

The Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences  
*Europe, a Patient*  
and the Centre for the Thought of John Paul II  
conference on

# HEALING PATIENT EUROPE

Casina Pio IV, Vatican City  
7-8 October, 2021



Centre for  
the Thought  
of John Paul II

*“An age of rapid change can bring with it a loss of identity, especially when there is a lack of shared values on which to base society.*

*To Europe, then, I would like to say: you, who for centuries have been a seedbed of high ideals and now seem to be losing your élan, do not be content to regard your past as an album of memories. In time, even the most beautiful memories fade and are gradually forgotten. Sooner or later, we realize that we ourselves have changed; we find ourselves weary and listless in the present and possessed of little hope as we look to the future. Without ideals, we find ourselves weak and divided, more prone to complain and to be attracted by those who make complaint and division a style of personal, social and political life.*

*Europe, find yourself! Rediscover your most deeply-rooted ideals. Be yourself! Do not be afraid of your millenary history, which is a window open to the future more than the past. Do not be afraid of that thirst of yours for truth, which, from the days of ancient Greece, has spread throughout the world and brought to light the deepest questions of every human being. Do not be afraid of the thirst for justice that developed from Roman law and in time became respect for all human beings and their rights. Do not be afraid of your thirst for eternity, enriched by the encounter with the Judeo-Christian tradition reflected in your patrimony of faith, art and culture”.*

### *Letter of His Holiness Pope Francis on Europe*

To Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Secretary of State, from the Vatican, 22 October 2020, Memorial of Saint John Paul II





## Healing Patient Europe

*Casina Pio IV, Vatican City, 7-8 October 2021*

### Concept Note

The COVID-19 pandemic uncovered a crisis, or rather a set of interconnected crises: public health crisis, human rights and migration crisis, political legitimacy crisis, inequality crisis, environmental crisis. These crises are themselves rooted “in a profound crisis of values”,<sup>1</sup> corroding the social fabric of Europe as well as its basic solidarity with other, especially less privileged, continents and nations. What Pope John Paul II wrote twenty years ago stands even truer for Europe today, confronted with the global pandemic: “While possessed of increased resources, it [Europe] gives the impression of lacking the energy needed to sustain a common project and to give its citizens new reasons for hope”.<sup>2</sup>

During the pandemic, many decision-makers refrained from solving the crisis or even denied its very existence. This led to disastrous consequences: excessive death rates, comparable with those caused by wars; compromised health of many survivors; isolation, within families and nations, of the elderly, the poor, the less resilient and the most vulnerable. Such an approach constitutes a precedent with disastrous consequences for the near future, endangered by an exacerbated climate breakdown, the migration crisis, the lack of intergenerational solidarity and intensified competitiveness over shrinking resources.

If Europe is to survive, these crises need to be countered with a movement to build a culture of life, solidarity and healing. Healing “patient” Europe cannot be achieved with unrealistic optimism, believing that the problems will eventually solve themselves, nor with fatalism, abdicating from our responsibility to prevent them from happening. It requires a realistic confrontation with the present state of affairs – and informed solutions.

That is why the role of experts, decision-makers and leaders is to come up with effective measures which would ensure that any future pandemics are prevented and that the recovery provides a sound basis for sustainable and just development. We shall approach these fundamental, interconnected priorities in four panels.

<sup>1</sup> John Paul II, *Ecclesia in Europa*, 108.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibidem*.

## Panel I

### **From a culture of death to an imagination of mercy:**

#### **Human rights in the age of pandemics, migrations and climate breakdown**

At the beginning of the pandemic, Pope Francis warned against the “viral genocide” caused by a tendency to prioritise the *supposed* good of “the economy” over public health.<sup>3</sup> The course of the events has proved that the countries that chose the good of the GDP over securing the lives of their citizens lost in terms of human costs, civil liberties, and even in GDP rates.<sup>4</sup>

Lack of an “imagination of mercy” seems to be a serious political handicap. The idea that global pandemics can be brought under control while poorer nations are excluded from access to vaccines and decent public healthcare proves to be an illusion comparable to the belief that climate breakdown can be denied or its grave consequences simply outsourced to less favored regions – with safety ensured by building higher border walls. What can be done to reverse this trend? What steps should be taken to build a *civilisation of life* based on the acknowledgement of the fact that we really are – globally – “members of one another”?

## Panel II

### **Rebuilding trust by helping citizens directly?**

#### **Healing the European legitimization crisis**

In many European countries, the pandemic has corroded not only the health of vast numbers of people, but also the citizens’ trust in institutions. Real sacrifices were demanded and were indeed made by the majority of European citizens. Essential liberties had to be suspended by a state of exception. Many lost their loved ones, their mental stability, their small businesses and jobs, or precious time in school. All lost essential sociability – the basis of all healthy social relations – which can be practiced fully when people meet face to face in churches, theatres, cafes, town markets and neighborhoods.

At the same time, companies received financial support from the public purse and the already over-affluent minority and over-powerful monopolies increased their market shares and thus their power over the public sphere. Moreover, while certain countries in Asia or the Pacific can rely on the trust created by the implementation of successful COVID-eliminating strategies in case of future crises and the need for further restrictions, countries across Europe have mostly depleted their already scarce resources of public trust.

Is it not unrealistic to believe that large groups of European citizens will simply agree to further restrictions and disciplinary measures, having already been abandoned by their institutions without any direct, tangible help? Shouldn’t this imbalance be corrected – not only for the sake of healthy populations and economies, as well as for public peace – but also for the sake of fair compensation?

Pope Francis recently called for serious consideration of an “unconditional lump-sum payment to all citizens”. Could a form of *temporary* direct income – similar to the *stimulus checks* used in the US – help support citizens, especially in the event of further disciplinary health and safety measures? Could it help generate a safety net for European citizens, a stimulus for the real economy by boosting family budgets as an alternative to the growing bank deposits of big business and most importantly, could it contribute to renewing the social contract between European institutions and European citizens?

<sup>3</sup> Priority on economy over people may lead to ‘viral genocide’, Pope warns, <https://www.catholicnews.com/priority-on-economy-over-people-may-lead-to-viral-genocide-pope-warns/>

<sup>4</sup> Patrick Artus, Ilona Kickbusch, Jeffrey V Lazarus, Devi Sridhar, Samantha Vanderslott, SARS-CoV-2 elimination, not mitigation, creates best outcomes for health, the economy, [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(21\)00978-8/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(21)00978-8/fulltext)

We are going to discuss pros and cons of such instruments of direct help for citizens, as well as available ways of funding them and balancing the above-mentioned imbalance of power by means of a digital platform tax, the European wealth tax, the border carbon tax and a global minimum taxation of the profits of big companies.

### Panel III

#### **Dignity of work, participation in community, care for creation:**

##### **A real Green Deal**

“There is a need, then, to *confront the challenge of unemployment*, [...] labour constitutes a good for which society as a whole must feel responsible”.<sup>5</sup> This need is felt as even more real in the time of a global pandemic which has hit many small businesses and workers hard. Moreover, Europe has rightly committed to an urgent task of transition to an economy which would create sustainable conditions for the future of human life on Earth, endangered by climate breakdown.

Is the European Green Deal transformative enough – both in its social and ecological aims – to build an economy which would really take care of people and their environment? Is it at risk of ending up as a mere cosmetic and technocratic corrective? What policies and measures should the European Green Deal implement to genuinely empower communities and workers, enhance their participation and hardwire it into an environmentally sustainable economy which would work for people and places? We shall discuss the emerging ideas addressing these questions – Job Guarantee, Social Taxonomy, Community Wealth Building and democratisation of work – with leading scholars in these topics.

### Panel IV

#### **Why does the world need an accessible vaccine and accessible health care?**

##### **Europe, Zero COVID and global public health**

“Europe is really not a closed or isolated territory. A “universal” vision of the common good demands this: we need to broaden our gaze to embrace the needs of the entire human family”.<sup>6</sup> The pandemic has demonstrated the truth of this showing that, “no one is safe, until everyone is safe”. However, this truth is rejected by short-sighted policies denying the vast majority of the inhabitants of Earth access to vaccines and to good public health care. How should we remodel the research funding patterns, patenting patterns, public health policies and patterns of caring to change this?

### Panel V

#### **What responsibility do political leaders have for healing “patient” Europe?**

“Politics, though often denigrated, remains a lofty vocation and one of the highest forms of charity, inasmuch as it seeks the common good (...) I beg the Lord to grant us more politicians who are genuinely disturbed by the state of society, the people, the lives of the poor!”<sup>7</sup> – Pope Francis called. What steps do we need to take in the coming months to heal a patient called *Europe* and to make her capable again of helping others? What responsibility do political leaders have for bringing about such a healing of the European body politic?

<sup>5</sup> John Paul II, *Ecclesia in Europa*, 87.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 111, 101.

<sup>7</sup> Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 205.



## Draft of conference plan

[TBC depending on speakers' availability]

## DAY 1, October 7, 2021

### 09:00 Introductory addresses for the conference

Stefano Zamagni, *Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences*

Msgr. Marcelo Sánchez Sorondo, *Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences*

Mateusz Piotrowski, *Europe, a Patient*

Dominika Żukowska-Gardzińska, *The Centre for the Thought of John Paul II*

### Keynote introductory lecture

Msgr. Paul Gallagher, *Secretary for the Holy See's Relations with States*

## Panel I

### From a culture of death to an imagination of mercy:

### Human rights in the age of pandemics, migrations and climate breakdown

Chair: Pierpaolo Donati, *Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences*

### Introduction

Aleksander Temkin, *Europe, a Patient* (5 min)

**Speakers** (25 minutes each: 10/15 minutes for the presentation, and 10 minutes for discussion / Q&A)

Yaneer-Bar Yam, *MIT* (via Zoom)

Riccardo Pozzo, *Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences Academician*

Tomas Insua, *Co-Founder and Executive Director of Laudato Si' Movement*

**General Discussion on Panel I** (30 minutes)

### 13:00 Lunch at the Casina Pio IV

## Panel II

### Rebuilding trust by helping citizens directly? Healing the European legitimization crisis

Chair: Jan J. Zygmuntowski, *Europe, a Patient*

#### 14:30 Introduction

Maciej Grodzicki, *Europe, a Patient* (5 min)

**Speakers** (25 minutes each: 10/15 minutes for the presentation, and 10 minutes for discussion / Q&A)

Roland Minnerath, *Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences Academician* (via Zoom)

Jeffrey D. Sachs, *Professor, Columbia University*

Sr Alessandra Smerilli, *Vatican COVID-19 Commission*

Wolfgang Schmidt, *State Secretary at the German Ministry of Finance*

**General Discussion on Panel II** (30 minutes)





**DAY 2, October 8, 2021**

**Panel III**

**Dignity of work, participation in community, care for creation:  
A real Green Deal**

Chair: Msgr. Marcelo Sánchez Sorondo, *Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences*

**09:00 Introduction**

Stefano Zamagni, *Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences* (5 min)

**Speakers** (25 minutes each: 10/15 minutes for the presentation, and 10 minutes for discussion / Q&A)

Pavlina Tcherneva, *Bard College* (via Zoom)

Joe Guinan, *Democracy Collaborative*

Ester Lynch, *Deputy General Secretary of European Trade Union Confederation*

Luigino Bruni, *Economy of Francesco* (via Zoom)

**General Discussion on Panel III** (30 minutes)

**13:00 Lunch at the Casina Pio IV**

## Panel IV

### Why does the world need an accessible vaccine and accessible health care? Europe, Zero COVID and global public health

Chair: Rocco Buttiglione, Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences

#### 14:30 Introduction

Pierpaolo Donati, *Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences* (5 min)

**Speakers** (25 minutes each: 10/15 minutes for the presentation, and 10 minutes for discussion / Q&A)

Achille Mbembe, *University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg*

Jeremy Rossman, *Kent University*

Antonio Spilimbergo, *IMF Deputy Director in the Research Department*

Richard Horton, *Lancet Editor in Chief* (via Zoom)

**General Discussion on Panel IV** (30 minutes)

## Panel V

### What responsibility do political leaders have for healing “patient” Europe?

Chair: Stefano Zamagni, Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences

#### 17:10 Introduction

Rocco Buttiglione, *Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences* (5 min)

**Speakers** (25 minutes each: 10/15 minutes for the presentation, and 10 minutes for discussion / Q&A)

Marta Cartabia, *Minister of Justice, Italy* (via Zoom)

Laurence Tubiana, *European Climate Foundation*

Philippe Lamberts, *Co-President of the Greens/EFA in the European Parliament*

**General Discussion on Panel V** (30 minutes)

#### Closing Remarks:

Rocco Buttiglione, *Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences*

Stefano Zamagni, *Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences*

## Blessing by the Holy Father, Pope Francis





*Front cover photo of the vault in Saint Ignatius of Loyola, Rome by Clay Banks / Unsplash*

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<https://europe-patient.web.app> | [www.centrumjp2.pl](http://www.centrumjp2.pl)

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