

Dear Josep,

Dear High Council Members,

Dear Colleagues and friends,

After eight years as President of EUI, the time has come to pack up and go. Cutting the rope and taking the road to the unknown is not easy. But I do believe that our governing bodies have taken a very wise decision in putting a ceiling to the term of the Principal. Innovation and fresh air come from the alternation and rotation of those in charge. I have been a staunch supporter of mobility in our administration, and the first rule of good governance is to practise what you preach!

These eight years have been fascinating years, at least for me. We may have differing thoughts on many things, but I believe that we all agree that this place is one of the most attractive and stimulating places of learning in Europe and probably in the world. Where can you find a place which is not only very international in character – this is not uncommon nowadays – but where there is no one dominant national culture? We are located in Italy and we all love this beautiful country, but we are not Italian. English is our main working language, but we are not British. And I do not think it

matters much if the President is French or Spanish - what matter is the balance that we have to keep between various academic cultures and traditions, balance between the various nationalities which make Europe, balance between the three authorities (and only three) listed by the Convention: the High Council, the Academic Council and the President who, for the first time I believe, are sitting together in the same room.

By construction, this institution is a blend of various cultural, academic and linguistic elements and it would betray its vocation if it was otherwise. Blending is not only a quantitative operation. When a tea or coffee trader tries to produce the best possible tea or coffee, he looks for the best varieties in order to get a unique taste that you do not find elsewhere. It is a daunting task indeed because so many variables have to be taken into consideration: the crops are not always of the same quality; the taste and needs of the consumer evolve; the market conditions are in permanent flux.

The situation at the EUI is not much different. I could elaborate and list the effects this has on an administrative, academic or research level. But it will take ages and I do not want to bore you with such a detailed examination. I will limit myself to providing

a few considerations around what I call the 4 C's that is: competition, challenges, change and community.

1. Competition: The Institute has for a long time considered itself as a unique institution. There is some truth in this view, as there is no equivalent university in the world as far as I know. But to be unique is not enough to survive in a competitive world. Every institution is unique in its own way, but has to compare itself with other institutions sharing the same objectives and aiming at the same target even if their institutional apparatus or *modus operandi* are different.

In today's world, economic factors including human capital are extremely mobile. There was a time when a British or French student applying to the EUI would have studied and graduated only in his/her country of origin - not to say in the place of birth. Today only a small minority of applicants have been educated exclusively in their country. Most of them have become academic travellers.

I was recently invited to participate in a conference in Hamburg where several young researchers were paper-givers. Europe and the US were their playing fields. I could not hide my satisfaction, however, when observing the breakdown of this small sample

group. With the exception of myself and of a former EUI professor, there was no special connection to the EUI. But at least 10 of them had been involved with the Badia as fellows, visiting students, participants in summer schools, etc...and all had fond memories of their experience. There is no doubt that the EUI is on the map.

But being on the map is not sufficient. Medieval and renaissance cities are still on the map. They are museums.

The EUI has to avoid being over self-satisfied. We must be proud of ourselves and we should not be ashamed of waving the banner of our successes and rankings. But this must go together with humility and anxiety. To be number one brings satisfaction. Remaining number one requires being permanently unsatisfied with things as they stand. There is always room for improvement.

But in order to beat the competition which today is not only national or European, but international - we need the appropriate means. I do not know of any university or centre of excellence at the top of world rankings which does not get the appropriate resources. Sometimes the EUI might seem costly to the Member

States. But as I have often underlined, the Member States pay only half of the bill. Our costs cannot be favourably compared to mass universities where library or administrative costs are distributed over many users. But I am ready to bet that we are less expensive than institutions comparable in terms of size, excellence and output. We are much cheaper than Max Planck Institutes, or Graduate Schools in America. We should be and we are very cautious in the use we make of public money, and indeed the auditors have always given full support to our financial management. Member States should never forget that excellence has a price, but that mediocrity is even more costly, in spite of the illusion that cuts might give at first sight.

2. Challenges. A certain number of challenges spring from this key feature that the EUI should address in order to remain ahead of the race. The first challenge is to be able to attract the best possible professors, researchers and fellows. This can be obtained if a condition is fulfilled – a condition which is rather simple to announce but difficult to achieve: Excellence.

When elected to this position, I declared that I was not interested in being the President of a mediocre institution. And I believed each

of our professors, researchers and fellows could fully subscribe to this. But excellence does not exist by *Ukase*. It requires first the appropriate material means: good working conditions, adequate grants and salaries, good or rather excellent library and IT services, efficient administration. Everything concurs to the creation of excellence. Nothing is indifferent or secondary.

Resources are important. They are not enough. We must be demanding with ourselves, with our students, with the administration. Scientific progress is made through challenging questions, programmes and methods. We do not help anybody by being too kind or too lenient. Facing the harsh reality, drawing lessons and taking decisions on the basis of evaluation is and will remain the key for the reputation of the place. I have great admiration for the way the American universities are challenging themselves all the time. It does not mean that we have to imitate them in a blind way. But we have a lot to learn from their capacity to look at the world as it is, rather than as it fits one's interest or comfort, as too often happens in Europe.

The **second** challenge is and will be to increase the pluralism and diversity which constitute a fundamental feature of the place. Pluralism is an important value in particular in Europe, a continent

which has multiplied at pleasure wars, conflicts and antagonisms by refusing pluralism. In our Institute I am not referring so much to cultural or national pluralism, which has always been a fundamental value of the place. I cannot recollect a single conflict based on nationality. I refer rather to the necessity for the Institute to look more and more beyond the European borders. Even if more than 50 nationalities are represented at EUI, Africa (with the exception of some Mediterranean countries) and Asia are as yet unexplored territories on the Institute map. It is urgent to address this issue which I personally regret not to have been able to tackle fully. The same could be said in relation to the social composition of our European intake. We have achieved a good gender balance at least for the researchers and fellows. But we are not representative at all of the ethnic diversity of Europe. Only a few of our students are the children of foreign migrants. We should have given more attention to this rising and promising generation. I am not talking of affirmative action. I only underline the necessity of paying more attention when selecting applicants.

Pluralism also means plurality of methods and approaches. I am not making a plea in favour of eclecticism and confusion. I am aware that not all methodological choices have equal value in

relation to a research question. But I do believe that there is not a single best way to look at the world in social sciences. Progress will come from confrontation between different approaches, not from the imposition of a preferred doctrine or methodology. Let me use the American example again but this time in a negative way: too much energy has been spent sometimes in fights and battles to impose one way of doing or thinking. Intellectual energy should be used for better objectives. Nothing can be more destructive for the life of a department than the battle for the absolute truth.

The **third** challenge is **professionalisation** and applies to everybody from researcher to administrative staff. This institute was created in a kind of void. There was no real model to imitate or emulate at the time. The concept of a doctoral school had practically no meaning in Europe and the only example of transnational administration was the European Community, something not very appropriate as a model for a university institution. The Institute has evolved in two directions: filling the empty box that a doctoral school was at the time; adjusting the community framework in order to avoid the red tape and *pesanteur* which today characterizes Brussels bureaucracy.

In both these directions, the challenge is to be everyday more efficient and professional. On the Academic side, it means preparing our researchers as well as possible for their professional life. It means doing more for them. It means that the researchers accept to be challenged and convinced that there is a life and a tough life after EUI. Completing a PhD is not enough. Completing an excellent PhD is not enough. Researchers with the help and support of their professors must learn how to present a paper, how to write it in English, how to submit a research project or an article in an international journal. This is part of the baggage that a student must travel with. Some departments have already gone a long way in this direction. But progress remains to be made. Our students should be at the top and at the forefront in this domain.

Professionalisation is also a key value and duty for our administration. There are various types of professionalisation according to the services provided. There are great variations in professional requirements from the Library to the Computing Services, to the Accounting Service. It is the fundamental role of the Heads of Service to keep updated and to introduce the

necessary reforms implied by a world in constant movement. They can't expect to convince their collaborators of the necessity for improvement, if they do not take the lead. But let me underline that the EUI administration has considerably improved its efficiency over the past years. There is certainly still room for improvement here and there. But the High Council should be aware that we have exhausted our capacity for doing more with less. Some services or individuals are already beyond their capacity to absorb the daily flow of demands and duties.

This brings me naturally to the third “C”: Change

One of my favourite quotations is by one rather famous local expert: Niccolò Machiavelli. In Chapter Six of “The Prince” he proposes the most illuminating interpretation of the difficulty to bring about change. “...it ought to be remembered that there is nothing more difficult to take in hand, more perilous to conduct, or more uncertain in its success, than to take the lead in the introduction of a new order to things. Because the innovator has for enemies all those who have done well under the old conditions, and lukewarm defenders in those who may do well under the new”.

However being aware of the perils and difficulty of change should not impede us from considering its imperious necessity. To paraphrase a famous motto “El cambio o la muerte”!

Not to adjust to the tremendous transformations of the world is and would be a deadly blow for the Institute both on the Academic and the Administrative side. I understand that we all like the comfort of the “*acquis*” and the security of certainty over the uncertain benefits of change. I also understand that nobody likes to change for the worse. But the preference for immobility is a call for crisis or decrepitude. Change is easier to swallow and digest if it is incremental and well-prepared. During all these years together, a lot of changes have been introduced and some might think that it is time for a rest. This would be a misleading conclusion in our ever-changing world and a mistaken view at a time a new President takes office. Any new person in charge comes with new ideas, new proposals, new style and I know that Josep Borrell will continue in that direction. He might not share some of the choices which have been made and it is rather natural that they be challenged: It is precisely the value of alternation to reconsider and re-assess the past, including the recent past.

The crucial point is to keep objectives in mind and be aware of the challenges. There are always several ways of addressing an issue. Changes might be limited by the present financial constraints but at the same time these constraints might trigger creative solutions and anyway should not prevent thoughts about the future. Let's imagine for one minute that we are richer than we presently are, and dream about the initiatives that we could take. You might remember the song from the famous musical **Fiddler on the Roof** – “If I were a rich man”; so let us imagine a brighter future.

If I were a rich man, I would strengthen the post-doc programmes by creating after the Jean Monnet and Max Weber programmes a new set of fellowships for the Global Governance Programme. The demand for post-doc fellowships is so huge and the supply so small that it is fundamental to initiate such a process.

If I were a rich man, I would considerably strengthen our offer in international relations and in international/European law in order to cover and/or strengthen areas such as climate change and environmental issues, international trade, intellectual property, financial regulations, international standards and norms.

If I were a rich man, I would dream of additional chairs in the History and Economics department in order to create bridges between these disciplines and the other departments. These chairs should be different from the usual chairs by being joint chairs between two departments.

Obviously I could go on and on but we cannot travel “eyes wide shut”. The reality is not as bright as in the dream. But there is nothing to prevent us from taking the first step in one direction or one another by mobilizing new energies and resources. The funding for research by the European Commission is increasing and should increase even further by 2013. We should not be taken by surprise.

Finally my last “C” is for Community-building. A few weeks ago, on my way to Florence airport, my attention was attracted by an advertisement. I do not remember what the product offered to the consumer was. But I was struck by the wording “Youniverse”. The individual becomes the universe, is the universe. This **extreme** view of individualism is a recipe for failure. No institution could survive such a paradigm.

One of the strengths and at the same time one of the weaknesses of the EUI derives from the fact that the academic body is made up of “birds of passage”. It is not so much a problem when professors stay 8 or 10 years, but it is more difficult to retain junior professors if they receive an alternative offer after only a few years at the Institute.

The only way to compensate for this relatively high turnover is to create a community feeling among all those who contribute to Institute life. Jean Monnet used to say that nothing is possible without the contribution of individuals but that nothing is lasting without the Institutions.

We have no other alternative than, day after day, to strengthen our institution, our Alma Mater. My economist friends, who see the principle of self-interest as the central paradigm, would certainly tell me: “What kind of incentives do you offer in order to attain this objective?”. I have no material objective to propose and I am sorry about this. But I will repeat what I said years ago: Who is interested in being part of a mediocre institution?

Even if there was no altruistic motivation, even if the idea of institutional commitment was foreign to our minds, the mere and crude self-interest would justify giving - and giving a lot to the community. We are all individually better off if our community works together, goes in the same direction, increases its reputation and prestige.

Building a community also means that the Member States and the European Union consider this Institute as their institute, an Institute which does not belong to anybody but is the common property of all. Dear High Council Members, do not consider yourselves only as shareholders but more like stakeholders who care for their unique child in common. In spite of being an intergovernmental institution in legal terms, it must be much more for each of you. It is a creature which is worthy of attention, dedication and love. I think it is a mistake to clip the wings of the bird; it should be given the possibility to be a high-flyer. The right strategy is rather to exploit the full potentiality of the Institute and the cost of your contribution, even if this means marginal additional expenses: economically speaking any country whose budgetary contribution is fixed, can only gain if it adds a few doctoral or post-doctoral fellowships, for instance.

Let me come to the conclusion, as you might have the impression that this sermon has been long enough!

I will only say, now it is time to leave this place, that in spite of the heavy work, in spite of the unavoidable hurdles of this position, I have experienced at the Institute the very best years of my life first as a scholar, and then as an academic manager. As I said at the beginning, there are very few places which offer so much satisfaction and this thanks to you all. Thanks to the professors who make the reputation of the place, to the administration - the backbone of this fragile creature, to the researchers and fellows who year after year bring the fresh and invigorating blood necessary to our continuous rejuvenation.

I am happy to pass the baton to Josep; he comes with a different professional experience which will add and complement those of past presidents, and I am sure that he will be an excellent captain of the rowing team. Let me wish you all well, but let me wish in particular a long and successful life to our beloved Institute.