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30 June 2011

The rise of populist movements in Europe and its dangers for democracy

Motion for a resolution
presented by Mr Volontè and others

This motion has not been discussed in the Assembly and commits only the members who have signed it

When the taste for material wealth develops more rapidly than civilization and the habit of freedom, there comes a time when people are attracted and nearly go mad looking at the goods they are acquiring. They only think about wealth and cannot understand the strict relationship between everyone's wealth and prosperity.

Alexis de Tocqueville rightly affirmed that "a nation which asks nothing of its government but the maintenance of order is already a slave at heart – the slave of its own well-being, awaiting but the hand that will bind it... they alone are in action whilst all are stationary; they regulate everything by their own caprice; they change the laws, and tyrannize at will over the manners of the country".

In a context of global economic crisis and in this contemporary period of uncertainty, the development of neo-populists movements and euroscepticism are two sides of the same coin. Is the European project in crisis? Do the values, moral traditions and common references recalled in the Preamble to the European Convention on Human Rights still exist? Is the decrease of credibility in politics and the temptation to "overcome" the traditional parties with populist movements beneficial for European democracy? How should we promote the democratic virtues and personal and community responsibilities in front of the widespread disaffection among citizens of several European countries?

This is a matter worthy of the Parliamentary Assembly's special attention with a view to making suggestions for the Council of Europe, the member states and the political forces. This issue follows and completes the stimulating discussions of the recent reports on the religious dimension of intercultural dialogue and on living together and widens their perspective.

Signed (see overleaf)

*Signed*¹:

VOLONTÈ Luca, Italy, EPP/CD
BÉTEILLE Laurent, France, EPP/CD
COMMERCIO Roberto Mario Sergio, Italy, EPP/CD
DOZZO Gianpaolo, Italy, EDG
FERNÁNDEZ-CAPEL BAÑOS Blanca, Spain, EPP/CD
GALATI Giuseppe, Italy, EPP/CD
GATTI Marco, San Marino, EPP/CD
GHILETCHI Valeriu, Moldova, EPP/CD
GREFF Claude, France, EPP/CD
GROSS Andreas, Switzerland, SOC
KALMÁR Ferenc, Hungary, EPP/CD
KOSZORÚS László, Hungary, EPP/CD
MARIN Christine, France, EPP/CD
MAYER Edgar, Austria, EPP/CD
MUÑOZ ALONSO Alejandro, Spain, EPP/CD
NESSA Pasquale, Italy, EPP/CD
NEUGEBAUER Fritz, Austria, EPP/CD
PALIHOVICI Liliana, Moldova, EPP/CD
SANTINI Giacomo, Italy, EPP/CD
SCHNEIDER André, France, EPP/CD
STUCCHI Giacomo, Italy, EDG
SZÉKYNÉ SZTRÉMI Melinda, Hungary, EPP/CD
TOFANI Oreste, Italy, EPP/CD
TOSHEV Latchezar, Bulgaria, EPP/CD
VEJKEY Imre, Hungary, EPP/CD
VITALI Luigi, Italy, EPP/CD
ZACCHERA Marco, Italy, EDG

¹ EPP/CD: Group of the European People's Party
SOC: Socialist Group
ALDE: Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
EDG: European Democratic Group
UEL: Group of the Unified European Left
NR: not registered in a group