PRIMER EJERCICIO – PARTE B

25 de Mayo de 2019

Los Opositores deberán realizar una traducción directa al español por escrito y sin diccionario, durante un tiempo máximo de UNA HORA, de un texto determinado por el Tribunal en uno de los idiomas inglés o francés.

What future for Europe?

Jean Monnet, the great architect of European integration, concluded his 1976 memoirs with these words: 'The sovereign nations of the past can no longer solve the problems of the present: they cannot ensure their own progress or control their own future. And the Community itself is only a stage on the way to the organised world of tomorrow.' Given today's global economy, should we already regard the European Union as no longer politically relevant? Or should we rather be asking how to unleash the full potential of over half a billion Europeans who share the same values and interests?

The European Union may soon have more than 30 Member States, with very different histories, languages and cultures. Can such a diverse family of nations form a common political 'public sphere'? Can its citizens develop a shared sense of 'being European' while remaining deeply attached to their country, their region and their local community? Perhaps they can, if today's Member States follow the example of the very first European Community — the ECSC — which was born from the rubble of the Second World War. Its moral legitimacy was based on reconciliation and consolidating the peace between former enemies. It adhered to the principle that all Member States, whether large or small, had equal rights and respected minorities.

Will it be possible to keep pushing ahead with European integration, claiming that the EU's Member States and their peoples all want the same thing? Or will EU leaders make greater use of 'reinforced cooperation' arrangements, whereby ad hoc groups of Member States can move ahead without the others in this or that direction? The multiplication of such arrangements could lead to an à la carte or 'variable geometry' Europe, with each Member State free to choose whether to pursue a particular policy or to be part of a particular institution. This solution might appear attractively simple, but it would be the beginning of the end for the EU, which works by anticipating the common interests of its Member States, in both the short and the long term. It is based on the concept of solidarity — which means sharing the costs as well as the advantages. It means having common rules and common policies. Exemptions, derogations and opt-outs should be exceptional and of short duration. Transitional arrangements and phasing-in periods may sometimes be necessary, but unless all the Member States keep to the same rules and work towards the same goals, solidarity breaks down and the advantages of being in a strong and united Europe are lost.

At the same time, the economic crisis has shown that the countries that use the euro as their currency are in a special situation of dependency which has led them to function as a core group of countries within the EU.

Globalisation obliges Europe to compete not only with its traditional rivals (Japan and the US) but also with fast-rising economic powers such as Brazil, China and India. Can it continue restricting access to its single market in order to protect its social and environmental standards? Even if it did so, there would be no escape from the harsh realities of international competition. The only solution is for Europe to become a real global player, acting in unison on the world stage and asserting its interests effectively by speaking with one voice. Progress in this direction can only be achieved by moving towards political union. The President of the European Council, the Commission President and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy must together give the EU strong and consistent leadership.

Finally, Europe should punch its full weight in international affairs. One of the EU's great strengths is its ability to spread European values beyond its borders. Values such as respecting human rights, upholding the rule of law, protecting the environment and maintaining social standards in the social market economy. What would count as success for the EU in the years ahead? Bringing its public finances back into balance. Coping with the ageing of its population in a way that does not unfairly penalise the next generation. Finding ethical responses to the huge challenges posed by scientific and technological progress — particularly in biotechnology. Ensuring security for its citizens without undermining their freedom. If it can do these things, Europe will continue to be respected and will remain a source of inspiration to the rest of the world.