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EIN joint seminar with Instituto Francisco Sá Carneiro and the Konrad Adenauer Foundation on:
"The Future of Europe"
Oporto - Portugal

Panel 1: Future of Europe and Brexit

Chair: Paulo Rangel

Guest Speaker:

Dara Murphy, Minister of State for European Affairs, E.U. Digital Single Market and Data Protection, Cork North Central, Ireland

Speakers:

Sebastian Plóciennik, PhD in Economics, coordinator of the EU program at the Polish Institute of International Affairs (PISM) in Warsaw

Federico Fabbrini, Full Professor of European Law Dublin City University, Ireland

David Campbell Bannerman, MEP, Member of the United Kingdom Conservative Party

- Europe is facing the worst crisis since its foundation, having to live with terrorism, the rise of nationalist movements, low economic growth, the migrant's crisis and, as if these were not enough, the withdrawal of a Member State. Among these, the nationalisms are seen as the ones that pose the greatest direct threat to the European Project, as those ideologies have already led us into two World Wars. Thus, both the extreme right and the extreme left populists share the same restrictive view towards the EU, both politically and economically.
- EU politicians should warn less against populist leaders and think more about their voters, normal citizens, as the majority of them are not extremists, people asking for answers and solutions, which they are not getting from their leaders. Politicians must be self-critical and search for a better understanding of what people think, need and want.
- Brexit's negotiation is about the exit and not about the future relationship. Therefore, the UK should respect the European Union Law until its final withdrawal and the EU citizens must have the right to be fully informed in this process. The British government want the EU to be reasonable and hope for CETA as a good starting point for an EU-UK deal. On the EU side, seems hard to start discussing any future relationship before agreeing on economic commitments.
- Furthermore, Brexit is a big risk for the UK and for the EU, as it will put the European values and principles under question; as well as the unity, the loyal cooperation; the solidarity for each other and the confidence on the European project. It is not only about a new trade deal, but it is also about the consequences of Brexit, which the British government seems to be fully unaware.
- In addition, Brexit should not jeopardize the Peace Process in Ireland, although some might think this is a good opportunity to call for a united Ireland. Nevertheless, this is not the time for such a poll.
- Brexit should force some constitutional changes becoming an opportunity for the EU to implement some reforms. These changes are as simple as taking off the name of the UK from article 52 or more complex as changing the composition of the European Parliament or the financing rules of the Union.
- The Future of Europe will be and must be always a representative democracy, as populist and nationalist movements cannot be and will not be the alternative for it. The political or ideological and the conceptual battle of the Future of Europe will not be the Left against the Right or the Christian Democracy against the Social Democracy; it will not be either the Socialist against the Liberals. It will be the battle of populism against the Representative Democracies.
- Differentiated integration means two things: whether as a goal, where there is a «Europe *a la carte*» or as a tool, where countries are granted with more time to fully enforce all the integration.