

Vicenza, 24 September 2014

**Italian Presidency of the EU, still some months to go and to act.
No excuses to be passive now!**

The Italian Presidency of the EU has been, as expected, mostly devoted to putting back on the track the institutions. The elections of the European Parliament, the new Commission and the launch of the programming period (with consequent delays of programmes and stand by situations) created a vacuum of power and representativeness. Let's admit that one could have hardly chosen a worse timing for Europe to be voiceless. Despite the usual pro-European attitude of the Italian positions, the Presidency did not manage to have, so far, any influence on the important emergency decisions that would have been needed for a long lasting effect on our present situation: programmes for employment and economy, immigration, the crisis in Ukraine. We can only be sorry for that. Certainly, Italy could have done more in its Presidency to steer the integration process of the EU and a single voice to address common problems. But, as said, the calendar of the institutions decided in another way.

But still, looking at the glass rather full than empty, there are still some four autumn months to go. The Parliament is working and the Commission – even if not still in place, expected to be operational on 1st November and after the final audition at the Parliament - is now more or less decided. We see the programmes starting. In short, the machinery is starting and moving. Therefore, there are now little excuses to be passive and not use all the possible efforts to raise and address problems and try to solve them.

Some months are ahead of us and should be wisely used. At the top of the Italian agenda is the issue of immigration, which – according to a recent survey presented in Rome mid of September - is among the highest causes of upcoming concern among Europeans. The problem is addressed only very marginally at the European level and the national plans are limited. Often local communities are left alone (with no means and guidance) to address the problems. The EU should develop a broad common policy on the matter since the flows of illegal immigration start by landing in place for then being spread freely all around all countries. Hot in the agenda is the European answer to the question of the crisis in Ukraine. The common understanding is that the answer given thanks to the sanctions against Russia are part a more global answer. Ukraine is an integral (not marginal) part of the European sphere of interest, and a more articulated answer, including a decisive support to accompany a stronger – in democratic terms [1] - Ukrainian State, should be adopted. Last but not least, Italy should play its vital role pro-European integration role as a convinced founding member of the EU. In this perspective a shared sense of European identity needs to be consolidated [2] . It is through integration that burning economic issues should be addressed. We remember here the European Citizens Initiative, proposed by the European Federalist Movement (New Deal for Europe) [3] which introduces, with clear options and solution, a possible way to follow to give competitiveness, sustainability and future to Europe.

The crisis is a crossroad. In a way or another, we'll get out of it. It is up to us to decide the road to follow. We hope that the strength and stability of Italy (not so common) these days, could pave the way towards the right direction and a place for us, European citizens, in the global and worldwide landscape.

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[1] ALDA is supporting the establishment of the Local Democracy Agency in Ukraine – Dnipropetrovsk (for information please see the news item about the [most recent mission in Ukraine](#), and support via the [project on GivenGain](#))

[2] See the programmes of ALDA and the Local Democracy Agencies to support local governance and citizens' participation in Europe and the Neighborhood on our [projects page](#)

[3] To support the ICE 'New Deal for Europe', visit and sign <http://www.newdeal4europe.eu>