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THE IMPORTANCE OF YOUR VOTE

AN OPINION BY LAURYNAS VEISMANIS

“The ballot is stronger than the bullet.” –
Abraham Lincoln.

In today's world voting can be quite overwhelming with such a wide selection of candidates and massive amounts of information to digest but the reality is that we just have to invest that time to make our own lives better. We are the ones who are choosing our political leaders to drive our country's growth and it is our responsibility to choose the ones who suit our society needs the most.

We may think that we are rebelling by not voting but in reality we aren't. Politicians actually don't want us to start voting because they like how the things they are now and if we start voting then things might change and they would not want to be changed. An American drama critic and magazine editor George Jean Nathan once said “Bad officials are elected by good citizens who do not vote.”

If you don't vote, nothing changes. Like Albert Einstein said “Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.” so it is our responsibility to vote for the change to happen. Even though you don't like the candidates some of them are really hard-working people that want actually want to make a change. If even then you don't see any possible candidate for your vote – why not candidate yourself? Like Gandhi said “Be the change that you want to see in the world.”

“But my vote won't make a change” I thought to myself once but then I realized that the power is in unity, if a million people think with me then if we all make the change and vote we can make an impact bigger than we can imagine. For example in 2010 UK election non-voters outnumbered the supporters of every single political party.

You can see a graphical image below regarding the 2010 UK election.

NON-VOTERS OUTNUMBERED THE SUPPORTERS OF EVERY SINGLE POLITICAL PARTY IN 2010

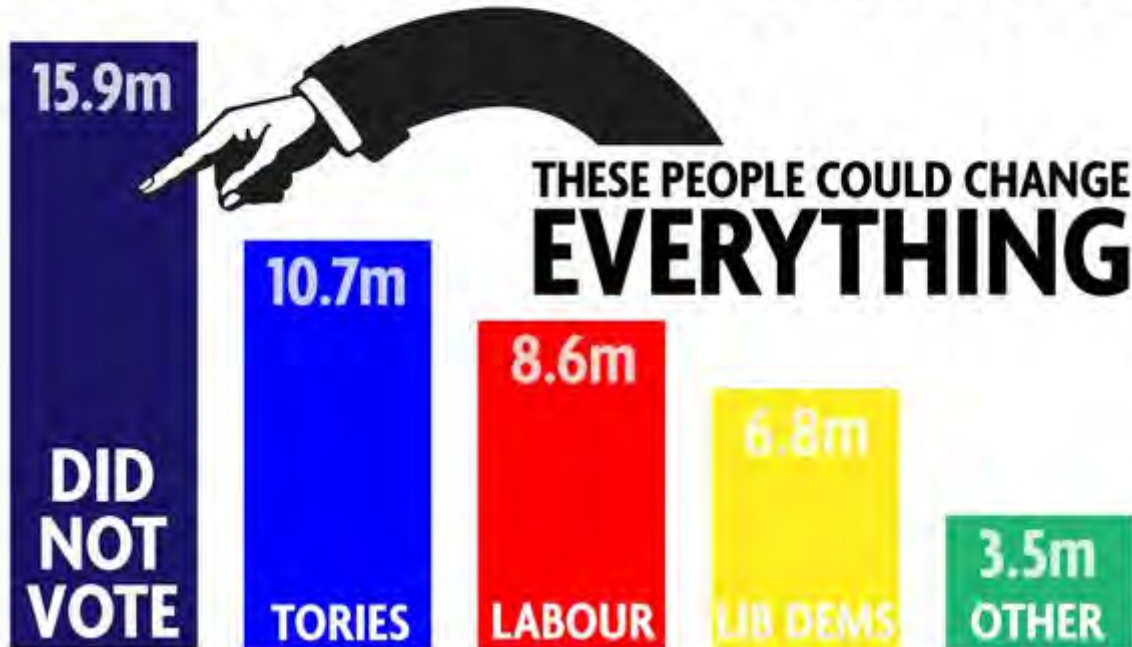


IMAGE SOURCE: THE MIRROR

What we can learn from this that in democracy voting is communal, not individual. Sovereign power is in the citizens as a whole, and our votes has weight as part of this political community.

By voting, you are making your voice heard and registering your opinion on how you think the government should operate. Enough voices in unison can elect someone to office, reaffirm or even change the course of our government so let's prepare for the next election by investing the time and energy to learn about the parties, candidates and their promises.

Let's invest the time to search the past promises of the candidates to check if they have kept their promises. Inform ourselves and speak up by voting at the next election.

It is our right to vote as well as the responsibility to inform ourselves to make a wise decision. A decision that we would be proud of after the election and that it would be for our all well-being so we can thrive as a country even more.

Thank you for investing the time and hopefully this article will inspire you to let your voice be known in the next election.





AN EXERCISE OF IMAGINATION

BY ALEXANDRA TRĂISTARU

In Romania, the communist regime finished in December of 1989. My generation - the 90s kids - is called the "one that was born in the same time as democracy."

We were born in freedom and spent our childhoods with no mobile phones nor computers. We still remember the struggle of hiding the sounds of the router, the simple joy of using computers only for Paint and offline games.

We also still remember the times when we were candidate country for the EU. I personally remember a sense of impatience towards the moment, excitement for change, but also raised expectations and the so-called euro-skepticism.

Since then 11 years have passed, with seemingly small improvements. The general public has a hard time differentiating the forest from the trees.

But what if the EU ceased to exist today? It would definitely complicate every aspect of the socio-political context of the member countries.

Immediate consequences would be the reinstatement of the borders in the EU countries (for control and defence purposes) which would make the movement of people time consuming and restrictive. Of course this begs the question of where do we draw the line. What about the people that already work or study in another country? What would their status be? Each country from the 28 ones would have to negotiate with the other 27 countries the conditions of migration between them.

The European Union was founded from economic reasons, so it's only fair that the economy will suffer the most changes to it. Cost of products from other countries would rise and the population might choose to consume products in support of local economy. This happens nowadays also, but truth remains that some of the foreign products are cheaper.

For example, Romania exports grains and imports bread products. It might become too expensive to maintain this back and forth exchange. Even nowadays the bread factories in Romania are complaining that the customers don't buy "romanian" in favor of imported frozen products.

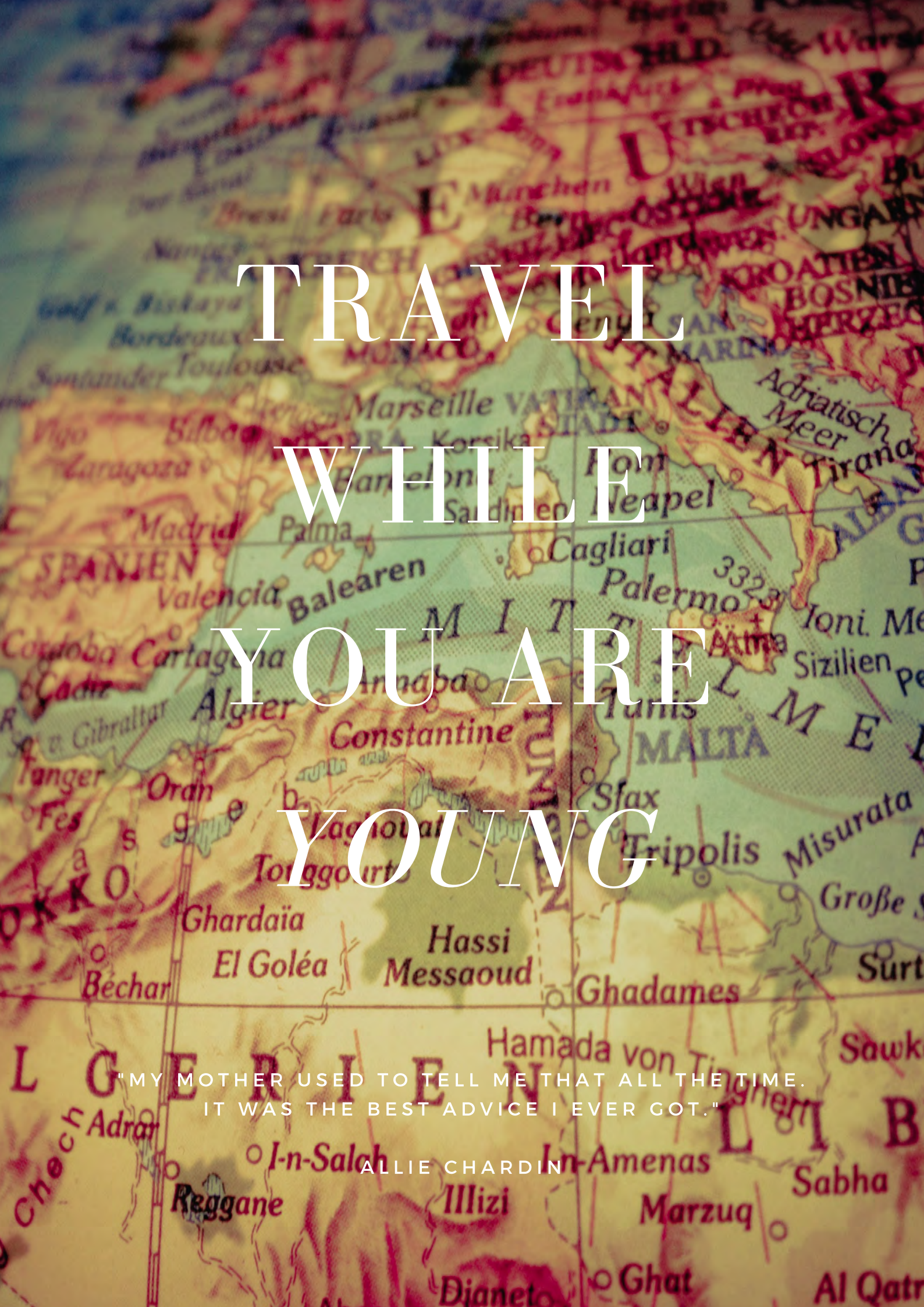
The euro zone would become unstable and the value of euro would decrease. And furthermore, if the countries wanted to reinstall the national currencies that would be a very expensive choice.

Culturally speaking, the countries would still maintain good connections because the unstoppable advancement of technology. I don't think that they would become more separated.

The fact is that 10 years from now we will have presidents and political leaders that have benefited from Erasmus, whether for students, youth or business so the EU values would still always remain through the influence the union had on these people.

In my opinion, the EU might actually disappear at one point in the future, but it won't be nearly as dramatic as it sounds. It won't disappear for real, but it will transform : adapt and change as technology and access to information becomes common place even for the older generations and rural parts of Eastern Europe.



A vintage, sepia-toned map of Europe and North Africa serves as the background. The map is detailed with various cities, countries, and geographical features. Overlaid on the map is the text 'TRAVEL WHILE YOU ARE YOUNG' in a large, white, serif font. The text is arranged in four lines: 'TRAVEL' on the first line, 'WHILE' on the second, 'YOU ARE' on the third, and 'YOUNG' on the fourth. The map shows parts of Western Europe, including France, Spain, and Italy, as well as North Africa, including Algeria, Tunisia, and Libya. The text is centered horizontally across the map.

TRAVEL WHILE YOU ARE YOUNG

"MY MOTHER USED TO TELL ME THAT ALL THE TIME.
IT WAS THE BEST ADVICE I EVER GOT."

ALLIE CHARDIN

DID YOU KNOW...????

10 THINGS TO TAKE INTO
CONSIDERATION WHEN YOU ARE
TRAVELING TO ANOTHER COUNTRY

BY CRISTINA ROHOZNEANU

"BODY LANGUAGE: Italy vs America

- * Of all the body parts, the hands are probably used most for communicating non-verbally.
- * Hand waves are used for greetings, beckoning, or farewells.
 - * The Italian "good-bye" wave can be interpreted by Americans as the gesture of "come here."
 - * The American "good-bye" wave can be interpreted in many parts of Europe and Latin America as the signal for "no."



Though subtle, our body language speaks volumes. We all use many forms of non-verbal communication to send messages, often subconsciously. It is said that our body language exhibits much more information about our thoughts and feelings than is possible to articulate verbally. But the implied meaning of these common signals we use every day can mean something wildly different in another culture.

If you're visiting different cultures, it's always a good idea to check out the body language differences and what each gesture means.

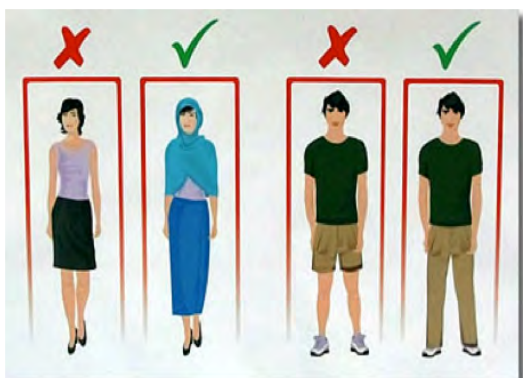
SPANIARDS EAT LATE

Spanish meal differ from most other countries because of how late they are. In general, Spanish eat lunch between 2 p.m. and 4 p.m. and dinner any time after 9 p.m. Be aware of mealtimes when eating out in many areas it may be it hard to finde a restaurant open before 2 p.m. for lunch or 8:30 p.m. for dinner, and if you do theymight well be a tourist trap.



DRESS CODE IN TURKEY

Understandably, one of the most often discussed topics in connection with Istanbul is how to dress. Although it's not necessary to cover up when you're out and about, mosques and other religious sites have a very strict dress code. When visiting these places, always wear long skirts or trousers, and remember to cover your shoulders and chest. Also make sure to wear socks, as you'll have to remove your shoes before entering a mosque.



TIME IS RELATIVE IN GREECE

Time is relative in Greece even when it comes to buses, trains, hydrofoils, and ferries. While everyone more or less expects that such things can run late in normal circumstances, they can also run early in Greece. Sometimes there's a good reason like hydrofoil leaving a few minutes early because the weather is changing and they want to make it to the next port as quickly as possible. If you are, or are traveling with, one of those people who always gets everywhere early Just In Case, you may find that a valuable trait in Greece. But it will be more than offset by an approximately equal number of times that the vehicle in question is running late.



VODKA IS COMPULSORY IN POLAND

Don't expect to head out in any Polish city to meet the locals without being invited to try a little of the local stuff at least once. Vodka is not just ubiquitous in Poland, it's a national obsession, and any night owls are bound to find themselves tasting their way through the whole repertoire: cherry flavoured; nut flavoured; quince infused – you name it, it's here.



ROMANIA: DRACULA WAS A REAL PERSON

Yes that it is true but he's real name was Vlad Tepes – translated as Vlad the Impaler in English. He was a real person and not a vampire, Vlad III Dracula was a ruler in Romania in the 1400s after whom Bram Stoker patterned his character Dracula. Vlad was a very cruel and truly inhuman some historians might say. He gained infamy for simply impaling his enemies upon spikes while they were still alive! It is assumed that Vlad might've lived in Bran Castle during the 1400's and also fought battles in the area. However, Bran Castle was not his main residence.



NOD FOR NO IN BULGARIA

Quite possibly the most confusing cultural difference I encountered in Bulgaria. Yes, in Bulgaria you nod for No and shake your head for Yes. In a country like Bulgaria, where English isn't all that widely spoken, you have to rely a lot on gestures and body language. That means, simple gestures like nods and head shakes become even more critical. This will take some time to adjust to during your visit, but I found it always helps to rethink what answer you were given to ensure you understood it properly.



BASKETBALL THE SECOND RELIGION OF LITHUANIA

Lithuania, a relatively small country with less than three million people, is among top five best countries in the world when it comes to basketball. Kids start handling the basketball as soon as they can move and it is a dream of many to play for the Lithuanian National team and Kaunas Zalgiris. So, even if you think basketball is not an interesting game, you should keep this idea to yourself as Lithuanians would probably not agree with it.



SHARING IS CARING

THE ESSENCE OF THE BEAUTIFUL IS
UNITY IN VARIETY- FELIX
MENDELSSOHN

BY ALBA LOPEZ

Have you ever thought what the European Union means? Its main principle is represented in its motto: United in diversity. Sounds good doesn't it? The main values of this Community stand for Human dignity, Human rights, Freedom (of movement, private life, thought, etc.), Democracy and Equality.

The EU is not only united to ensure these values, but also to use a common currency and to work together on a common political and economical level.

In this article I would like to focus on a business level, looking more deeply into selling abroad. One of the goals of the EU is a "sustainable development based on balanced economic growth and price stability, a highly competitive market economy with full employment and social progress, and environmental protection." (1) But do countries from the European Union collaborate between them or, on the contrary, compete?

(1) Goals and values of the EU:
https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/eu-in-brief_en

There are strict EU rules that protect free competition and prohibit certain practices. Some of the second ones would be price fixing, market sharing or agreements on customer allocation. That said, even that the EU promotes equality and cooperation, there are a lot of countries that fight for certain funds or industries.

Focusing on the example of Greece and Spain, both countries are always competing against each other for the most touristic country of the Union. As a result, prices of both countries go down, tourists take advantage of low prices and it makes it harder for both of them to improve their economy. When EU countries don't cooperate together, it is hard for everyone to win. On the other hand, collaborative economy can be seen in many sectors. One of the recent examples can be the collaboration on a EU Space Project called ESA. Thanks to the cooperation of all the countries four satellites were sent into space on December 2017.

In my ideal European Union all countries would collaborate together. There would be one main objective, that is, all countries helping each other to make a better European Union.