



NEWSLETTER - DECEMBER 2009 - SEASON'S GREETINGS!

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EDITORIAL

REGIONAL CHRISTMAS PARABLE

On the morning of 27 November 2009, while the Muslims were celebrating Eid and the Christians were about to enter Advent, the Archangel José Manuel Durão Barroso came to bring the Good Tidings: "A new Commission has been born unto thee!"

Thereupon the fishermen of Galicia, Shetland and Brittany, the farmers of Andalusia and Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, the sailors of Bremen, Genoa and Gdansk, the wine growers of Tuscany, Aquitaine and La Rioja, the Swedish, Danish and Finnish innovators, the sugar cane planters from the faraway islands, the musicians of Scotland, Greece and Romania and the *pilotari* of the Basque Country, all hastened to the manger at Berlaymont.

They brought with them their ideas, their proposals, their faith in a new stage in European integration. All gazed in wonder at the grace of the newborn and trembled at the thought of its innocence and vulnerability.

They would not wish for another Herod - one of those who had plunged the world into crisis on account of their deeply flawed analyses - to decree another massacre of the Holy Innocents and slay the child and his admirers. A draft edict along these lines had been written in October 2009 and had even been illustrated by a distant descendent of Breughel the Elder and Breughel the Younger, but the Archangel had cast it aside. However, the Pharisees were still at large and no-one knew how far Governor Van Rompuy, recently appointed by the Council, would go to safeguard the hopes of the faithful of European integration or whether he would wash his hands of them and abandon them to the executioner!

All these Josephs who had hastened to Berlaymont had left their work unattended for several days - the beams of new houses, the wheels of new carts, their investment plans, their anti-crisis measures: would they soon be able to return to continue and complete their labours or, as in times past, would they have to consider fleeing to Egypt?

However, the Good Tidings had reached all corners of the Earth. Guided by the Twelve Stars, Caspar, Melchior and Balthazar, the Three Kings of the brotherhood of FOGAR, set forth to the Berlaymont Crib. They brought with them gold from America, frankincense from Asia and myrrh from Africa following a Doha round that had concluded in an agreement beneficial for all populations worldwide. Seeing such an influence, the Archangel and the Governor made the year 2010 of the Gregorian calendar a true Epiphany of the European Union.

This is the last editorial by Xavier Gizard as Secretary General of the CPMR. He extends his best wishes to one and all.

INTERVIEW

PAT COX WELCOMES THE NEW EU LEADERS

Pat Cox was member of the European Parliament from 1989 to 2004 and in 2002 he became its President until 2004. He is now the President of the European Movement international organisation (www.europeanmovement.eu) and he has been the main actor for the YES campaign in the second Irish Referendum on the Lisbon Treaty.

Enrico Mayrhofer: Mr Cox, you have been one of the key people during the Irish campaign to convince people to vote "YES" to the Lisbon Treaty. This Treaty just entered into force and two new personalities have been nominated as heads of the European Union. What do you think about Mr Van Rompuy and Baroness Ashton?

Pat Cox: The first thing I am pleased about is the fact that we have two people and not an argument between the 27 capital cities! This is already - in European terms - a positive outcome.

Secondly, I have to tell you that I have never met them. However, the echo that I have from people who personally know both very well, is very positive. In my opinion, Mr Van Rompuy and Baroness Ashton both have a high level of competence and we can rely on their competence to express itself in their period in office. There was a good deal of thought and discussion about the personality of the people that might be chosen in particular to lead the European Council. Therefore, I would belong to the school of thought that thinks the choice made is a positive choice; not just speaking of the person selected, but of the nature of the person and his or her personality.

EM: Mr Cox, what will change in the institutional architecture of the EU with these two new nominations?

PC: This is the first time to have such offices. Concerning Mr Van Rompuy, the Treaty is clear that this office is to chair Council meetings, to prepare the agenda, to try to represent the European Council between summits and to try to ensure that the work of the Council is well organised. It is equally important that someone who can do all this and be a voice for the Council should not be someone who would run the risk of ignoring or lording over the other institutions. And I think these issues of personality did not appear in the debate by accident.

As regards the role of the new High Representative for Foreign Policy, Baroness Ashton has a very high reputation in terms of personal competence. Moreover, she has already had the commercial dossier for the latter end of the recent Commission, although only on the commercial side of external relations. In my opinion, the greatest challenge that the Union faces more than she, is the extent to which we will find, or not, the political will to act together.

The new architecture will give us greater weight, if our political will chooses to exercise that weight collectively. And, specifically the important test will be how often will our larger capital cities chose a European preference rather than a bilateral preference for their expression of interest, when they deal with significant third countries, like United States, Russia, China, India, Brazil and so on.

EM: Mr Quatremer, who is the correspondent for the French newspaper "Liberation" in Brussels, said that this will probably be the last Treaty that our generation will see. As the President of the European Movement, are you as pessimistic as him or not?

PC: I am not pessimistic, but unlike a lot of other people, I am - as the French would say - "un vieux routier" when it comes to referendum campaigns. Since the fall of the Berlin Wall we have had four Treaties: the Treaty on European Union, which was a very significant one, and then Amsterdam, Nice, the failed Constitutional Treaty and now the Lisbon Treaty. There is no doubt that this is an important Treaty, but it is not the most significant one. However, certainly it has been the most complex and longest in its passage to birth because the winning of unanimity is more difficult in a more diverse and enlarged Union of 27. This suggests to me that that the way of making Treaties probably has found its final expression. If in future changes need to be made, they may well be more specific and incremental, and indicated by an exact need rather than more general and architectural.

enrico.mayrhofer@crpm.org

ARTICLE

WRITE YOUR LETTER TO SANTA ... "ECO MUNDO OCÉANS", EMBARK ON A JOURNEY AND DISCOVER MODERN ECOLOGY AT THE HEART OF THE MERCHANT NAVY

At this particularly bustling time when everybody is looking for a gift, here is one original idea: "Eco Mundo Océans". It's an entertaining and instructive board game on the environment for players of all ages from 7 to 77. Its aim is to raise awareness of current ecological issues and the conservation of the oceans. The game is an enjoyable way to learn all about the maritime world, while maintaining an element of fun. There are two versions designed to adapt to different levels of play (30 minutes for the short version or for children and 45 minutes for other players). A leaflet containing 800 questions & answers helps you get to grips with the basics of marine biology, everyday types of pollution and their solutions and the history of the oceans. "Eco Mundo Océans" is sponsored by the film-maker Jacques Perrin in view of his upcoming film "Oceans" to be released on 27 January 2010. The game also benefits from the scientific collaboration of the Natural History Museum of the City of Geneva in Switzerland. In this way, players are free to acquire a unique knowledge and most likely a real concern for the environment.

So if you're game enough, all you have to do is write to Santa!

<http://www.eco-mundo.com/>

Game exists in French only

EVENTS

14-17 December 2009, European Parliament Plenary Session, Strasbourg (FR)

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/activities/plenary/home.do?language=EN>

15 December 2009, Climate Leaders Summit organised by the Climate Group, COP 15, Copenhagen (DK)

<http://fr.cop15.dk/>

16 December 2009, Committee of the Regions special event during COP 15 "Mobilising citizens: regions and cities working together for climate protection, Copenhagen (DK) »

<http://www.cor.europa.eu/pages/EventTemplate.aspx?view=detail&id=fe9fcfe2-f707-44bf-bf38-0025e8b42e20>

13 January 2010, After the crisis, towards a sustainable growth model, EU Trade Union Institute, Brussels (BE)

<http://www.etui.org/en/Events/2010/January-13-Brussels-Conference-After-the-crisis-towards-a-sustainable-growth-model>

18-19 January 2010, Summit of the world's regions on food security, Dakar (SN)

<http://www.crpm.org/index.php?act=6,1,2,172>

18-21 January 2010, European Parliament Plenary Session, Strasbourg (FR)

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/activities/plenary/home.do?language=EN>

4 February 2010, Seminar on Transport and TEN in the Mediterranean, Murcia (ES)

<http://www.medregions.com/index.php?act=1,6>

9-11 February 2010, Plenary Session of Committee of the Regions

<http://www.cor.europa.eu/pages/EventTemplate.aspx?view=folder&id=87402c77-d94a-4381-95b0-5ee5b3ec2d2d&sm=87402c77-d94a-4381-95b0-5ee5b3ec2d2d>

10 February 2010, Seminar on Transport in the framework of the EU Council on Transport, A Coruña (ES)

<http://www.crpm.org/index.php?act=6>

15-16 February 2010, Meeting of the CPMR Political Bureau, Gijón (ES)

<http://www.crpm.org/index.php?act=6,1,2,169>

18-19 February 2010, CPMR Islands Commission workshop on transport, Bornholm (DK)

<http://www.islandscommission.org/en/index.php?act=2>

LEGAL NOTICE

Director of Publication : Xavier Gizard

Editor : Enrico Mayrhofer

To receive the TENOR, please send your e-mail to the.newsletter@crpm.org

