



## Europe at a crossroad

Time to complete the European political unity

# EUROPE AT A CROSSROAD: TIME TO COMPLETE THE EUROPEAN POLITICAL UNITY

Friday, 16 June 2017 | 18.30 – 20.30

Congreso de los Diputados, Madrid

## Report of the event

*Co-organised with:*



*In cooperation with*



## Programme

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17:00	OPENING
17:30	<p><i>Welcome greetings by</i></p> <p><b>EUGENIO NASARRE</b>, President of the Spanish Council of the European Movement</p> <p><b>PABLO FAURA</b>, President of Unión de Europeístas y Federalistas Europeos (UEF Spain)</p> <p><b>ALEJANDRO PEINADO GARCÍA</b>, President of Jóvenes Europeos Federalistas (JEF Spain)</p>
17:45-18:00	<p>KEY-NOTE SPEECH: <i>EUROPE AT A CROSSROAD – TIME TO COMPLETE THE EUROPEAN POLITICAL UNITY</i></p> <p><b>ÍÑIGO MÉNDEZ DE VIGO</b>, Minister for Education, Culture and Sports, Spokesman of the Spanish Government</p>
18:00 – 19:15	<p>“ECONOMIC GROWTH, SECURITY, MIGRATION: WHICH EUROPEAN SOLUTIONS?”</p> <p><i>With interventions by</i></p> <p><b>JOAQUÍN ALMUNIA</b>, former Vice-President of the European Commission</p> <p><b>LUIS GARICANO</b>, Vice-President of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE) Party, responsible for Economy and Jobs at Ciudadanos</p> <p><b>ELMAR BROK</b>, Member of the European Parliament, Co-Chair of the Spinelli Group and President of the Union of European Federalists (UEF)</p> <p><b>BRANDO BENIFEI</b>, Member of the European Parliament, Board of The Spinelli Group</p> <p><b>ENRIQUE CALVET CHAMBON</b>, Member of the European Parliament, member of the Federal Committee of the Union of European Federalists</p> <p><b>PAULA SCHMID</b>, International officer, JEF Spain</p> <p><i>Debate moderated by:</i></p> <p><b>CARMEN ENRÍQUEZ</b>, journalist and writer, Televisión Española</p> <p><i>Topics for discussion</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>How to resume plans towards fiscal and economic integration to make the monetary union stronger, more competitive and bring European economy back to grow?</i></li><li>• <i>How to develop European security capabilities to face growing cross-border terrorist threats?</i></li><li>• <i>How to face the migration challenge with European solutions?</i></li><li>• <i>How to make Europe secure in today's more instable world?</i></li></ul>
19.15 – 20:30	<p>“EUROPE’S FUTURE AS POLITICAL PROJECT: TOWARDS A FEDERAL UNION?”</p> <p><i>With interventions by</i></p> <p><b>DANUTA HÜBNER</b>, Chair of the European Parliament Constitutional Affairs Committee, Board of The Spinelli Group</p> <p><b>JOSEP BORRELL</b>, former President of the European Parliament</p> <p><b>ANA BOTELLA GÓMEZ</b>, Member of the Spanish Parliament, Socialist Parliamentary Group, member of the Committees on Economy, Home Affairs and Defense</p> <p><b>FERNANDO MAURA</b>, Member of the Spanish Parliament, Spokesperson of Ciudadanos Parliamentary Group for European and Foreign Affairs</p>

**FRANCISCO ALDECOA**, Professor of International Relations, Universidad Complutense de Madrid

**IGNACIO MOLINA**, Senior Researcher at the Elcano Royal Institute and Professor of Politics and International Relations, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid

*Debate moderated by:*

**ANNA BOSCH**, International Editor, Televisión Española

*Topics for discussion*

- *How to relaunch the European political project to consolidate the European Union following Brexit?*
- *How can diverging views among Member States on the future direction of the European Union's integration be reconciled?*
- *Reforms within the EU Treaties or reform of the EU Treaties?*



More than 200 people participated in the event organised by The Spinelli Group at the Spanish Congress of Deputies on 16 June 2017. Speakers debated proposals on the transformation the EU will undergo in the coming years in order to move closer to its citizens and further integrate to meet its current challenges. During the event, speakers paid a tribute to former German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, an exceptional European who died on the same day.

**ÍÑIGO MÉNDEZ DE VIGO**, Spanish Minister for Education, Culture and Sports, Spokesman of the Spanish Government

Mr. Méndez de Vigo devoted his keynote speech to the remembrance of German Chancellor Helmut Kohl and his great importance in the history of the European Union. Chancellor Kohl had the historical merit of re-uniting Germany and anchoring Germany to Europe by pushing for the introduction of the single currency in the second half of the 1990s. In the context of today's European politics, Helmut Kohl's experience should encourage current policy-makers to keep fighting for Europe despite its challenges and its enemies, because at the end it will turn out to be the right choice.



**The Spinelli Group** @SpinelliGroup · Jun 16  
 .@IMendezdeVigo and @ElmarBrok\_MEP remembering Helmut Kohl  
 (03.04.1930-16.06.2017), an exceptional European. #HacemosEuropa





**ELMAR BROK**, Member of the European Parliament, Co-Chair of The Spinelli Group in the European Parliament and President of the Union of European Federalists (UEF)

At the beginning of his intervention, Mr. Elmar Brok added his own tribute to the memory of Helmut Kohl. He shared with the public some impressions of his long-lasting personal friendship with the former Chancellor and he mentioned in particular how much Kohl was determined to push for the introduction of the single currency despite many political constraints. That was, according to Mr. Brok, an example of political bravery that should nowadays be imitated for the sake of the future of Europe.

Coming to the current European political context, Mr. Brok acknowledged Donald Trump's indirect role in the relaunch of a positive political momentum for Europe's unity. While Trump's administration expressed the wish to negotiate trade agreements individually with EU Member States, the latter should reject this approach as they will be stronger and obtain much more by sticking to each other. They should do the same in other domains as well, Mr. Brok added. Indeed, as terrorism is an international issue, tackling it at EU level is the least that Member States can do. In spite of repeated terrorist attacks on European territory, Member States still fail to trust each other enough to pool intelligence, but they should not need any more evidence that they must start to do so.

**The Spinelli Group** @SpinelliGroup · Jun 16  
 .@ElmarBrok\_MEP: "Member-states should give Europe instruments to solve current issues. Alone they will fail." #Terrorism #HacemosEuropa

**JOAQUÍN ALMUNIA**, Former Vice-President of the European Commission

Mr. Almunia insisted on the importance of a European approach to migration and integration policies in today's European context. He also reminded the public how common security policies are key to deliver on the protection of European citizens and, at economic level, on sustainable growth.



**LUIS GARICANO**, Vice-President of ALDE Party, responsible for Economy and Jobs at Ciudadanos

Mr. Garicano argued that Brexit and Trump have been a «catharsis» for Europe and a vaccination against populism. He explained that, although he was not of the idea that Brexit would be an opportunity for the EU at the beginning, he now sees potentiality for a positive after-Brexit European political process, which, in his view, should include bold steps such as the creation of a Schengen area for the police staff. In addition, concrete measures should be adopted in the fiscal and economic integration. As long as there won't be a fiscal

union and a central institution backing European banks in case of crises, the EU will be an imperfect Union. It would be like «having the foundations, but not the rest of the house».

**BRANDO BENIFEI**, Member of the European Parliament, Board of The Spinelli Group

Mr. Benifei expressed his wish that the many good ideas that are now circulating about the way forward for European integration will have a concrete follow up in the EU institutions. Supranational institutions are the right level for planning and decision-making, because those are the only institutions in Europe that can implement long-term strategies. Indeed, recurring national cycles force the political debate to focus on the short term, becoming thus an obstacle to taking the right decisions for Europe's future. Mr. Benifei also called for the European Parliament to bring its proposals on the future of the EU directly to the citizens and make sure that they are as much informed as possible on who wants to reform Europe and how. The debate on the future of Europe, he concluded, should not be left to the Heads of State and Government, as they would mainly propose short-sighted intergovernmental recipes.



**ENRIQUE CALVET CHAMBÓN**, Member of the European Parliament, member of the Federal Committee of the Union of European Federalists

Mr. Calvet Chambón contributed to the remembrance of Helmut Kohl by reminding the public the symbolic importance of the *Geste de Verdun*, when he appeared hand in hand with former French President François Mitterrand in sign of the Franco-German reconciliation in 1984. Ever since, Mr. Calvet Chambon said, that moment is a symbol of the European project, a project that should be completed. As a matter of urgency, the EU needs single migration, asylum, security, and defence policies. Priority should also be given to the creation of a Eurozone minister and treasury, as there can't be any proper Economic and Monetary Union without political union.

 **The Spinelli Group** @SpinelliGroup · Jun 16  
.@EnriqueCalvet: If we want a stronger Europe, we need a single migration, asylum, security, military and defence policies. #HacemosEuropa

**DANUTA HÜBNER**, Chair of the European Parliament Constitutional Affairs Committee, Board of The Spinelli Group

Mrs. Hübner noted that the current Treaties are obsolete as regards democratic representation. While a reform of the EU's fundamental law will be necessary soon, the departure of the United Kingdom from the EU could have provided a window of opportunity for the creation of European transnational for European elections, as the European Parliament will need to make a proposal on what to do with the seats which will be freed



by British MEPs. Mrs. Hübner nonetheless noted that the project has raised great opposition. According to her, transnational lists will be a reality only when citizens will call on their governments to provide them with this tool of genuine European democratic participation. Moreover, she voiced out federalists' frustration. All federalists know that Europe will become a federation sooner or later, but so much time is being wasted in these years due to lack of solidarity and short-sighted vision of the Member States. Anyhow, she added, if a treaty change procedure is to be triggered, *"we should not allow governments like the Polish one to have the monopoly of the future text, or the European project would be seriously endangered"*.



**JOSEP BORRELL**, former President of the European Parliament

In his intervention, Mr. Borrell emphasised the opportunities that the result of the British referendum on EU membership can provide for the European Union. Indeed, that referendum generated a new awareness among Member States and citizens on the importance of the European project, thus giving a new impulse to EU integration.

**ANA BOTELLA GÓMEZ**, Member of the Spanish Parliament, Socialist Parliamentary Group, member of the Committees on Economy, Home Affairs and Defense

Mrs. Botella Gómez insisted on the historical importance of Spinelli's manifesto as it includes ideas that are still relevant for the EU and essential for its future. Although the text was written in the darkest years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it embodies the hope of European unity and integration that should be kept alive nowadays. As a member of the Spanish Parliament, Mrs. Botella Gómez recalled the importance, in a European perspective, of daily cooperation and exchange of views among EU national parliaments.



**FERNANDO MAURA**, Member of the Spanish Parliament, Spokesperson of Ciudadanos parliamentary group for European and Foreign Affairs

Mr. Maura underlined the need for those who believe in a federal Europe to bring the debate on the future of Europe to the broad public. That is the way to concretise for real the many proposals that federalists put forward for a better Europe.



**FRANCISCO ALDECOA**, Professor of International Relations,  
Universidad Complutense de Madrid

Prof. Aldecoa presented a critical assessment of some historical achievements of the European project and how their supporters won tough political battles by pushing for them despite many political constraints. What professor Aldecoa described is indeed a good lesson for nowadays' European federalists and pro-Europeans: having the right vision for the future of the EU is not enough, if it is not propelled by political will and engaged activists.



**IGNACIO MOLINA**, Senior Researcher at the Elcano Royal Institute  
and Professor of Politics and International Relations at Universidad  
Autónoma de Madrid

According to Prof. Molina, although Spain is a pro-European country, its national parliament seems to remain anchored to a national perspective. This, he explained, is a problem common to national parliaments all around Europe, which still lack a genuine European perspective in their decision-making. In this sense, national politics should be “Europeanised” and, in parallel, the European Commission should become more political.

**ALEJANDRO PEINADO GARCÍA**, President of Jóvenes Europeos  
Federalistas (JEF Spain)

Mr. Peinado Garcia underlined the fundamental role in the involvement of young Europeans in the debate on the future of Europe. As president of the Spanish section of the young European federalists, he is convinced that the young generation will be the one which will finally achieve the creation the United States of Europe.

