

Beat: Politics

THE BORDERS WILL REOPEN BECAUSE THEY ARE VITAL FOR OUR PEOPLES

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USPA NEWS - Over a billion people are now confined. The exchanges are stopped; savings stalled. To prevent a health threat from turning into a global and deadly political crisis, we will have to meet major challenges, as unexpected as they are significant. Here are seven:

We publish the translation of Jean Dominique Giuliani's editorial about the next perspectives offered to the European Union, after the Coronavirus outbreak will be over, after few weeks, or months. Jean Dominique Giuliani is the President of The Foundation Schuman.

* The extraordinary restriction of freedoms constituted by the confinement and cessation of all activities makes people aware of the seriousness of the issue. We can only recommend a moderate use of this ploy. The whole history of humanity reminds us that fear is a bad adviser and that it can easily overcome its propagators. In this register one will note besides the usual excesses of the demagogues who claim always more. But, in a democracy, can we durably compel citizens to stay at home and to give up the first freedom, that of coming and going? Using force?-----

* The importance assumed by the experts undoubtedly reflects the regrettable devaluation of public speaking. Relying on them and allowing them their own expression, dangerously increases it. They will quickly be divided on diagnosis and remedies; they will quickly be overwhelmed by the role of co-managers that we want them to play. Their opinion should be taken into account among other considerations. The same goes for health as for the rest. The responsibility of leaders is often overwhelming. It must be assumed and can in fact only be shared with citizens directly.

* The collective guarantee must not exclude individual responsibility. The slogan "the State will pay" which some Europeans very quickly launched, opposed a concept probably more resilient, associating the community and the individuals in the safeguard of the economy, the exchanges and our model.

The lack of responsibility of citizens, the abuse of the right of withdrawal or the precautionary principle must be avoided at all costs or else a crisis will cause even more social damage.

While it is essential to protect the most exposed, the most fragile and the most vulnerable, the others must accept their share of risk.

Let us always remember that one of the promises - unfulfilled - of totalitarianism has always been mothering as risk reduction, the abandonment of individual responsibility in the name of collective interest. We know the outcome: ruin without freedom.

* We live in a century of emotions. Perhaps we miss it and take every opportunity to vibrate together for a shared cause. These are always moments of enthusiasm. However, it will be necessary to be wary of excesses which cloud judgment.

With each disaster, citizens ignite to celebrate the courage of those on the front line. After the wave of attacks in 2015 and 2016, our heroes were the police; after the Notre Dame fire, it was the firefighters; they are often our soldiers; today it's the medical profession. These institutions employ exceptional people of skill, courage, selflessness and human qualities. Do we need disasters to realize this and pay tribute to them?-----

Our old democracies, which we all too often say are tired, are animated by devoted, admirable people, committed to the general interest, and often ready to do anything to help their neighbor. The emotion of a moment should not make him forget and hide the need to think of himself as a member and actor of a true community of shared values "à" at all times.

* Securities, like viruses, do not have passports. European states, like all the others, wanted to reassure their citizens by closing their borders. This crisis will demonstrate that they were wrong and that it did not protect them from anything, not even their selfishness! This bad reflex is against the rules and the spirit of the European Union.-----

The nationalist withdrawal, a dream opportunity for demagogues, threatens European construction. Europeans should have developed a concerted response to the virus: containment or not, sharing and pooling of tests and masks, etc. Until they do, the steps they take will be imperfect. Confining the population here, but not with the neighbor, preferring collective immunity there and attacking the virus head-on elsewhere, are errors that denote both the difficulty of the task of the rulers and their dismay. We knew that solidarity between Europeans had regressed, we could not measure how much!

They will need a strong gesture to restore confidence and hope to their fellow citizens: Why not an in vivo European Council this March

26, with the physical presence of the heads of state and government, rather than an inglorious and probably inconclusive exercise of videoconference? This would make it possible to abandon the enormous diplomatic-technocratic machinery which now accompanies these Councils and to finally give the opportunity to European leaders to confer personally and to decide politically together. It would be a beautiful symbol while on the walls, fences and barbed wire that multiply on the planet we are now asked to add barriers between beings.-----

* This lesson also applies to the G7. The fact that the American president has already decided not to physically welcome his counterparts next June shows how much the United States has given up its leadership and how little it cares about international cooperation. Without it, there is little chance of winning the battle against the virus from China.

The borders will reopen and trade will resume because they are vital for our peoples. In addition, the virus will also hit the poorest countries. Only a real concerted global effort will therefore make it possible to eradicate it by coordinating containment measures, sharing drugs and pooling medical resources.

Europe could take the initiative. It would be in keeping with his interest and his values.

*The history of our countries is punctuated by fateful choices of our leaders, analyzed retrospectively without complacency. The extent of the economic and financial crisis, now inevitable, depends on the decisions they will take in the days to come. Sooner or later, we will have to start working again and pay the addition of the sudden stop of production. The slogan "Stay at home" should be replaced by the slogan "Roll up our sleeves" and involve all stakeholders in the recovery of the European economy, which does not depend only on the Central Bank, the European Council or the Commission. The conditions under which we can start working again must not be decided in the same confusion as those under which we have been deprived of it. They must be concerted, at least across the continent and, if possible, beyond. Support measures and recovery plans must add up, not compete. This time we will really have to stick together." Jean Dominique Schuman, President of Fondation Schuman, stated in his address, over the next perspective of European Union, after the end of COVID-19 outbreak.

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