



THOU WHO DO NOT RESIST EVIL, THOU FOSTER IT

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I am not an adherent to biblical wisdoms.

This rule, however, has been articulated by many - in different forms and in different contexts - because within the complexity of human life we encounter, sooner or later, the necessity of such a moral, but political also, imperative. I highlight the complexity because it is of crucial importance - against the simple evil, directly inflicted on us, men oppose spontaneously, with no need to be convinced beforehand that this is the right reaction. With the complexity of contemporary social life, however, things are quite different - one can easily get the

impression that a particular evil is too far away, and therefore does not concern him or her. Furthermore, the very cognition of what's evil is not that simple.

This is exactly the case with today's debates on the right of the European Union to punish the Member states when their governments do not honour the fundamental values of the European Union:

- liberal democracy, guaranteeing the rights of the political opponent
- freedom of speech, without which there would be no informed and, hence, responsible civil and political behaviours
- the personal civil freedoms, without which everything else is void of meaning on its own, nor could it exist as a social mechanism, allowing the achievement of the the central aim of the EU – the triunity of peace, stability and prosperity.

Exactly because the Union is just an instrument for the achievement of these fundamental values, important for us all, its existence is a value in itself, which



deserves to be a high priority for us and to be protected.

For a very long period of time - approximately two decades - after the establishment of the European Union in the beginning of the 90s of the last century, it seemed that the basic values upon which it has been founded, were so deeply rooted in the socio-political history of the Western European societies that they were taken for granted, by default. Moreover, it was assumed that the direct significance of each one of them, for the sustainment of the others, was a sufficient guarantee that all Member countries would strictly follow these values because they affect the entire citizenship. It seemed that these values - once established in a society - would be self-sustaining.

In the middle of 2018 it has already become unquestionably clear that this is not the case in reality - in a number of countries where the governments received the power because they were selected and supported by democratically voting majorities, one can notice permanent tendencies of abuse of power in the form of violation (in a legal form) of the fundamental principles of the European Union. As an urgent - and even delayed - measure (against these abuses of power in such countries) on May 2 this year, the European Commission came up with a proposal¹, to link the access to EU funds to imperative adherence to the rule of law as a key center of EU's fundamental values and a guarantee for the successful application of its policies.

¹ The concrete proposition is a major political accent in the overall financial framework, aimed at resolving the strategic task of "doing more with less (funds)". The statement is unambiguous: "A major innovation in the proposed budget is the strengthened link between EU funding and the rule of law. Respect for the rule of law is an essential precondition for sound financial management and effective EU funding. The Commission is therefore proposing a new mechanism to protect the EU budget

Of course, this measure provoked a massive and clamorous political resistance, extensively reinforced in the mass-media. The most important arguments against this new instrument in the policy of fight against the violation of the fundamental values are, in fact, only two:

Firstly, the means from the funds are intended for specific policy aims - for example, regional development, and their discontinuation would harm only this sector, and would affect neither the policies for encouragement of the non-liberal (euphemism for authoritarian) democracy, nor the destruction of the rule of law, and the limitations to the freedom of speech. These are, seemingly, different things with no connection to each other.

Secondly, although targeted at punishing the politicians, the proposed measures would not affect them, but rather the majority of citizens who would not receive the necessary resources for their social development.

These arguments appear to be quite sensible (as well as all the rest in the arsenal of resistance against the new initiative of the European Commission). And here is the right place to recall the critical importance of the problem of distinguishing good from evil in the complicated social systems. In these societies, neither the good, nor the evil are self-evident. This does not mean, however, that they cannot be identified.

But it must be clearly explained that the EU funds are not a social benefit that all citizens are subscribed to,

from financial risks linked to generalised deficiencies regarding the rule of law in the Member States. The new proposed tools would allow the Union to suspend, reduce or restrict access to EU funding in a manner proportionate to the nature, gravity and scope of the rule of law deficiencies."

(https://ec.europa.eu/commission/news/eu-budget-future-2018-may-02_bg)

regardless of their behaviour; the access to them is not a universal right, such as the right to life, the right of personal security, etc. On the contrary, the financial resource of the Union is simply an instrument for the achievement of other priority social goals, aiming at the prosperity of the European citizenship, which is, however, responsible for its own fate.

Above all, the European Union is in itself a complex institutional instrument for guaranteeing peace, stability and prosperity, and its own resources are needed for its strengthening and consolidation. Therefore, governments that launch policies which destroy the foundations of the EU, cannot be granted access to funds aimed at its stabilization and development. For example, there cannot be a regional cohesion between the EU Member states, if the EU itself is non-existent. Adherence to the fundamental values is a preliminary, common and exclusive condition for all the remaining particular EU integration policies.² This is above all, a matter of common sense and basic moral integrity.

² It is not an accident that in the Communication from the Commission "A new, modern Multiannual Financial Framework for a European Union that delivers efficiently on its priorities post-2020" from 14 February this year, it has already been clearly stated: "The Union is a community of law and its values constitute the very basis of its existence. They permeate its entire legal and institutional structure and all its policies and programmes. Respect for these values must therefore be ensured throughout all Union policies. This includes the EU budget, where respect for fundamental values is an essential precondition for sound financial management and effective EU funding. Respect for the rule of law is important for European citizens, as well as for business initiatives, innovation and investment. The European economy flourishes most where the legal and institutional framework adheres fully to the common values of the Union".
(<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:52018DC0098&from=BG>)

More to that, exactly the citizens of these countries that bare such governments, should be able to feel - through the quality of their lives - the weight of the governmental policy, so that they can keep the authorities responsible for this weight.³

Even if the implementation of the new rules create - in a short-term perspective - additional inequalities between societies with, metaphorically phrased - "protestant ethos", and the rest, this price is worth being paid now, because of the strategic advantages of the policies, based on the European values.

Otherwise, "Thou who do not resist evil, thou foster it!". This concerns each one of us...

³ One should pay attention that the Commission stresses exactly the civil aspect of the key facilitation of the management of the EU budget: "A number of programmes will directly help to strengthen and uphold EU values and the respect of the rule of law. Most notably, the new Justice, Rights and Values Programme will focus on sustaining the open, democratic, inclusive and creative societies which Europeans expect. It will empower citizens by putting forward European values, cultural and linguistic diversity and heritage. It will protect the rights of European citizens and contribute to creating a European Area of Justice"
(https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/budget-proposals-financial-management-rule-law-may2018_en.pdf)
Empowering the European citizens mainly is a mandatory prerequisite for effectiveness in the resistance against the violation of the rule of law and the remaining EU values in general, and in particular, for the sustainable use of "the EU budget that protects, empowers and defends".