

### A People's Parliament for Una Europa (this builds upon my previous note)

- 1 *The formation of Una Europa, with its 8 universities, offers a rare opportunity to establish a vehicle for cross-university cooperation and integration, and to hear an extraordinary panoply of voices in the wider world (given the universities' networks) and to speak with cross-university authority.*
- 2 *The idea of a People's Parliament (PP) suggests itself BUT the idea needs modification so as not to generate an unwieldy bureaucracy.*
- 3 *There are 8 universities in Una Europa, each with its own mission, identity sense of self-worth. Establishing a single People's Parliament to serve the 8 universities of Una Europa would need 'buy-in' from each of the 8 universities; and buy-in at that at both (i) the leadership and (ii) the academic levels. More formally, it needs to be granted legitimacy (at both levels).*
- 4 *Buy-in at the academic level will need (a) ownership by the academic community and (b) demonstrable influence (not necessarily direct power as such).*
- 5 *Buy-in at the leadership level will be achieved if the People's Parliament works so as to assist the evolution of each of the 8 universities.*
- 6 *Models for achieving such legitimacy are - drawing on the UK - (i) Parliamentary Committees; (ii) the upper house ('House of Lords'). Neither has (much) power but both have influence - of different kinds.*
- 7 *Influence would be achieved through its integrity, thoroughness, and substance.*
- 8 *It would address large issues spanning the whole of Una Europa - ie across all 8 universities. These could be*
  - (i) *issues of particular interest across the 8 institutions - eg the principles underpinning a credit accumulation system; or*
  - (ii) *wider issues within European higher education, eg, the student experience; the examining of PhD students; developing transdisciplinarity; learning analytics; or*
  - (iii) *matters of broad societal/ global significance, eg the UN's SDGs; relationships with universities in China (in context of intellectual property concerns); the fate of the humanities; ecological crisis; matter of 'public engagement';*
- 9 *Functioning: This PP would have its own resources, and (small) secretarial support. The financing of it would be achieved through top-slicing of/from the 8 universities.*
- 10 *Composition:*
  - a. *three academics elected by each of the 8 universities (ie 24)*
  - b. *Chair and Vice-Chair elected from and by the members.*
- 11 *Principles: The PP would evolve its own way of working but it would heed some principles, eg transparency, openness, encouragement for conversations at all levels, equity of voices and its outputs informed by rigorous research and scholarship.*
- 12 *Each inquiry would involve a significant element of providing space for the voices of constituencies - whether students, academics, researchers, or professional staff.*
- 13 *Evidence-based: It would crucially involve the assembly of evidence (of all kinds).*
- 14 *It would call expert 'witnesses' to provide evidence. These would often be academics (from anywhere in the world) but would also include authoritative others.*
- 15 *Its reports would:*
  - a. *contain appendices, so as to provide a summary of the evidence*
  - b. *be authoritative, and contain recommendations and principles for action*
  - c. *be made public and presented to the governing bodies of each University.*