The euro-zone crisis has provided a strong new impetus for European integration, but this risks being undermined amid increasing tension over how best to meet the many complex financial, economic, political, social and global challenges we face.

Efforts to overcome the current malaise are being hampered by profound disagreements over the future course of reforms; mounting socio-economic problems and political instability in many EU countries; different interpretations of the causes and consequences of the crisis; growing Euroscepticism and an increasing reluctance among both citizens and elites to further pool sovereignty at European level.

And while the EU is preoccupied with itself, Europe keeps on losing ground as the global shift continues.

The New Pact for Europe project was launched by the King Baudouin Foundation (Belgium) and is supported by a large transnational consortium including:

- Bertelsmann Stiftung (Germany)
- Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation (Portugal)
- Allianz Kulturstiftung (Germany)
- European Cultural Foundation (Netherlands)
- Network of European Foundations (Belgium)
- European Policy Centre (Belgium)
- La Caixa Foundation (Spain)
- Stiftung Mercator (Germany)
- Open Society Initiative for Europe (Spain)
- Swedish Cultural Foundation (Finland).

This project aims to promote a European-wide debate on reform proposals addressing three fundamental questions, which need to be answered to develop an effective response to the multi-dimensional crisis Europeans are facing:

- What is at stake if ‘Europe’ cannot tackle the various challenges we face?
  ‘What do we need the EU for?’
- What kind of collaboration is needed at European level to respond to the crisis?
  ‘What needs to be done?’
- How can the answers to these two questions be translated into action to make the EU more effective and ensure it can command broad-based public support?
  ‘How should it be done?’
A Reflection Group and an Advisory Group will provide input to, and inspiration for, the elaboration of a New Pact between policy-makers and European citizens and between Member States:

- The Reflection Group includes around 15 top opinion-makers from different EU Member States, who have a genuine interest in the success of European integration, are realistic and pragmatic but at the same time able to think ‘out of the box’, and ready and able to communicate through the media.

- The Advisory Group brings together around 25 high-ranking policy-makers, academics, NGO representatives and other stakeholders – a mixture of past and current national and European leaders from different sectors and backgrounds.

The project will be divided into four main phases in the course of 2013-2014:

- **PHASE I** (March-October 2013): The Reflection Group will develop a comprehensive analysis of the ‘state of the Union’ in order to identify and evaluate different strategic options for the future of European integration. The findings – inspired also by the reflections of the Advisory Group – will be published in a first report scheduled for publication in October 2013.

- **PHASE II** (November 2013-May 2014): This first report will provide the basis for a wider debate with citizens and policy-makers in and across Member States about the EU’s future.

- **PHASE III** (February-July 2014): These EU-wide consultations will allow the Reflection Group – in close cooperation with the Advisory Group – to draft a second report setting out a New Pact for Europe including concrete recommendations. This Pact will feed into the debate about the best way forward as the newly (s)elected EU leadership takes office after the European elections.

- **PHASE IV** (end 2014-2015): The ‘New Pact for Europe’ will be presented and discussed in different EU capitals and in Brussels with policy-makers, experts and citizens.

In a nutshell, the goal of the New Pact for Europe project is to foster a wider public debate on the EU’s future at both European and national level, involving not only policy-makers but also citizens; to contribute fresh but also realistic thinking and ideas on how to address the challenges facing Europe; and to help close widening gaps between Member States and even within EU countries about Europe’s future.
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