PASSION FOR EUROPE
Rediscovering the European common good

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Passion for Europe 2022

Group Discussion Take-Aways:

On challenges:

- **Peace is the major concern**. Slow recognition that what is happening is unjust expressing itself as anger. Principle of subsidiarity should have been more highlighted. The reason of Brexit is largely the feeling of disenfranchisement. The EU could give more weight to the local level.

- **Demonization of others**, even technology, is a challenge as well. There is inequality of politics in the EU (top-down between Western and Eastern).

- What's the current **definition of democracy**? What are we defending exactly?
- **Rebuilding democracy** = rebuilding common good, common citizenship underlining not only our rights but our obligations. We face a constant impoorishing of language, we seem lost in translation. So, let's find a "*New art of conversation*" that could be a tool of defining legal principles and values among 27 societies.

- The West is looking at Eastern in a missionary spirit (and not within the dialogue of equal). The sense of **economic frustration** (Central, Eastern Europe) in 2008 that couldn't promise stability not only in the founding members but also in the new-comers. It appeared like a 'broken promise'. New liberalism faded in the economies.

- The **fear of a blooming technology** that overwhelms all spheres of our democracy and undermine it, imporishes the value of our acts and our language that no longer communicates. So, can we still legislate what we care about? How to legislate, considering that law should be the "noble expression of democracy"? How to legislate to lower the level of violence in acts and inside the language?

- Beyond legally stated values, there is a **lack of a common understanding** of our purpose of being together.
- The fast development and ubiquitous adoption of interconnected digital technologies brings unknown impacts to thinking, emotions and behaviors as individuals and society. It brings new unknown effects to our psychological and mental health that evolve faster than our ability to perceive and deal with them effectively.

- The **populism as a cry** for authenticity because Europe was very passive.
- **Autocrats have a manual for the regime change** and it works. And if we do not intervene soon, autocracy will come. *It's a war between UA and RF, but it's a war between democracy and authocracy (Ursula von den Leyen).*

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- And technology? We have to distinguish aim we would like to achieve in terms of technology. On the other hand, which kind of mechanism we are going to use in order to regulate properly? How could the law intervene in terms of digitalization process?
- The digital tools are not the problem. It's the way you use them.

On values:

- Europe has no taste in terms of values. We need to ask ourselves – what should be our values instead of 'knowing our values in advance'? **What values should we protect? Who decides on what the European values are?**

- **Relations between the Church and political power** and political views of what is perceived by church and political system paradigm (immigration: the church can be having inclusive approach, but many politicians being Catholic have totally different point of view. So, who takes the responsibility?)

- **Being individual is good but it is never separated being part of the community** helping to develop your identity and equip more to integrate with others.

- **Not the values missing, but vision**. We need to give time to younger democracies. How much tension are you able to carry while waiting?

On tools and remedies:

- Democracy should not be taken for granted. **Democracy is a conversation**, not ignoring the other one but keeping the dialogue. Conversation doesn't mean the one that does have the power has to grab that power.

- **Democracy is the mechanism for mediation**, as a never-ending process, to be always built-up.

- **European democracy is based on the rule of law** being its strength. Anticipating better future challenges and developing new laws should be prioritized on the European level instead of waiting the threats to appear and then – trying to regulate them.

- **Christians have to concentrate on fraternity.** We need to insist on dialogue being the key.

- **Christians can bring hope.** As Christians, we need to become more vocal and better for what we are for and provide both hope and tangible alternatives to current problems of society. **Hope** is the catalyst for change and we don't need to change much to become better. **Solidarity** in action is a great starting point.

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- **We need to shape our mind on what we want**. We need **Faith** but not blindly, within reason, exactly at the same way you should not blindly take what the institutions tell you.
- Moral rearmament could especially help in choosing the right resources (information) and keeping us awake (being able to criticize). However, the **spiritual leadership should keep the message** and be open to developments (be flexible).

- **We have to create spaces for encounter & cooperation** to be able to create conversation, dialogue and listening as a key tool to make democracy better**. We need to invest into intermediate actions in society in between elections.** As individuals and community, we need to seed actions to connect and collaborate with each other, by opening channels to listen, discuss and help around issues of public interest.

- We, as Christians, can have a role in it **via fostering vocation for opening spaces of dialogue**. Furthermore, we should use the momentum of present external threats to democracy as a uniting purpose and also as a responsibility to come up with new ways to defend it.

- Digital democracy remains an illusion with many challenges. It can be improved due to changes in the technology because there are always ways how to interfere and influence (direct democracy). We need spiritual leadership in this process as well.
- As citizens, **ask institutions that they keep an eye on who controls the data** and the scalability of digital. Ask institutions, companies and civil society to educate across all levels of society about the risks of digital and foster behaviours of educating oneself about the sources of information, about undesired effects, addictions, mental disorders, digital pollution, etc.

- **Education can bring back trust**. It is a way to provide a shared reality.

- **The Church can bring lots of values in acting and by learning from its mistakes**. By bringing sense of responsibility, trust, and engagement in private and public spheres; re-building society within Europe and abroad, among the "family of people" .
- We should **create a kind of platform in the EU** (channel) in which it is explained every kind of word inside the Europe.

- **As Christians – we have to be at the frontline**, we have to engage, to have higher responsibility. Christians should be the soul of Europe.