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THEORIES FOR THE FUTURE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

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Due to the crisis in Europe, there is no doubt that it is necessary to consider the future of the Union. Throughout the EU, national leaders, heads of institutions and even the citizens are accounting the possible future plans, the consequences and the steps forward to it. Some think that the EU has too much power, and sovereignty should return to the individual Member States, because the EU goes too far in formulating a common policy. Some others think that there should be a larger integration between the members, they urge the 'political union' and think about the EU as a future federal state. And there are of course the radical parties, who think that leaving the EU is the best solution to create a world where their country can maintain their independency, sovereignty and where they are able to develop.

One of the first calls for the more integrated Europe was a former British Prime Minister's opinion. Following the Second World War, Winston Churchill was convinced that only a united Europe could guarantee peace. He formulated his conclusions drawn from the lessons of history in his famous 'speech to the academic youth' held at the University of Zurich in 1946: "There is a remedy which would in a few years make all Europe free and happy. It is to re-create the European family, or as much of it as we can, and to provide it with a structure under which it can dwell in peace, in safety and in freedom. We must build a kind of United States of Europe."

In some particular point of views, formulating a closer EU common policy is a field of development of the individual countries. According to the last year's speech of the British prime minister, David Cameron about the EU membership, being a part of the Union is a great opportunity to decrease the gap between Member States, to stand up against the terrorism, the organized crime and is the way to assure the prosperity and welfare of the citizens. He believes that together the EU can have more power and influence to fight against these issues. Also a very current matter is the oil supply from Russia on which a great amount of EU countries depend. Against this dependence, the only solution is to guarantee the security and diversity of the energy supplies within the EU, he said.

Viviane Reding, the former European Commissioner for Justice, Fundamental Rights and Citizenship – in unity with David Cameron – stated that if the UK would leave the EU, EU is still going to be its main market, but they could not influence the EU regulation anymore about the single market. This statement could be applicable to the most of the Member States. She believes in a 'United States of Europe' in accordance with Churchill; José Manuel Barroso, the former President of the European Commission; Angela Merkel, Chancellor of Germany; Francois Hollande, the President of France and the European

Federalist Party, which is a new pan-European and federalist political party which advocates further integration of the European Union through the establishment of a democratic and federal Europe.

On the other hand, however there also exists an opponent group of people who does not agree with the deep integration within the EU. They are not urging the formulation of more common policies; they believe that a 'political union' or even the 'United States of Europe' is a step too far.

These people - usually referred as "euroscepticists" - are convinced that deepening the integration results a weaker Member State with less sovereignty and less independence. They also criticize the bureaucratic system of the EU, the absence of democratic legitimation and the unaccountable officials of it. They also miss the renewed referendum about staying in the Union or not, because anyone under the age of 55 has never had a say on anything related to Britain's relationship with the EU, according to them, it is not democratic.

There are two types of these people. Hard euroscepticists are in the opposition to membership or even the existence of the European Union as a matter of principle. The Europe of Freedom and Democracy group and the United Kingdom Independence Party in the European Parliament are typified by such parties.

Soft euroscepticists support the existence and membership of the European Union, but with opposition to specific EU policies, and opposition to a federal Europe. The European Conservatives and Reformists group, typified by centre-right parties, such as the British Conservative Party (with the leadership of David Cameron) are soft eurosceptic parties.

If we take a closer look on the recently accepted acts of the EU, we can easily say they only care about light-minded, airy issues, such as the notorious, informally called 'bendy banana law' from 1994 laying down quality standards for bananas (amended in 2006).

Nevertheless the EU formulated thousands of acts which made all our lives easier and our countries better, for instance the "roaming directive", which contains the insurance that the difference between roaming and national telephone prices should approach zero by 2015. Or for another example, the 2005/36 EC directive, which lays down the free movement of professionals, meaning that a person having professional qualifications has to have access to the same profession with the same rights as citizens.

As a conclusion, I can declare that there are more stronger and persuasive arguments on the deeper integration side, than on the eurosceptic side. Although in my home country, in Hungary only one third of the population supports the membership of the EU, I deeply believe that Hungary's national interest is best served in a well-functioning, open, flexible and adaptable European Union.

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