

THE EUROPEAN UNION: THE UNFINISHED WORKS OF AN ELUSIVE « EVER-CLOSER UNION »

Eurosceptics point to the coming end of a European Union that has been walking on its head for decades, producing mountains of **red tape** and an array of **minute regulations** constraining every walk of life and production in Europe, whereas the foundations of the core institutions have been left unfinished.

Furthermore, Eurosceptics clamor that the **elitism** of the **Eurocrats**, who produce endless trains of regulations, is beyond the reach and control of the European **democracies**.

Thus, flourishing **populist parties** throughout Europe call for a return to **national borders** and to the control of the destinies of **the peoples** through their **national parliaments**.

The mistrust of the populist parties and the “reluctant Europeans” has been aggravated over the last decades by the unchecked mobility within the passport-free **Shengen area**, the **euro crisis**, the possibility of a **Grexit**, the **asylum-seekers** crisis from the Middle East and Africa, and the looming referendum in the United Kingdom over a **Brixit**, after the vote in favor of a secession of **Catalonia** in Spain.

More generally, the Eurosceptics’ feeling is that the European construction has been confiscated from them by an

elite of intellectuals, sitting at the **European Commission** in Brussels or at the **European Parliament** in Strasbourg.

Under these circumstances, time is running short for settling the unfinished works that have been opened by the European Union, such as the **euro currency**, **migration policies**, common foreign policies, common defense or military forces. The European Union is at the crossroads: 1) it has largely opened up to economic liberalism under British influence and could choose to remain a mere economic **free-trade zone** in an ever-**enlarged** Europe; 2) it could also decide to **deepen** its integration to lay down the **core of a federalist union** by defining **supranational** rules in terms of **constitutional**, **economic** and **fiscal** policies; 3) it could simply disintegrate with a return to **national borders** and **protectionism**.

What most contemporary Europeans fail to heed is that their continent has lived in **peace** for the past seventy years, which has been an anomaly in that part of the world where conflicts devastated **European empires** and **Nation-States** every forty years or so, since the end of the Roman Empire.

The current crisis of the European construction is not without reminding the failure of the project that the **Carolingian** elite had in mind for the reconstruction of the western part of the **Roman Empire**: the overstretched **dreams** of an elite out of touch with mere **realities**.