

Macron's European Renewal

From the pen of Emmanuel Macron in the Elysee, available in twenty two languages, has emerged a manifesto entitled "For European Renewal" [1].

Superficially ambitious it proposes numerous new institutions and initiatives for Europe (i.e. the EU). But really it is just the old, stale, "more Europe" agenda writ large - which maybe why the eurosceptic Daily Mail chose to print it *in toto*.

There is to be a European Agency for the Protection of Democracy. This institution "will provide each Member State with European experts to protect their election process against cyber attacks and manipulation". Stop the Russians persuading the half-educated to vote the wrong way, I guess.

There is a "covenant" with Africa. This programme will see the EU help with African development via investment, academic partnerships and education for girls (this last really is a good idea). Also, perhaps, migrant detention camps on the Mediterranean coast.

What about migration - that most neuralgic of topics? Well the word occurs just once. He says: "On the issue of migration, I believe in a Europe that protects both its values and its borders". This vision is to be executed by a common border force and European Asylum Office. There is a swipe at the East Europeans who are told they must accept their fair share or not be in the Schengen area at all.

Some proposals are not for new programmes or institutions. For instance trade policy is to be revamped to guarantee "fair competition" and impose "penalties or a ban on businesses that compromise our strategic interests and fundamental values" (swipe at China). A new defence treaty is proposed (swipe at USA).

Here is a table of the proposals that are for institutions or programmes. The second column indicates whether this is a new institution or a programme of action, the third column contains "police" if the function of the institution/programme would be to regulate (i.e police) an existing activity from Brussels or to enable new activity.

European Agency for the Protection of Democracies	institution	police
European Asylum Office	institution	police
European Council for Internal Security	institution	police
European Climate Bank	institution	enable
European food safety force	institution	police
European supervision of the major platforms	programme	police
European Innovation Council	institution	enable
Covenant for the future with Africa	programme	enable
A Conference for Europe	programme	enable
Citizens' panels	programme	enable

There are 1600 words in the document: that is more Europe every 160 words.

Why bother with this manifesto since it is unlikely to actually go anywhere? Not because of anything in the document but because of the thing that isn't, because of something extraordinary that is missing. There is absolutely nothing about democracy, about repairing the perceived democratic deficit of the EU. It is as if he is just blind to the issue. And surely that is amazing. Or perhaps not. Macron once said "France has an implicit nostalgia for the monarchy" and his predecessor Francois Hollande thought he had authoritarian tendencies [2]. Maybe at bottom Macron is only loosely attached to democracy - like to an institutional afterthought.

There is another thing. How can a man who does not mention democracy be the great white hope of the europhiles in the UK (for example at the Financial Times)? Maybe they are only part-time democrats as well.

Peter Mott

peter2108mott@gmail.com

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References

- [1] Emmanuel Macron. *For European Renewal*. March 4, 2019. URL: <https://www.elysee.fr/emmanuel-macron/2019/03/04/for-european-renewal.en> (accessed 03/04/2019).
- [2] Hadrien Mathoux. *Macron vu par Hollande: en enfant-roi borde de nouilles*. April 11, 2018. URL: <https://www.marianne.net/politique/macron-vu-par-hollande-un-enfant-roi-borde-de-nouilles> (accessed 03/06/2019).