

PREFACE

AGUSTÍN GORDILLO is a man who cares about his country, Argentina, and about Latin America altogether. He is a thinker; most important of all he is an opinion leader. Administrative lawyer with an international experience and reputation, he has acquired over the years a wide range of perspective and wisdom, that allows him to intervene in the public discussion and take position in order to contribute in the elaboration of a new world in Latin America.

Latin America has suffered a lot. Financial ups and downs, corruption, patronage, clienteles, dictatorships, institutional dysfunctions in democratic times, etc. It occurs that outsiders believe that this situation has become inherent in the societies of the region, that those dysfunctions are almost synonym of Latin America. The truth is, however, that this kind of dysfunctions is very much present in Europe and other parts of the world as well.

Agustín Gordillo is familiar with an excellent example of cooperation between Latin America, North America and Europe: the Inter-American Development Bank. Focusing on this example, where nations from all these regions are represented and cooperate for a better future in Latin America, he came up with an idea: if this is a well functioning instrument for regional development, if North Americans and Europeans care about the financial and institutional development of the region, why should they not join forces for a new financial and political structure of Latin America with better governance?

First of all, Gordillo is of the opinion that his region should follow the example of the European nations and create a financial and political structure similar to the European Union. Secondly, he finds it important that the USA and the European Union have a minority vote and participation in the new structure.

The tights between Latin America and Europe are traditional and strong. The creation of the nations of that part of the world were the result of European migrations and settlement. The political and societal structures are also local adaptations of European values and prototypes. Meanwhile, Europe has also benefited from Latin American values, especially from the cultural dialogue, not to mention the enthusiasm of European intelligentsia towards their liberation movements and its compassion towards the political misfortunes of various nations.

Due to economic disaster and poverty in Latin America in comparison with economic growth and wealth in Europe, a massive move of highly educated youngsters is recorded from Latin America to Europe, benefiting therefore from their nationalities of the past, which they had tried for centuries to forget. If Latin Americans come back to Europe, perhaps Europe must return to Latin America?

I do believe that Europe has a duty towards Latin America. If Europe wants to become a reference in the international political system, it has to assume its part of responsibility for a better world, for democracy, good governance, economic growth and social justice. Europe has its own values which Latin America does share, especially as it keeps coming closer to Europe.

The European Union has already developed various policies for the region, perhaps, however, not as extensively as it has in other parts of the world. The European Public Law Center is, thanks to one of those policies, present in Latin America, working closely with various Latin American Universities with the aim of the formation of a better post-graduate studies programme in public law. However, the question remains as follows: Should the European Union be part of a Latin American Union, be it with a minority vote?

Europe extending its presence to this part of the world, discovered centuries ago by Europeans, and assisting its sister countries to develop and prosper with the aim of better global governance, would indeed be an ideal.

I doubt, however, that, for the time being, Europe can, with its existing structures, assume a role of this importance. Mainly, because the European Union has not yet proved that it can produce a uniform foreign policy. Only if things change thanks to the much expected Constitution of Europe, currently under process of elaboration, could Europe play eventually such a role.

Only the future will tell whether this concept is achievable. Meanwhile, we can only promise our distinguished and learned friend Professor Agustín Gordillo, that our institution, the European Public Law Center, with its humble means will never forget his appeal for Latin American and European public lawyers to work together towards a better mutual understanding and towards a better governance in Latin America. We have a responsibility too, and we have already taken that challenge.

SPYRIDON FLOGAITIS

Professor of Administrative Law at the University of Athens
Director of the European Public Law Center