

Things are improving, says President Juncker. Time to make the weakest feel it, we say!

In his annual speech on the State of the Union the Commission President Juncker asserts an economic improvement, a stopping blow to far-right populism, a window of opportunity and a need to relaunch the European project.

For the European Civic Forum this relaunch can only be grounded on equality, solidarity, social inclusiveness and democracy. The way these values are translated into public policies at local, national and European level simultaneously is crucial, as these three levels are so closely linked for all of us living on the EU territory.

With economic growth back and massive investment plans on track, how will the European institutions bring back equality, while the last ten years' crisis management has dramatically increased inequalities?

What kind of solidarity do the European institutions propose to curb the social, economic and democratic imbalances among territories and between member states, in order to fulfil the promises of the European project?

How to rebuild trust in democracy as *"the worst form of government, except for all the others"* when the institutional practice denies more than often peoples' capacity to be involved in decision making concerning the crucial issues that affect them directly?

As long as citizens are called to participate in a competition of all against all, how can the value of inclusiveness be at the core of the EU social project?

To us, the scenario for the future of Europe must urgently answer these four questions in coherence with the claimed European values. These values must impulse strong measures and be readable in financial choices.

Missing these points goes against the European promise and paves the way to reactionary populist forces which build collective identity on exclusion.

Beyond State of the Union discourse, Equality, Solidarity, Inclusive policies, Democracy are needed to bring the wind on peoples' sails.

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