[Titles]
MEPs approve three resolutions on the future of Europe

In Austria, Chancellor's statements call into the principle question of free movement in the European Union

Germany's election race is now tight, after Martin Schulz fired on the latest polls
[Titles End]

Welcome to Magazine Europa,

The European Parliament adopted three resolutions on the future of Europe. The texts suggest a series of reforms which, according to a communiqué from the legislative body, aim to respond to the need for strengthen the European Union's capacity to act, restore citizens' confidence and increase the resistance of the euro zone.

The journalist Rui Cid, of Radio Macau, presents some of the proposals:

RM – Rui Cid:
"The first resolution, adopted with 329 votes in favor, 223 against and 83 abstentions, proposes that the Council of Ministers be transformed into a 'genuine second legislative chamber'. The document also proposes that each Member State present at least three candidates - men and women - to the position of Commissioner. The resolution also calls for the implementation of a Permanent Council of Defense Ministers to coordinate the defense policies of the countries that are part of the European Union.

The second resolution suggests a number of reforms in the Treaty of Lisbon. The text calls for the creation of the European Union Minister of Finance, as well as powers for the European Commission to formulate and launch a common economic policy, supported by a Euro zone budget. Another of the proposals contained in this resolution is to reduce the number of European Commissioners. The document also reiterates the conviction that the European citizens of each Member State should be allowed to vote directly on the leaders of the political parties that are candidates for

President of the Commission. The resolution was adopted with 283 votes in favor, 269 against and 83 abstentions.

The third resolution calls for an approximation of the economies of the Euro zone by proposing a convergence strategy, financed by a specific budget for all the countries of the single currency. Among the proposals presented are the commitments on fiscal capacity as well as the creation of a European Monetary Fund. The document, which received 304 votes in favor, 255 against and 68 abstentions, also proposes to strengthen the role of the European Parliament and national parliaments. "
++++++++++++++++++++++++

On the phone from Brussels is Magazine Europa's resident commentator, Victor Ângelo, the international consultant based in the Belgian capital.

Hello Victor, what common vision, if at all possible, reflects these three resolutions adopted by the European Parliament?

RM – Victor Ângelo:
"There is an important part of MEPs who are concerned about the future of Europe, namely the functioning of the European institutions and the way these institutions are viewed by citizens. That is why in recent weeks there has been a concern to suggest improvements and reforms in the way Parliament works, also in relation to the role of the European Council and also in relation to the role that the European Commission should play. These resolutions go in that direction, essentially to have a European Council that does not go into detail, in order to prevent Heads of State and Government from passing the meetings to decide on small things. On the other hand, [they are going to] strengthen the executive role of the European Commission - the Commission must be the one who takes the orientations given by the European Council into practice - and also have a better functioning parliament in terms of control and proposals for The improvement of institutions and the functioning of the whole of Europe. In addition, there is another concern that is the concern of the tax reform, labor market reform and other issues related to, for example, social justice and the environment - these [the latter] are the big issues that at the moment , Are on the agenda of the European Parliament. The fight against populism is also a major

concern and justifies, to some extent, the emergence of these resolutions adopted by the European Parliament. "

Looking at these resolutions, are there any political conditions in the European Union to deepen these ideas?

RM – Victor Ângelo:

"The Member States and the European Parliament itself are much divided. Incidentally, these resolutions were not adopted by major majorities - they were approved, of course, but there was also a lot of opposition. We must discuss the future of Europe and this is perhaps the ideal year to do so, 60 years after the Treaty of Rome. I think that the future of Europe is going through a series of broad lines that must be taken into account. On the one hand, what does it mean to be European, to define a common identity for the citizens of the different nations that constitute Europe? On the other hand, there are political issues: the elections, and in particular the elections to the European Parliament and the elections for President of the European Commission, should be made more popular and all European citizens should be involved in lists which Are international. We must also create hope and confidence in the future of the European Union. It is also important to promote debates between the national parliaments and the European Parliament because, in reality, what we are witnessing at the moment is that there is a great separation, a great gap, between what is happening in Brussels and in Strasbourg - European Parliament - and, on the other hand, what is being discussed in parliaments in Lisbon or in Madrid or in Warsaw. "

Despite the populism and euro-skepticism we see, the Euro barometer advances data collected in November which indicate that the negative image of Europeans towards the European Union has lost some strength...

RM – Victor Ângelo:

"The image of the European institutions is still relatively positive, especially at a time when the image of national politicians and national institutions is very negative. The citizens of each state generally have a very unfavorable opinion when it comes to their own politicians, their own parliamentarians. All the polls in the different European

countries show that people consider politicians to be very un-serious, putting politicians at the bottom of the credibility list. There is, nonetheless, a more positive attitude towards the European institutions. But it's not enough. We must continue to invest in this direction and, above all, we must bring the European institutions closer to the citizens. Citizens here in Brussels, who live a kilometer or two beyond the European district, know little or nothing about what goes on in these institutions. And if there is such a distance here in Brussels, what will that mean in terms of distance between the European institutions based in Brussels and the citizen in Oporto or in Krakow or in any other part of the European Union . "

Christian Kern, the Austrian chancellor, argued last week that employers in the country should give priority to sites. This is what the radio journalist Pedro Galinha tells us:

RM – Pedro Galinha:

"Christian Kern accused the Eastern European countries of 'exporting the unemployed to Austria'.

The chancellor argued that Austrian employers should give priority to the hiring of compatriots. Christian Kern considers that only if there is no one in the country available to perform the intended functions should this job be granted to newcomers without restrictions.

EU legislation stipulates that any citizen of a country of the bloc should be treated on an equal footing with those of other Member States.

The number of immigrants in Austria has been rising over the last few years.

The Austrian government plans to cut the country's maximum number of asylum seekers to about half - a measure supported by Christian Kern. The current ceiling, introduced in January last year, is 35,000 people per year. By 2016, that number was not reached. "

++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++

Victor, if the measure taken by Christian Kern would be fulfilled, would allow Austrian employers to discriminate against jobseekers based on their nationality.... This would be an infringement of the principle of freedom of movement for the citizens of the European Union...

RM - Victor Ângelo:

"Here in Brussels it is said that the chancellor already gave the said by not saying. He have already realized that he can not, in any way, impose restrictions on foreign citizens who are working in Austria. Austria is a country that works well, is a country with a relatively prosperous economy. It is, in fact, one of the most prosperous countries in the European Union, it has a positive trade balance, has a relatively low public debt and, above all, has an unemployment rate that would make many other European countries jealous - it is a much lower unemployment rate of the 6 percent. This is a country that, from an economic point of view, from the point of view of public finances, is in a healthy situation but has a public opinion that has very conservative segments. And this very conservative public opinion will be able to vote against the party of the Prime Minister, which is the Social Democratic Party, and that is why he made the statements he made regarding foreigners. I think it was a mistake on his part. He tried to be populist, tried to fish in the waters of the extreme right with statements that are right-wing extremists, but this type of political behavior of the social-democratic parties or the parties of the center always ends up not giving result. What is essential is to explain the situation, to show that the economy is working - which is the case in Austria - and to try to make people realize that, in today's European circumstances, the presence of foreign workers is not necessarily an evil, on the contrary, they come to do things and come to allow the economy and the social system to become sustainable. "

It is therefore not to be expected that this measure will progress in Austria...

RM - Victor Ângelo:

"I think it will not move forward. I think the electoral promise he had made that there would be restrictions on the employment of foreigners would not be legally enforced. It is likely that one or another company will first seek an Austrian worker before seeking a worker from another EU country, but in legal terms this will not go forward...

If any country wished to bring such a measure to bear, it would easily be fought by the European courts...

RM - Victor Ângelo:

“Exactly, at the moment, I think that such political proposals are purely electoral in nature and do not aim to satisfy, say, very conservative segments of public opinion in the country concerned, and little else. But in reality, in practical terms, it could never be applied. "

In Germany, Martin Schulz, a candidate for the post of chancellor for the Social Democratic Party, has fired on the latest polls. Some even place the former President of the European Parliament ahead of Angela Merkel, of the Christian Democrats, who until recently was seen as the favorite.

Journalist Miguel Brandão of Radio Macao shows us the portrait of Martin Schulz, the great surprise in this pre-election period in Germany:

RM - Miguel Brandão:

"Martin Schulz was born in 1955 in eastern Germany.

He dropped out of high school to pursue a career in football, but was unsuccessful.

Without a degree, he worked as a bookseller and became owner of a bookstore between 1982 and 1994, the year he became a MEP.

In 2012, he was elected President of the European Parliament, a position he held until this year. A position he left before the end of his term to devote himself to the domestic political life of Germany.

A member of the Social Democratic Party of Germany since the 1970s, Martin Schulz served as a local councilor, and was also a town clerk.

Last week, the BBC reported that a committee of the European Parliament is examining expenses incurred by Martin Schulz as chairman of the legislative body.

Until a month ago, Martin Schulz appeared to have no chance against Angela Merkel, who is seeking a fourth term as chancellor. However, in recent days new polls have emerged that point to a tight race where anything can happen. "

++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++

Victor, is it really, anything can happen? Can Martin Schulz defeat Angela Merkel in the 24 September elections?

RM - Victor Ângelo:

"Well, the election procession in Germany has not yet left the churchyard. And it is still too early to realize what will happen in September this year. But the truth is that

Martin Schulz climbed enormously in the polls and the fact that he appeared at the head of the German Social Democratic Party allowed this party, which was in a difficult situation in German public opinion, to win intentions to vote. Martin Schulz brings to the Social Democratic Party a renewal that this party needed. And at this point, the question of who will win the elections in Germany is a totally legitimate question. That is: [...] Chancellor Merkel, from the outset had all the conditions, [...] everyone thought she would probably win a fourth term ... At the moment, the chances of her winning a fourth term are no longer as great as they were three weeks ago.

"In today's European context, what does this gain in popularity for social democracy?"

RM- Victor Ângelo:

"Martin Schulz is the visible face of European social democracy. And the fact that he mobilizes an important part of German public opinion is positive for Social-Democracy, it is self-evident. Suddenly, people again believe that social democracy still has political space in the European context and in particular in a country like Germany. Martin Schulz invigorates the social-democratic positions, brings hope, again, to the social-democrat family. Martin Schulz is good news for the European Union. "Martin Schulz has been described as being" more Brussels than Berlin ".

What will the impact of Martin Schulz's election on the leadership of Germany be, or will it have, in Europe?

RM - Victor Ângelo:

"Both Martin Schulz and Angela Merkel are good news in terms of the European integration process because they are both very convinced Europeans. There will be in each case of different news for Britain. If Mrs. Merkel wins the election, it is very likely that the German position vis-à-vis Brexit will be a more flexible position. If Martin Schulz is to win the election and be the next German chancellor, it is very likely that Germany will have a much more difficult position and enter into a much more complex and harder negotiating position vis-a-vis Britain than Merkel. For the

British, it would be preferable to keep Merkel in power to see Martin Schulz take over the power in Berlin. Martin Schulz also represents, to some extent, a response to German extremism. The rise of the Social Democratic Party and the fact that many people believe that Martin Schulz could be the next German chancellor has suddenly given an alternative to the Germans. The emergence of Martin Schulz in strength allows to a certain extent reduce the chances of voting in far-right parties and, above all, in the far-right party Alternative for Germany.

The analysis is by Victor Ângelo, the Magazine Europe's resident commentator.

We closed this program with the seventh art, not to mention the Oscars, but of the Césars, the prizes of the French industry, delivered last Friday in Paris.
Fatima, by Philippe Faucon, was distinguished as best film. The film, about the integration of immigrants in France, also received the best film adaptation award by the director and the award for the best female hope, Zita Hanrot.
See you next week!
The presentation of Sofia Jesus, the analysis of Victor Ângelo and the coordination of Rui Flores, Europe Magazine is the result of collaboration between Radio Macau and the University of Macao under the Jean Monnet Magazine Europe Project.

The opinions expressed in this magazine do not necessarily represent the positions Officials from the various institutions of the European Union.

The Jean Monnet Magazine Europe project is a partnership between the University of Macao and the Institute of European Studies of Macao, co-financed by the European Union under the Erasmus + Program.

You can also see our page “Magazine Europa” on Facebook