal Democratic Party (LDPR) also made their way into the State Duma. Given the election results, the silence of the usually anti-Russian Western media seems all the more surprising. But after the representatives of the opposition parties recognised the largely smooth course of the elections, there were hardly any interview partners remaining for slobbering commentaries, except the daughter by profession of *Boris Nemtsov* or the negligible fan club of *Pussy Riot*.

With the parliamentary demise of *Jablonko*, the already marginal acceptance of Western-based political parties and organisations appears to have been finally sealed. In addition, the lack of “investment opportunities” for unrest and orange revolutions and for all the highly endowed good works of a Mr *Soros* made it, thanks to strict transparency laws, impossible to intervene in the elections from the outside.

### True standards versus some “Western standards”

The measures taken to achieve a genuine civil society could thus calmly take hold and unfold. Putin’s efforts to reform the

legal system, pushed forward since 2011, were aimed at facilitating the candidacy of political parties in elections. They also significantly simplified the procedure and encouraged the opponents of the government to compete under equal conditions. All this was compounded by the successful but cautious election campaign led by *Wjatscheslaw Wolodin*, deputy head of the Presidential Administration, who had already successfully led the presidential elections in 2012, and now led the Duma elections in 2016.

Advertising materials were used with great restraint during the election campaign. Even in Moscow, election posters were hardly to be seen immediately before the elections. “United Russia” explained this by the fact that the wastage of campaign funds was not in the interests of the electorate during economically strained times – a truly inspiring viewpoint, especially in view of the US-election campaign, where some 250 million dollars in *Hillary Clinton’s* official budget for the election campaign, funded by illustrious sources such as armament companies and the Saudi guardian of the holy places of Mecca and Medina, are waiting for the opportunity to impart “democratic values” or merely to communicate *Hillary Clinton’s* health status.

The great success of “United Russia”, especially in the major urban centres, is also attributable to the fact that every citizen eligible to vote this time had the opportunity to go through a completely transparent selection process as a candidate within his party, and, therefore, to participate in it actively and passively. This has led to a great number of new candidates and elected representatives. Never before has the membership of the Duma been such a representative cross-section of the various professional groups and social levels of the population. This also made a major contribution to the election’s legitimisation. The central election commission was led by the internationally recognised civil activist *Ella Pamfilova* – who is highly respected in Russia. On 22 September, the election commission concluded that because of irregularities in nine polling stations (from a total of 90,000) the election results had to be annulled – a résumé that, given our repeatedly failed presidential elections, we in Austria can only dream of.

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

## “It takes an outcry of humanity” Wide condemnation of euthanasia for 17-year-old

*mb.* Active euthanasia on a 17-year-old young person in Belgium is provoking wide protest and horror. It is based on a law with which Belgium has removed the age limit for active euthanasia completely. This is a situation unique in the world, and was established against bitter opposition from churches and patient associations in Belgium.

### Catholic Church: opening of the ethical floodgates

On the occasion of the killing on the request of a 17 year-old, *Radio Vatican* talks of the “opening of the ethical floodgates”. Curial Cardinal *Elio Sgreccia*: “This decision is not only aimed against the sentiments of all religions, all of which have made their voices heard in Belgium, but also against the human instinct for especially vulnerable minors, who must be helped with medication and with moral, psychological and spiritual assistance”. *Klaus Küng*, Bishop in St. Pölten, Austria, takes a similar position: “Love and compassion are never shown by the killing of another human being, but by affection, closeness and care.” He quotes Cardinal *Franz König*, who said, “people should die being held by the hand, and not die by the hand of a fellow being”. Bishop Küng notes that the state of a society is shown by the way it treats its most vulnerable members. “Each person is unique,” life is a gift that requires an affirmative society, “in which there is space for each of us to live in dignity and without fear to be no longer wanted by tomorrow.”

### “Stiftung Patientenschutz” urges EU-rules against euthanasia on children

Also *Eugen Brysch*, the chairman of the German “Stiftung Patientenschutz”, protests: “The euthanasia of children has nothing to do with dignified dying. In that respect the Benelux state is leaving the EU human rights standards.” He calls

“Hippokratische Gesellschaft Schweiz”

### The appalling act of killing a 17 year old teenager must be condemned

This is a serious attack on human rights, Christian European values and the protection of life in a state under the rule of law.

The several releases on the first case of killing of a minor, a 17-year-old teenager in Belgium, supposedly legitimized by law as “active euthanasia (of a child)”, have been justifiably and strongly criticized and condemned. This act means a further escalation of a campaign mainly in the western states towards an increasing disregard for fundamental and human rights. It contradicts any notion of humanity.

We notice that Switzerland is currently exposed to a process of propaganda by manipulative film and other media contributions aiming at promoting the further acceptance of assisted suicide in Switzerland. The state shall

no longer have the duty to protect life. This development includes ongoing efforts to “accompany” even healthy, suicidal people to death, instead of helping them and winning them for a meaningful life.

We remind that in 2001 Swiss parliament rejected with a considerable majority an initiative of former MP *Cavalli* to introduce active killings of patients in Switzerland. Right to life and the protection of life are constitutional foundations of a democratic constitutional state. The state has the duty to protect the lives of its citizens! If he doesn't fulfill this duty anymore, the doors for barbarism will be wide open!

Source: Press Release “Hippokratische Gesellschaft Schweiz”  
(Hippocratic Society Switzerland),  
hgs.ch@gmx.ch from 20.9.2016

for a German initiative against regulations such as those existing in Belgium, where minors may already be killed by means of active euthanasia.

### “It goes to the core of humanity itself”

According to the “Welt”, the CDU/CSU faction in the German “Bundestag” criticized the Belgian practice sharply. *Michael Brand*, CDU: “A society that de facto legalizes the killing even of its own children has declared bankruptcy and is on a downwards spiral, because the value of human life is measurably scaled down, and at the same time perseverance, compassion and assistance are replaced by capitulation and death.” According to Brand it goes “to the core of humanity itself” when “people increasingly see the solution in surrender and put technical assistance to commit suicide in the place of human assistance.” Brand concludes: “This debate about the devaluation of life and the upvaluation of killing, here in the

name of the self-determination even of young children, which are placed under tremendous pressure, makes me shudder in anticipation of the next steps for burdensome older people or for people with depressions.” It takes “an outcry of humanity.” It is notably Germany that has “a very special responsibility to oppose such irresponsible decisions”.

### Austrian way as alternative to euthanasia

Bishop Küng proposes that in respect of palliative care, the Austrian way should be taken as role model for all of Europe. Here, hospice- and palliative care is established and being steadily improved. The current case in Belgium shows how important this is especially for children and young people. Küng requests that individual or societal pressure on people, whether inflicted by legislation or by influence through third parties, must be banned. •

## TTIP – economic content (part 2)

by Dario Rivolta, Milan\*



Dario Rivolta  
(picture ma)

Since the TTIP agreement includes an arbitration clause which justifies the primacy of “investment protection” over possible national laws that might be considered (by the judges) as discriminatory or as “indirect expropriation”,

the sovereignty of governments and parliaments will be reduced. So much is certain.

Nevertheless, it is said that this agreement will bring the economies of the US and of Europe so many benefits that it is worthwhile despite the loss of independence.

### Is less independence worthwhile?

To prove this assumption, the *European Commission* asked the *Centre for Economic Policy Research* (CEPR), to conduct a profound study on the economic consequences of a possible implementation of TTIP. This analysis was realized and submitted in 2013 under the name “Reducing trans-atlantic barriers to trade and investment.”

The US government commissioned its own Department of Agriculture (this is a governmental department) to accomplish the same task. On the whole, the results resemble each other.

### It is not about the reduction of tariffs

One must start by saying that the real aim of this agreement is not the reduction of tariffs, because these are already very low or have already been abolished for almost all products. More precisely, the highest duty for Europeans in the United States is 3.7% for agricultural and forestry products. This is followed by 3.2% for processed foods, while for most of the remaining products the customs offices demand a percentage to 1% or less. Europe demands slightly higher Customs duties for American goods: 14.6% for processed

foods, and 8% for passenger cars. Everything else costs about the same as our exporters pay in the US.

### The real key objective of the possible agreements

If tariffs are not the problem, it follows that we must pay attention to the so-called “non-tariff barriers”, i.e. the regulations in the following areas: production conditions, technical standards, legal and juristic investment limits, and standards for health and hygiene. The reduction of these “barriers” is the real central aim of these possible agreements. Subject to the abolition of all existing tariffs, the CEPR study delineates two scenarios in this context: harmonization of 25% of these standards, which is considered possible, or the ambitious target of 50% of them. Of course, the resulting economic results would be very different.

### The one ...

In the first case (25%) the study estimates that by 2027 Europe would realize an increase of GDP of 0.27%, while the US would remain at 0.21%. At best, the respective increases would amount to 0.48% and 0.39%. In the latter, more optimistically estimated, case annualised European gross domestic product would amount to around 0.3%. So if the planned growth for 2017 is 1.8% on the continent, it would then instead rise to 2.1%. For the European families that would mean an average of 11.25 euros per person per year. Not much, frankly, but there are those who would say this is better than nothing. And that is true! But what about the other side of the coin?

### ... and the other side of the coin

Let us remain with the study ordered by the European Commission. It delineates that some sectors, such as the automobile industry, would profit and others, particularly our agriculture and the sector of electric machines, would suffer losses. In addition, a loss of jobs of 0.6% is predicted for the US and also for the EU. This means that about one million workers would lose their jobs and would have to hope that they get employed somehow in the remaining sectors at some point of time in the future.

We have talked about the studies ordered by the negotiating parties, but this is not the only existing analysis: Professor *Jeronim Capaldo*, economist and researcher at the *Global Development and Environment Institute* at the Boston University, used another method of analysis than the CEPR and in this way achieved less optimistic results. He concludes that in 2025 the number of

jobs in the United States will have increased by 784,000 units, while it will have declined by 58,300 units in Europe. The purchasing power of European workers’ families will decrease annually by between 165 and 5,500 euro (in France), and the average prices of basic goods will rise, especially in Germany, France and England.

### Brexit makes reassessment of all studies necessary

Regarding England it must be noted that the above figures relate to Europe as it stands at present. The Brexit will require a re-evaluation of all studies, mainly because the British, along with the Spanish, the Swedes and the Baltic States, would have been the greatest European beneficiaries of the agreements. The possible absence of the GDP growth of 9.7% attributed to England would make it clear that even the measly annual growth rate of 0.3% would have to be corrected downwards.

### For the benefit of the United States: increase of transatlantic trade causes decrease in internal trade

That is not all. The study prepared by the Department of Agriculture in 2015 focuses on the sector of its competence (*Agriculture in the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership*) and is clear in its conclusion, that in agricultural trade between the two shores of the Atlantic Ocean there will be a reversal of the present situation to the benefit of the United States: the European medium and small enterprises (especially the Italian ones) will be at a disadvantage: Europe will import much more food than it is able to export and intra-EU sales will decrease. Perhaps this is the reason why *Obama* insists so much on the opening of the agricultural sector and that of the GMO (genetically modified organisms) and wants to exclude the financial services.

All studies take into account the different variables within the entire, growing world trade, and this is included in the calculation of GDP. It is not known how the real data would look if the interactions of the third countries were to be less favourable than predicted. It is clear, however, that the increase in transatlantic trade will cause a decrease of the internal EU trade in all sectors.

### Joseph Stiglitz: free reign for multinationals

Nobel Prize winning economist *Joseph Stiglitz* said in 2014 before the Italian Chamber of Deputies: “The Trade Department is negotiating in complete se-

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# CETA/TTIP – the 3<sup>rd</sup> phase of colonialism

by Prof Dr Eberhard Hamer



Eberhard Hamer  
(picture ma)

1. From the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, mercantilism suggested that a nation could only become rich if it processed low-value raw materials and then sold them again in the form of high-quality finished products.

Therefore Western European coastal countries (Holland, England) were the first to found trading companies, so as to secure the sources of raw materials in the East Indies, Africa, and South America for themselves, import these raw materials to their home countries and then export the finished products. According to mercantilism, the profits from the difference created the largest wealth.

## Colonial system of mercantilism

There was, of course, competition for these sources of raw materials. Therefore already the trading companies tried – with the backing of their states – to secure the areas where such natural resources could be found as “colonies”, i.e. to effectively declare them Dutch, English, French or Spanish territories, and thus not only to secure their raw materials and their markets for themselves, but also to exclude other countries.

This colonialism provided an essential part of their national prosperity to the Dutch in the 16/17<sup>th</sup> century, to the British in the 17<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and also to the Spanish, Portuguese and French. But this colonial principle practically always meant exploitation of the colony for the benefit of the mother country. This exploitation was militarily supported and secured by the home country.

The Second World War brought the end of colonialism, because the colonial powers were no longer able to adequately control their colonies and restrain the colonised peoples’ desire for freedom. So the mercantilist colonial system collapsed in the last century.

## The FED as a dollar bills printing machine ...

2. However, at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the Anglo-Saxon high finance had a replacement idea and established a private, government-backed *Federal Reserve Bank* (FED, founded in 1913):

Because the looting of foreign countries can also be achieved by granting them high loans of internally generated paper money and letting them repay these with interest and compound interest in addition to the amortisation – almost like a permanent tribute. This was based on the dollar bills printing machine FED. The financial syndicate was using the FED, which they owned, to print their own private money, to make this available to the banks and governments of the world in the form of credits, and thus to bring ever more countries into debt bondage quasi by creating something out of nothing. After the dollar’s link to gold had been abandoned, this system of credit-, debt-, and interest slavery was forced on the whole world by means of financial organisations (IMF, *World Bank*, even the UN) dominated by this same high financial clique. Over 200 countries around the world have become interest-tributaries to the financial syndicate and the syndicate has stationed American troops in these countries in order to secure this interest slavery.

## ... and dollar empire

And so emerged the dollar empire, upheld by tributary vassals with ever greater debt totals and money (dollars) from creditors who no longer had any coverage for this money (fiat money).

The system has become so abused and so excessive that a large part of the debt vassals, and even the US itself, can never repay these debts. The system is about to burst, a crash is imminent – as even presidential candidate *Trump* recently confirmed.

The dollar empire as a second colonial empire has not only been the largest and most universal so far, but also the most profitable. The financial syndicate’s income from this dollar debt bondage system was higher than all colonial returns have ever been before. The dollar world power’s second colonial empire will soon burst like a balloon because its bubble is thus exaggerated.

## Bought up world monopolies

3. As members of the financial syndicate have already announced (e.g. *Soros*, *Rothschild*), the second phase of colonialism will soon collapse. But provisions have already been made against this. With its fiat money, which has no more real value than the paper it is printed on, the Anglo-Saxon financial syndicate has during the past 50 years systematically bought up commodi-

ties and companies all the world over (especially energy, metals, water, seeds and others) and turned them into global monopolies. So, in the case of the financial empire’s collapse, the financial syndicate will be able to extort a differential rent, i.e. special profits for themselves, from all consumers by means of setting monopoly prices on the raw materials of our world. Colonial revenue will then no longer be the interest on loans, but the high prices of monopolised commodities which are needed the world over and for which there will therefore necessarily always be a market.

Yet, as shown by the nationalisation of oil wells (Iraq, Iran) or mines (Peru) originally owned by the financial syndicate, or by the rejection of the monopolised genetically modified seeds in Europe, the world monopoly power of the financial syndicate is in danger of national states’ reducing those monopolies by law, socialising them – especially if monopoly prices are driven too high – or of these monopolies suddenly losing all their value because of a sudden political about-turn, as for instance nuclear energy in times of the energy transition.

## CETA/TTIP should secure monopoly

But the financial syndicate found a solution also for this: they had tame middlemen amongst the EU officials elaborate in secret negotiations the alleged “free trade agreements”, which should guarantee them the great monopoly domination in their colonies, and at the same time prevent colonies from democratically, politically or by law curtailing the once reached monopoly position of the international Atlantic monopolies.

Since the collapse of the dollar empire is imminent, TTIP is now to be rushed through in the time till January 2017. The financial syndicate and the US want to remain the center of the world economy and now increasingly bank on trade agreements in order to maintain their international system of rule in their own interest.

If you look more closely which politicians are trying to enforce these CETA/TTIP negotiations in Europe, and if you know about the special dependencies of just these politicians on the US financial syndicate, you need no longer believe in either their objectivity or in any loyalty to their own people. They are ordered to carry out the third phase of colonisation for the benefit of the Atlantic powers. •

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

# Swiss franc and direct democracy (part 1)

## What is going on with our money?

by Dr rer publ W. Wüthrich

*Strange things happen today in the monetary system. Most central banks lower their interest rates to zero. Even negative interest rates occur. Major central banks operate state financing more or less openly. For example, the ECB agrees printing money or its electronic equivalent – if necessary – to buy up as many debt securities of euro area countries which got into trouble financially. “Whatever it takes.” With these words, Mario Draghi has announced in 2012 that he wants to save the euro at any price. Debts – and the connected political problems – are swept away with a money flood, and the contracts that prohibit state funding of the ECB are put aside. With a few mouse clicks the Swiss National Bank sets new Swiss francs in circulation – out of nowhere – and so many that usually it would take the whole Swiss population’s work for one year. Government bonds pay negatively, that means, who lends money to the state, must pay for it. There is even the idea of “helicopter money” (Milton Friedman). A helicopter lets drop bank notes, or central banks should provide the people and the government directly and freely with money to stimulate the economy. – Disturbing “strangeness” more and more. Something must be wrong, some will argue. – What is happening with our money? Current Concerns will investigate this question in three articles. In the first one, it is about the classical gold standard, the second one about the monetary system of Bretton Woods, and in the third one, with the subtitle “Monetary policy without borders”, about the events of*

*these days – always in connection with direct democracy.*

To understand the issues of today, it is necessary to include the history of the Swiss franc. And this includes from the beginning many referendums. - Agriculture and money are areas about which most referendums have taken place in Switzerland, because food and money are basic for the people.

### The time before the foundation of the Swiss National Bank – many referenda

After the founding of the Federal State in 1848 the monetary system in Switzerland worked for more than fifty years without a National Bank which was founded only in 1906. It was one of the first tasks of the newly elected parliament to create the Swiss franc as a common means of payment, namely on the French model as a coin containing 4.5 grams of silver. The Federal Government received the monopoly to mint coins and founded the *Federal Mint*. A growing number of banks issued own banknotes as a replacement for the silver and later gold coins but were no legal tender. As a result, the money system we know today was being built step by step.

A first important ballot took place in 1872 when the total revised Constitution was voted on. A key point was Article 38: “The Federal Government has the power to establish by legislation general rules on the issue and redemption of banknotes.” The people said clearly no. Why? A large majority favoured a federal system: The

various cantonal banks and private banks should still issue their own banknotes covered by gold coins which were indeed distinguished in their appearance – but coordinated in their value. The 20-franc-note corresponded to the “*Goldvreneli*” (Helvetia Head) of which 56 million units were in circulation. So they could be exchanged easily. There was also a corresponding gold coin for the ten and hundred francs note. The five francs note had its counterpart in the five francs’ silver coin.

In this money system banknotes were merely a substitute for the gold coins and no legal tender. So, the citizen was free to accept or not the banknote of a bank. This system had the advantage that the citizen could control and monitor these banks himself – over the years there were at least 51. It is evident that banks so avoided speculative businesses and put the needs of their customers or citizens in the foreground. If a bank had had a dubious business policy, citizens wouldn’t accept their notes (which means the end for the bank).

This system was so important to the citizens that the Federal Constitution of 1874 expressly forbade the Federal Government to establish a monopoly for the issue of banknotes and to declare banknotes as legal tender. This system worked quite well without National Bank. In 1876 and 1880 it was confirmed in two more votes. Until the foundation of the *Swiss National Bank* in 1906 it never happened that the private banknotes of a bank were rejected as payment.

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### “TTIP – economic content (part 2)”

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crecy, without informing the American congressmen. What is at stake is not the import tariffs between Europe and the United States, which are already very low ... it is the standards for food safety, protection of the environment and generally for consumers. This agreement is not meant to improve a system of standards and exchange, which is positive for US as well as European citizens, but it is meant to ensure free reign for entrepreneurs (especially the American multinationals) that carry out economic activities harmful to the environment and to the people ...”

One really has to wonder why and with what motivation local politicians insist on signing this agreement. However, we will discuss this point later.

### NAFTA agreement: experience has not been positive

We now turn to the question of what experiences were made in relation to a similar agreement between the US, Canada and Mexico, the NAFTA agreement.

Clinton, the main protagonist in the implementation, claimed that he had thereby created 200,000 new jobs per annum and an increase of purchasing power for Americans. The *Economic-Policy Institute* ([www.epi.org/blog/naftas-impact-workers](http://www.epi.org/blog/naftas-impact-workers)), however, calculated that 700,000 US jobs were lost. A similar study in Canada comes to the conclusion that there, too, 350,000 job places were destroyed by the NAFTA agreement. In theory Mexico would have benefited, as many North-American enterprises settled there. But in the area of agriculture, the same thing happened that is also to be expected in Europe: In the course of eight years

1,100,000 campesinos were displaced from their workspace. American and Canadian workers were forced to accept lower wages and the purchasing power of American workers fell by 12.2%. At the same time the proportion of poor Mexicans increased from 36% to 50% of the total population. The prices of consumer goods increased seven-fold, while the minimum wage was only four times as high as before.

It is notably this experience with the NAFTA agreement which causes more and more American politicians to start questioning the agreement with the Pacific countries (China excluded) already signed by their government.

If Clinton I was so conspicuously “off the beam”, will *Clinton II* follow the example of her husband, this time to our disadvantage?

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

**"Swiss franc and direct ..."**

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You shouldn't imagine this monetary system working in a way that all major bills were paid with coins or banknotes. So much gold wouldn't have been there, and it wouldn't be practical. Above all the invoices in foreign trade were paid mostly with bills of exchange (securities, securitised commercial loans). This technique allowed to offset the debt from the import of goods with the balances from the export with the banks. For this, neither gold nor banknotes were needed. This highly popular payment method was the forerunner of today's cashless payment system. The classical gold standard or the "gold franc" formed the framework where other methods of payment and also creation of money (book money) of private banks were possible.

### Two referenda lead to founding of the National Bank

Not until 1891 – as the economy grew and the payment transactions became more pretentious – unifying the numerous private banknotes was intruding. The people agreed to an article in the Constitution, which newly gave the monopoly to the Federal Government to issue uniform banknotes for the whole of Switzerland (which it rejected several times before). In this ballot the question of who should issue these notes remained open, however. Should it be done by a national "central bank" or by a private, "joint stock bank", more appropriate to federalism? Federal Council and parliament clearly decided upon the project of the "*Swiss Federal Bank*". This was designed as a pure state bank – under a legal form, which was similar to that of the *Swiss Federal Railways SBB* founded at approximately the same time. 1897 in a referendum the people, however, voted against the proposal of the Federal Council and the parliament, so that the way opened up to found the *Swiss National Bank SNB* as a state-controlled stock corporation. It is a state independent legal person, its degree of independence should be determined by legislation. It was founded in 1906. Until today, the cantons hold the majority of shares, and also citizens are involved – but not the Federal Government.

### The difference

What's the difference between a *state bank*, favoured by the Federal Council and the Parliament, and a *state-controlled stock corporation*, which the people had chosen as a legal form for the future National Bank? Saying "no" to the pure state bank, the people wanted to prevent too much and direct influence of federal institutions on the monetary system.

## The Latin and the Scandinavian Monetary Union – two successful European monetary unions

*ww.* The Latin Monetary Union was founded in 1865 and was based on the principle, that – inspite of having different names and different minting – the coins were of the same metal value. Switzerland was a founding member. This union continuously worked until the First World War – without a central bank. The French franc, the Belgian Franc, the Greek drachma, the Italian lira and the Swiss franc had all the same gold respectively silver content. This meant that on the one hand, it was possible to comfortably pay with Swiss francs in Athens, Rome, Paris or in Brussels and that, on the other hand numerous foreign currencies were able to circu-

late within Switzerland. About the same time, a similar monetary union occurred within the Scandinavian countries. These countries had also coordinated the gold, and respectively the silver content of their currencies with each other. In spite of central banks already existing within these countries, the union – for the most part – did work without them. Due to its terrible wars, the 20<sup>th</sup> century destroyed quite a stable coexistence and economic activity with a stable monetary order that protected national sovereignty. It wasn't until 1926 that the *Latin Monetary Union* was dissolved formally, preceded by the dissolution of the *Scandinavian Monetary Union* in 1924.

The *state-controlled stock corporation* is closer to the people. It corresponds to the federalist principle because the majority of stocks is with the cantons and interested citizens are directly involved. They can become shareholder for very little money. They get information posted by the National Bank and have a right to talk at the general meeting. Worldwide, the National Bank is the only bank offering this.

The relative independence from the state applies also in another area. Would the National Bank be established as a pure *state bank*, the Federal Government would have to stand up for losses, resulting for example from the purchase of foreign currency or other securities. The Swiss National Bank does accounting as any stock corporation according to the principles laid down in the Swiss Code of Obligations. Profits are primarily used to build up reserves, which are intended to cover future losses independently. This provision asks for caution, because – as mentioned above – there is no comprehensive federal or state liability. The distribution of profits to the private shareholders, the cantons and the Federal Government is therefore secondary. – It will not come to bankruptcy as it may happen to a normal stock corporation, because it takes a political decision on dissolving the National Bank.

A few years after it was established the SNB began to issue uniform Swiss banknotes having the same nominal value as the private banknotes already in circulation. A twenty-franc note was still a twenty-franc note, the hundred-franc note still a hundred-franc note and so on. The transition to the federal money was in this way easy. The new notes, given out by the National Bank, were just replacing the gold coins – similar as the private banknotes before. According to the Federal Constitution the notes were no legal tender – "except in emergencies during times of war". In other words: The people gave the con-

trol over the monetary system not out of hand. Should the new National Bank issue too many notes, citizens had the right to reject those. There were enough examples of central banks, which were running the "note press" hot to finance wars or any dubious policy, already at that time. The private banknotes still in circulation in the cantonal and commercial banks were gradually being exchanged.

### Less flexible, but stable

Today, historians and economists criticise, that the classical gold standard had its weaknesses, especially that the supply of money was at that time not sufficiently flexible. That's for sure correct. But the system was very stable over many decades – far more stable than the highly flexible money supply today. It was a time with a lot of private initiative, pioneering spirit and numerous business start-ups. At that time the foundations for the current prosperity were laid.

Governments opted for a debt-free budget on all three levels, communal, cantonal and federal, holding up the principle of the "*paterfamilias*" as it was called at that time. If debts were made, they were fully paid back soon. So, for example, the Constitution of the Canton of Bern of 1869 included the following provision: the fiscal authority plans for four years "a summarising estimate of the annual needs of the state budget" and a "complete amortisation plan of debts."<sup>1</sup>

### The end of the classical gold standard

During the First World War, the banknotes could no longer be exchanged for gold coins. The money printing press began to play an increasingly important role in the financing of the war. After the war, some countries tried again to continue the gold standard in a weakened form.

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**"Swiss franc and direct ..."**

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The end came in the 1930s. The United Kingdom devalued the pound in 1931 and ended the obligation to convert banknotes into gold. In 1933 the United States devalued the dollar by 41 per cent and banned possessing of gold coins by citizens. This was an affront to the citizens who completely lost control of the monetary system. The final end of the classical gold coverage was initiated with this political bang. The way was free to systematically use the note press and the so-called deficit spending, that is, making targeted debt, to combat a crisis. – *John Maynard Keynes*, the most influential economist of more recent times, commented: "We have at last free hand to do what is sensible. [...] I believe that the great events of the last week will open a new chapter in the world's monetary history." Keynes was proved quite right. 1937 Keynes wrote his masterpiece "The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money" – a book that determined future policy like no other. A new era began, to which lingering inflation and getting into debt – increasingly and in global dimensions – belonged until today.

In 1936, also Switzerland as the last country in which the classical gold standard was still at least partially valid, devalued the franc by 30 per cent. The Federal Council has been waiting quite a long time with this step, what earned him criticism from Keynesian-oriented economists. There were systemic and practical reasons for this. The gold standard had been proven over many decades, and the people had legitimised this system in several referenda. 56 million "Goldvreneli" (Helvetia Head) with a nominal value of 20 francs, in addition coins with a value of 10 and 100 francs were in circulation. These were made out of gold and could not be devalued (or you should have taken the coins in, newly shaped with a reduced gold content by 30 per cent). – The gold coins were worth significantly more than the equivalent banknotes, therefore they disappeared from the payments virtually overnight and immediately. Because the gold coins as payment were not used anymore, banknotes were in fact the only *legal tender* in Switzerland for the first time. To the population it was demonstrated clearly that a new era had dawned for the money. – The gold coins have become popular collectibles and stores of purchasing power.

Thus, the classical gold standard with the obligation to convert banknotes into gold in Switzerland ended.

After the Second World War a new monetary order came up – the monetary system of *Bretton Woods*, in which the gold played also an important role – but in a completely different manner. In Switzerland, this led to new groundbreaking referendums. •

<sup>1</sup> Kölz, Alfred. *Quellenbuch zur Neueren Schweizerischen Verfassungsgeschichte*. 1996, S. 74.

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## Education for all in Kakuma

*In the arid border regions of Kenya there are two huge refugee camps: Dadaab – it is the world's largest camp – and that of Kakuma. Hundreds of thousands of displaced people have been living there, some for decades. The SDC project "Skills for Life" in Kakuma provides vocational training and social as well as economic competencies – and therefore prospects for a better life.*

*jlh.* About 185,000 people – slightly more than in the city of Basel – live in the refugee camp of Kakuma in northern Kenya. "Nowadays, the average length of stay in refugee camps is 17 years worldwide," says *Martina Durrer*, SDC programme officer for the Horn of Africa. What begins as a sudden humanitarian crisis at the moment of expulsion, threatens to become a permanent condition in the camp. This compels to a combination of approaches in humanitarian aid and development cooperation: The people in the camp need prospects, employment and some income, in order not to be completely dependent on foreign support. The SDC project in Kakuma gives the people various practical skills to cope better with life and to be able to attain a certain independence, whether it be in the camp itself or, in case of return, in the home country.

### Neither compensation nor free meal

"Refugee camps in border areas often evolve into an economic hub," *Martina Durrer* says. As is the case in Kakuma. From the viewpoint of the local population, whose living conditions are often even more appalling than those of the people in the camp, this situation has its positive aspects. For, thanks to the refugees, markets arise; there is trade and some infrastructure. But at the same time the camp represents a competition for scarce resources such as water or firewood. While the refugees are often not allowed to integrate themselves into the local la-

600 000 refugees in Kenya, according to the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) worldwide there were about 65 million refugees and expellees in 2015 – more than ever since Second World War. Turkey, Pakistan, Lebanon, Iran, Jordan, Ethiopia, and Kenya host most of them.

In Kenya there are about 600,000 humans; about 365,000 live in the Dadaab-camp, 185,000 in Kakuma. Globally about two third of all refugees and expellees do not live in camps, but in urban regions. This presents the host countries and local authorities with great challenges to guarantee a minimum of medical, educational, and employment supply.



*"You can choose between a total of twelve subjects – from agriculture, masonry and waste management via computer and mobile phone repair up to laundry and weaving. To complement this, there is a basic training in literacy and numeracy."*(picture ma)

bour market, the local population has in turn no access to the aid for the refugees.

In order to defuse tensions, the project "Skills for Life" in Kakuma is therefore open for the people from the camp as well as for the local population. Women and men are equally involved. Participation in the project is voluntary, there is neither compensation nor free meals – decisive is solely the motivation to improve one's own situation. For this project, SDC on site works together with local and international partners.

The Swiss foundation Swisscontact, being involved in vocational education in developing countries for decades, is in charge with the operational management of the project. "The challenge is," as *Katrin Schnellmannshausen* of Swisscontact says, "to adjust the dual approach of vocational training to the local context of the partner country."

A second important partner is the United Nations High Commissariat for Refugees (UNHCR), which is responsible for the management of the camps and the maintenance of the refugees and coordinates the work of other locally active organisations.

### Earning money as soon as possible

Having jointly carried out a market analysis, the local authorities and the economy have launched the pilot phase of the project in autumn 2013 which lasted until summer 2016. It is about an informal and cost-effective education, which focuses on "learning by doing". At the heart of the project are

study groups of several men and women with similar profiles (interests, age, education) being composed of refugees and the local population.

You can choose between a total of twelve subjects – from agriculture, masonry and waste management via computer and mobile phone repair up to laundry and weaving. Each group is dedicated to one of the topics. To complement this, there is a basic training in literacy and numeracy and also training in economic and social skills such as entrepreneurship, financial management, health and prevention. The aim is an all-round education, because after their training the participants should as quickly as possible be able to achieve a first income and ideally be able to set up a small business together with other members of the study group. During several months, they are accompanied in a coaching programme and gradually released into the entrepreneurial independence. The training lasts four to five months and for the participants it ends with a lot of knowledge and a certificate.

### Successful pilot phase

An independent evaluation in 2015 and an assessment as part of the supervisory group (local government, UN, partner organisations and beneficiaries) showed that the pilot phase is successful. They gave very good marks to the training in the learning groups.

The proportion of women there is at around 55 per cent. The next project phase

## Swiss cultivated mushrooms – fresh harvest all year round

by Heini Hofmann

Since mushrooms have a permanent place in healthy diets and wild mushrooms, however, are only seasonal and not available in sufficient quantity, the increasing demand is covered by cultivated mushrooms by an innovative industry that, in addition to the familiar mushrooms de Paris, launches more and more new “exotics species” on the market. Thus the wild mushrooms are not overused.

About two railroad cars full of fresh mushrooms are eaten in Switzerland every day, of which about 90 per cent come from domestic breeding. They are provided by about a dozen of smaller and larger companies that are joined together in the “Verband Schweizer Pilzproduzenten VSP” (Association of the Swiss Mushroom Producers). However, the knowledge of the methods of cultivation is limited to only few mushroom species. Only for culinarily interesting species such as chanterelles, porcini, morels or truffles they are nothing more than a fantasy.

### Market leader agaricus

The most important and at the same time most selling mushroom produced in Switzerland is the classic mushroom de Paris (agaricus bisporus), either the white (crisp, with fine aroma) or brown one (with more intensive flavour), sometimes small for appetizers, sometimes big for the grill. Mushrooms de Paris enrich the menu all year and variously – as a main meal, as a garnish to other dishes or in sauces. Until

### “Education for all in Kakuma”

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of two to three years serves to learn from the experience and to consolidate the training methodology.

“Very pleasing is the fact that several study groups of the project have already joined forces to form small businesses,” Martina Durrer says. Some groups have concluded contracts and secured firm orders, such as for waste management in refugee camps or the repair of IT of the local government. “After the next phase we want to be ready,” Durrer says, “that, thanks to the pilot in Kakuma, we have a package model for informal training, which in the future can be modularly activated in other refugee crises. We are well on the way there.”

Source: Eine Welt (One world) No 3/September 2016

(Translation Current Concerns)

the mid-nineties, the production could be increased continuously; since then the amount has stabilised at around 7,000 tonnes.

At the court of Louis XIV the agaricus bisporus has already been regarded as a delicacy. In 1670 a gardener in Paris discovered that the field mushroom can be cultivated. It was found that it is sensitive to light and grows best in dark cellars and vaults. Highly specialised mushroom production facilities with modern plantation rooms gradually developed from former farms with mushroom growing as a niche division.

Unlike vegetables, where an effective border protection exists, the domestic mushroom production competes against largely open borders. What matters to hold ones ground against foreign competitors, are optimum quality and efficiency. Deciding criteria for choosing mushrooms from the store shelf, are freshness, appearance and confidence in the product. Therefore, the integrated production was introduced in 1997, the certification according to Eurepgap was realised in 2004 and Suisse Garantie, which is standard today, was added in 2005.

### Production and handling

Raw material for mushroom production is a special soil from fresh organic materials, the so-called substrate. This is irrigated, composted and pasteurised several days. Subsequently, the mushroom seed, the mycelium, is applied. The substrate interspersed by mycelium is placed in air-conditioned rooms in huge patches, and the necessary microclimatic conditions are created. Lowering the temperature will stop the further growth of the mycelium and will lead to the formation of fruiting bodies.

From feeding the cultivation areas until the start of harvesting the mushrooms, it takes about three weeks, as long as it subsequently takes to harvest by hand. After buying the mushrooms they can be stored in the refrigerator for several days, but not in a plastic wrapping: they must be able



Working on grifola brown. (picture VSP)

to breathe. Pressure and friction generate brown spots on the snow-white mushrooms that do not have to be cut away, since they neither affect flavour nor durability. Cleaning is carried out – if necessary – briefly under running water (no watering!). Should they have been kept in a cool place, mushrooms can also be warmed up again easily.

### “Exotics” on the rise

Since success requires innovation and new products stimulate consumption, the mushroom producers entered new territory and included additional species, the so-called “exotics” in their programme. From the mid-eighties it has been the shiitake originating in China, which has been called the aromatic because of its spicy flavour. Today it is – after the agaricus bisporus – already the most widely consumed mushroom in Switzerland.

Since the early nineties, the oyster mushroom or pleurotus (commercially called pleos), originally a wild mushroom, with roof tile shaped, fleshy hats and a taste between porcini and chanterelle and suitable as a meat substitute, has been added. The king oyster mushroom of Mediterranean origin, firm to the bite, with a slightly sweetish taste and meaty texture, which is often used in the kitchen as a substitute for porcini, is related to it.

Even the grifola from the family of porriaceae, which belongs to the endangered species in nature, is a newcomer in cultivated mushrooms. It impresses with cauliflower-like appearance, crunchy consistency (after preparation) and slight flavour of nut and pepper. Yet it is ex-

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**"Swiss cultivated mushrooms ..."**

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clusivity, but it is becoming increasingly popular.

**Different acceptance**

The mushroom producers are testing new species repeatedly, whereby two factors are of interest: cultivation and market potential. Hence experiences fall out very different. Not all newcomers have been proven popular; for example, pom pom, the rare coming from China – smelling of coconut, lime and citrus flavour – has not achieved the expected results. Although it resembles chicken and veal and can be prepared like a veal cutlet as Piccata, its market opportunities remain low.

As distinguished is the situation with the shimeji or beech mushroom: this intensely white and tasty mushroom is tender and yet firm to the bite, spicy and of slightly nutty flavour. In China and Japan it has been cultivated for a long time, and has developed to the most eaten of all mushrooms in China. In Switzerland, the production of shimeji is still in the

**Healthy natural products**

Fresh mushrooms consist of 90% water, contain 2 to 3% protein, are with less than 1% almost fat free and low in calories (15 to 40 kcal per 100 g), and they contain fibre, many vitamins of the B group and vitamin D.

start-up phase, which is why it has not yet come into appearance in large quantities on the market. But the odds are in its favour.

**From wild mushroom to cultivated mushroom**

Unlike the mushrooms, the "exotics" are not grown on large patches, but on crop-production units in the form of substrate blocks, requiring a lot of effort and commitment, though. If you are going to introduce a new species onto the market you have to start studying specialist literature and the list of the mushrooms permitted by law. Then a suitable candidate must be sought in nature and it has to be evaluated, if the species that has not been cultivated so far will be attractive in taste. Only now efforts to its cultivation can be made.

This is done either by inoculating the substrate with tissue cultures or by spore germination. These spores and tissue cultures are added to a malt-agar growth medium in test tubes or petri dishes. If all the necessary conditions are met for germination, a mycelium will be the result. From now on the ambient conditions are deliberately modified to accelerate the growth and induce the formation of fruiting bodies.

**Often years of test phases**

The coordination of all parameters – optimum temperature, proper humidity, best source of nutrients, ideal ventilation – causes numerous test series, that

*Shiitake-culture (picture VSP)***Tips for preparing mushrooms**

Mushrooms are multifactorial foods; they can be boiled, steamed, fried, grilled, deep-fried, dried, frozen or pickled in oil and vinegar. (Some – such as champignons, oyster mushrooms and king oyster mushrooms – are even suitable for raw consumption.)

And they can also be consumed reheated; leftovers should be kept refrigerated and only for a short time and then be warmed up to at least 70 degrees Celsius.

Cultivated mushrooms can also be preserved without any difficulty. For deep-freezing either put them thinly sliced and raw into the freezer (for example, on a baking sheet), or steam them whole or sliced during 5 to 10 minutes without seasoning in a little extra virgin oil.

Mushrooms can also be pickled in oil and vinegar, with fresh herbs or spices according to your taste. Another form of preservation is drying.

*Agaricus-cultivating room (picture VSP)*

may take months and years. It is also important to work with different breeding lines, since their genetic characteristics show different resilience and frequencies of reproduction.

As soon as it is possible to produce complete life cycles for a particular mushroom in the laboratory and as soon as the mycelium forms fruiting bodies, you can proceed to the pilot phase. This requires a first-class and low-cost substrate, ideally from waste products of agriculture and forestry. Now it is time to check the acceptance by trial promotions. Only if these will be positive, then the industrial production can be started, accompanied by clever marketing for the new product. In other words: The success story of cultivated mushrooms has therefore not yet been written to the end! •

[www.champignons-suisses.ch](http://www.champignons-suisses.ch) and [www.pilzrezepte.ch](http://www.pilzrezepte.ch)

(Translation Current Concerns)