



On the Semantic Domains of the European Construction

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Let us stop for a moment; let us take a breath to restore the fragmented memories of the long route we covered since our common willpower on the European unity construction begun to prevail over the set of our mutual disagreements.

If we carefully look at those memories, we'll clearly find a point where the voices supporting the unity of Europe by federating its diversity managed to be heard over the still resonant noise of war. Attending to our Galician sources it is possible to locate that point at the succession of the federalist meetings which, starting at Switzerland, brought forward the Den Haag Congress on 1948 where the convenience of a political European unity was stated under the presidency of the British Premier Winston Churchill.

After that, 'the construction process of the European Union will flow over the path outlined by its Treaties determining the character of the

communitary institutions, extending their competencies or approving the integration of new Member States' (Nogueira 2008). The Declaration read by Schuman in 1950 will facilitate the ECSC Treaty to be signed on 1951; this one will be followed in 1957 by the Treaties of Rome (EEC and EURATOM) finally joining all together in the 1965 Merger Treaty when the previous existence of the BENELUX Treaty helped to define a first core composed of Germany, Belgium, France, The Netherlands, Italy and Luxembourg. After that, the union would continue growing with the arrival of a common budget mechanism from the Treaty of 1970 and the Accession Treaties of the UK, Denmark and Ireland in 1973.

The Budgetary Treaty in 1975 created the ECA (European Court of Auditors) -a body intended to audit the accounts of the three communities: ECSC, ECC and EURATOM- and also granted the rights of the Parliament to reject and approve the execution of the Commission Budget. Between 1979 and 1986 will follow the Adhesion Treaties of Greece, Portugal and the Spanish State -along

with the Greenland Treaty. The Single European Act (SEA) extended the EEC competencies, strengthening the Parliament functions and establishing the objective of the Internal Market for 1992.

In that same year the Treaty on European Union is signed, consolidating the Parliament through the co-decision procedure, introducing new forms of cooperation between Member States in key fields -like defence, justice or home affairs-, determining new communitary policies in education or culture and -especially relevant- creating the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) deciding a set of economic convergence criteria as exchange rate stability in order to achieve a common currency.

The accessions of Austria, Finland and Sweden until 1995 will precede the Treaty of Amsterdam in 1997 which will produce consolidated versions of the previous Treaties going deeper in aspects as the co-decision and qualified vote procedures in a similar way as the next one: the Treaty of Nice in 2001, entered into force in February 2003. The Czech Republic, Cyprus, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia acceded to the EU in 2004 before Romania and Bulgaria, who accessed in 2007.

This first segment of European unity construction ended just in that year with the Treaty of Lisbon signature when, in order to go forward on the unity process it was necessary to modulate the constitutional nature of the adopted in 2004 by the Heads of State and Government at the Brussels European Council but never ratified Treaty establishing a constitution for Europe.

After that first era, delimited from the BENELUX to the Lisbon Treaty, we are asking ourselves about the future steps on the European unity construction. Could it be possible to continue with the enlargement process of the European Union? Could we continue going deep in the 'de facto' internal European federalisation process as the organic evolution of the stateless nations and regions is showing us? Could our experience to be reused by other regions in the world having similar problems as those we faced in the middle of the past century? Of course we will need to identify the right questions if we want use useful answers but we'll also need to identify the proper language to do them; and it might be a European wide understandable language. Which one? Let's do some 'information retrieval' work in order to identify some candidate.

Given the fact that all those Treaties are indeed texts -and therefore that they can be thinkable

and processable as the large sets of character strings they are-, it could be possible to collect all them in a single data file which could include their amended and consolidated versions as well as all the legal literature generated from the institutions and procedures they'd instantiated during the last fifty years. What that aggregation mechanism has produced then is a textual corpus suitable to be processed by the computational methods used in linguistic research in order to extract and format its core linguistic resources - i.e. glossaries, dictionaries, thesauri or taxonomies- and then to describe the syntax and even the grammar of a very interesting linguistic superset: just that one which allowed us, Europeans, to go forward with our unity establishing mutual relationships outside the field of bellic violence for more than fifty years.

After all that Computational Linguistic research now we have identified a sort of meta-language that demonstrated to work quite well in the past. But: has it expired with the constitutional issue or could it still work from now? May it also help us to express and solve our doubts on the future steps of the European unity and, consequently, about our common future? Answering this is again a linguistic matter: to that one dedicated to identify what that 'meta-language' can

express or talk about; which are its valid senses, meanings or acceptations and therefore: which are the concepts that conform the ontology managed by that language. At the end, what we'll need to do in order to go forward with the construction of the European unity process is to identify common semantic domains and to apply on them our successfully tested meta-language.

Of course, we will need to improve our meta-language in order to make it compatible with new semantic domains and to solve eventual errors and warnings. Let us do a first approximation.

Semantically data mining the previous textual corpus, soon we will find a continual common interest about the European production system related concepts. First the coil and steel industry integration (ECSC), then the uranium one (EURATOM), the budgetary and financial system (EEC/ EC), the common market and the currency policy (the EMU), the common agriculture and fisheries policies (CAP and CFP) or the structural and cohesion funds (ERDF, ESF) are good examples of that.

It seems to be clear that our meta-language works quite well on the semantic domain of the European economical production system so if we

want to continue using that meta-language in an as-is basis, then we will need to identify a common interest production system. Just taking a look around, it will be easy to agree on the suitability of the semantic field linked to the Information and Communication Technologies as a good candidate given the real challenges driven by ICT introduction in all the orders of our modern societies.

Focussing on ICT production system terms can be framed on the Information and Knowledge Society development and, from a European perspective, on the Pan-European eGovernment Services (PEGS) deployment.

The final question is: could it be possible to apply our meta-language in the 'PEGS deployment' semantic domain? Is our meta-language ready or might it be improved in order to continue with the European unity construction process? This question will be answered by our citizens, business and public administrations during the next years, as they are the users -or speakers- of that meta-language. Because PEGS relies on interoperability -and as interoperability is clearly a matter of European construction- one can be optimistic, specially noticing that IDABC is working on the background.

Moreover the success of projects like the EIF, the Open Source Migration Guidelines or, more recently, the [OSOR](#), [IDABC's SEMIC.EU](#) will facilitate the convenient Semantic Interoperability needed to a successfully PEGS deployment. That Semantic Interoperability will establish -from the end-user perspective- transitive relationships between the elements of different sets: an expression which can be used to talk about both unity and identity concepts.

With IDABC's SEMIC.EU initiative now it is possible to find a symbolic junction point between both necessary ways - the institutional or unity one and the cultural or identity one- because semantics relies in the background -even when the assets have completely different natures on each field. Once again IDABC is providing the European construction with the necessary tools just in time.

Now: time to resume this break in our half a century itinerary. Time to continue walking through the European unity way, each one with its own load and all together in the same way. Over the last millennium wayfarers crossed all Europe arriving to Galicia in their search of the 'Finis Terrae'. If tiredness arrived at their spirit, the strength was recovered when hearing from others the ancient salutation: Ultreia! Times

changed from then, and now our roads are
becoming electronic so let's update that
salutation for a more proper one to strengthen

our willpower in the European aboutness:
Interoperability!

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