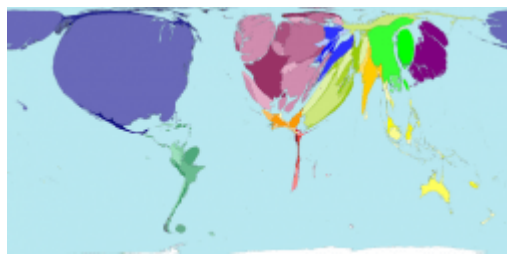


THINGS OF EUROPE

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This is the second time I've come to Donosti to attend a summer course offered by the University of the Basque Country. Speakers were Benita Ferrero-Waldner and Michel Camdessus, Araceli Mangas, Francesc Morata, Daniel Innerarity, Josep Borell, Cristobal Montoro, Mario Fernández, Eduardo Rojo, Victor Renem José Manuel González Páramo, Julio Pérez Díaz, Lluís Bassatz, and Ignacio Torreblanca.

Ferrero-Waldner was a European Commission Commissioner for Foreign Affairs, she is from the European People's Party family and, according to political scientist Simon Hix, "her political positions in right-left terms are to the right of Barroso." Benita Ferrero-Waldner presented a decalogue of instruments to face European challenges such as the financial crisis, climate change, energy and demography. Among the decalogue, it is surprising that he mentions a tax increase to reduce the systemic risk of the economy, something that traditionally could be said to be a demand of the left. Fully identifies with an [article by Jürgen Habermas in Die Zeit](#), which, among other topics, talks about a federal Europe and greater control of the financial sector (greater transparency of Hedge Funds, greater control of the stock markets, of Rating agencies, elimination of speculative instruments that are harmful to the economy, taxes on economic transactions, etc). *How the speech has changed in just two years! Anyone would have been called a communist if they had proposed it in the middle of the Bush era!*

The rest of the speeches followed the same line. Europe is not bad, we have enormous weight in economic, financial, and political terms. 38% of the United Nations budget is paid for by the EU, it carries out 2/5 of the peace missions under its mandate and pays for 50% of development aid in the world. The main problem is that it does not take advantage of its influence capacity by insisting on continuing with the fragmentation of its policies and unleashing an anti-European discourse on the part of the politicians of the EU states. In my opinion to camouflage their disabilities in their policies at the state level. A big problem is the ignorance of the EU. There is talk that Europe has proposed this or that, but general public opinion does not understand the role of each institution or of the parties. Who proposes? What institution, what party? What should governments and parties do so that citizens and peoples begin to take an interest in European politics as well as the media?

Europe is not interesting because there is no clear winner after a European election. There is neither government nor opposition, and it clashes with reality at the state level. It is easier to understand the politicians of the states that make up the EU. This is where some changes would have to be made, giving priority to the winner of the European elections so that a certain "European government" with its corresponding opposition is more perceived. Consequently, it would mean giving the European Parliament a greater role to the detriment of the Commission and the Council, which, in my opinion, are the institutions where the seed of the emerging anti-Europeanism is germinating. The Commission has increasingly mutated from a technical institution to an increasingly politicized one, with political positions up to the level of Heads of Unit. In addition, with the change in the treaties and the appointment of a Commissioner per state, governments have begun to appoint politicians of their absolute confidence. At the same time, a president of the Council, Van Rompuy, was appointed, and with this a European structure was created, which would lead the Council to think more in European terms and less in terms of the state. Consequently, the differences between the Council and the Commission are narrowing and the role of the institutions is duplicating.

In the medium term, this could lead to a constant weakening of the image of these two institutions, with constant internal struggles and decisions that are not very transparent. This could be a golden opportunity for the European Parliament, reinforcing its image and, in the medium term, its role as a European Government if it manages to distinguish itself from the other two institutions.

More Europe would mean savings. Today, the current budget of the EU is equal to that of a country

like Denmark with 6 million inhabitants, and that already decides on most of the policies. An example of how money can be saved is military spending. The picture reflects very well the enormous amount we spend on armies without it being reflected in our foreign policy. We are totally dependent on the US military policy through NATO. More Europe through a European army would mean reducing duplication, less military spending and at the same time greater independence from the US. Let us not forget that the 2003 Iraq war was the first time in history that the European governments represented in NATO did not they supported the US (with some exceptions); And what a mess!

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