

# Independence and neutrality

## Switzerland in the EU mist

by Thomas Scherr\*

*A new understanding of independence and neutrality is settling like mildew over the Swiss media world and spreading among the population. In the following, this mildew will be removed with a few facts and some logic.*

Many are now of the opinion that Brussels must be accommodated in the negotiations with the EU. The erroneous opinion that unilateral coercive measures against Russia are somehow compatible with neutrality is also finding favour in the media. How did this creeping change of opinion come about and what does it signify?

The following article will initially 'only' deal with the EU. We hear almost only positive things about it in our media. Has Brussels improved? For the Swiss media and the 'classe politique', Brussels now seems to have become an honest reference point with which it is possible to negotiate on an equal footing. But with whom has the Federal Council been negotiating a reshaping of relations for some time now? And who is Brussels?

On the surface, the EU is an alliance of states with the undeclared aim of growing together to form a large European state. The EU is not democratic. It functions 'top-down'. Legislative proposals do not come from the citizens, nor can they influence decisions in any way. Anyone who settles any agreements with the EU is therefore not negotiating with a democratic counterpart, but with an elite of functionaries who are not accountable to the population.

### Around 80 per cent of all laws from the EU

Around 80 per cent of laws and regulations in the individual EU member states are no longer decided in their own countries, but in Brussels. Theoretically, this leaves 20 per cent that could be passed in the respective countries. However, these laws must not contradict any EU law or regulation. There are thousands of legal texts

and tens of thousands of regulations – often only in English... In the event of conflicts between the EU and a member state, the *European Court of Justice* (ECJ) is the final judge. Its judges are appointed – but not democratically. Their decisions tend to be in favour of the EU. The decisions of the ECJ are ultimately enforced via supply of money (cf. the dispute with Poland over press law or with Hungary over family law) or via sanctions, as was the case against Austria in 2000.

### The EU Parliament – a façade of democracy

Even if there is an EU 'parliament' and there are some credible, even committed parliamentarians in it, this parliament has remained just a façade since 1958, occupied by MEPs who are fed and often led by lobbyists. However, the laws proposed by the EU Commission and then approved by the EU Parliament affect all citizens in their direct daily lives from Helsinki to Athens. Every law and every regulation has advantages for individual lobbying and economic sectors. Depending on how the laws and regulations turn out, they are favourable or disadvantageous. The sums involved are often in the billions. Who can gain influence over individual commissioners, members of parliament or senior executives and influence the course of decision-making? Enormous sums of money and favours from third parties are handed-out under the counter.<sup>1</sup> Effective controls have been lacking for decades. Much has been promised, but little has happened.

### At the mercy of Brussels' decisions

The EU does not recognise democratic decision-making processes that originate from the citizens. The "parliament" does not implement direct decisions by citizens on substantive issues, as is possible in Switzerland by the right of initiative and referendum. The people of the EU are at the mercy of Brussels' decisions.<sup>2</sup> – This is somewhat pathetic for an entity that comes across as so positively "democratic" in our mainstream media.

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The undemocratic structure of the EU is also reflected in the fact that the EU Commission has been involved in various corruption scandals for decades. This is hardly recognised by the public. It is not that the EU Commission has become less susceptible to corruption – it is just that there is less reporting about it.

### **The EU President is under investigation**

Investigating authorities are currently looking into a contract signed between EU Commission President *Ursula von der Leyen* and the pharmaceutical company *Pfizer* for Covid vaccine doses worth 20 billion euros. On 5 April 2023, Belgian lobbyist *Frédéric Baldan* filed a criminal complaint with a Belgian authority against von der Leyen for “usurpation of functions and titles”, “destruction of public documents”, “illegal taking of interests and corruption”. Hungary and Poland joined the complaint.<sup>3</sup>

In the meantime, investigators from the *European Public Prosecutor’s Office* (EPPO) have also become active.<sup>4</sup> This is not the first time that von der Leyen has acted on her own authority. Even today, German judicial authorities are still looking into the contracts she signed as Federal Minister of Defence<sup>5</sup> (2013–2019), which she also concluded by mobile phone.<sup>6</sup> And how von der Leyen came to her position as President of the EU Commission is a story in itself.<sup>7</sup> She is not the first and only member of the EU Commission to be involved in major irregularities.

### **Is the EU a serious contractual partner?**

This raises the question of whether the EU is a serious contractual partner with whom we would like to engage more closely and to whom we would also like to grant the final judicial decision in disputes – even on specifically Swiss issues?

Why does the mainstream media play down the advantages of Switzerland, while the EU mutates into an almost “likeable” counterpart? Compared to the situation of citizens in EU countries, the political and legal conditions in Switzerland are nothing short of being heavenly: these include short decision-making paths, direct democratic decision-making, federal structures, a cultivated middle class, the political

rights of the population and the country’s independence.

So how did this creeping rapprochement with the EU come about? Are some representatives of the *classe politique* flirting with the idea of getting lucrative posts in Brussels and Strasbourg? Do they want to please? Is money flowing, are private sector jobs beckoning? Or is the selfish pressure from the now internationalised Swiss economy and finance becoming so great that thoughts about self-determination and democracy no longer have any place in the negotiations with Brussels? More self-confidence in our own strengths would suit us well. An objective view of our negotiating partner could save us from major disappointments.

(Translation “Swiss Standpoint”)

- <sup>1</sup> Corruption is the order of the day. Cf. the trivialising *Wikipedia*: “MEPs are often “fed” with free offers by lobby organisations. According to analyses by Austrian MEP *Hans-Peter Martin*, the value of offers made by lobbyists, such as trips, dinners, or cocktail receptions, can reach up to €10,000 pre week.” [https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lobbyismus#cite\\_note-84](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lobbyismus#cite_note-84)  
cf. One of the latest major scandals is the corruption scandal involving EU Parliament Vice-President *Eva Kaili* and other MEPs. <https://www.srf.ch/play/tv/10-vor-10/video/verdacht-auf-korruption-im-eu-parlament?urn=urn:srf:video:c662871c-d867-46a9-883b-070376a3fcff>
- <sup>2</sup> Just think of the referendums on the EU Constitution in 2005, which was rejected by the people in France and the Netherlands. The slightly amended content was then waved through in 2009 as “Treaty of Lisbon” without a referendum.
- <sup>3</sup> Cf. <https://www.voltairenet.org/article220679.html>, 2 April 2024
- <sup>4</sup> Cf. <https://tkp.at/2024/04/03/pfizer-gate-erstmal-direkte-ermittlungen-gegen-von-der-leyen/>, 4 April 2024
- <sup>5</sup> U. von der Leyen involved the Bundeswehr in a quagmire of consultancy activities in which she also used her close family environment. Cf. [https://www.zeit.de/politik/deutschland/2020-02/ursula-von-der-leyen-untersuchungsausschuss-berateraffaere-bundeswehr?utm\\_referrer=https%3A%2F%2Fmetager.de%2F](https://www.zeit.de/politik/deutschland/2020-02/ursula-von-der-leyen-untersuchungsausschuss-berateraffaere-bundeswehr?utm_referrer=https%3A%2F%2Fmetager.de%2F), 13 Februar 2020)
- <sup>6</sup> Cf. <https://www.tagesschau.de/inland/handy-von-der-leyen-101.html>, 13 Januar 2020
- <sup>7</sup> The state of the EU was demonstrated in 2019 by the election of EU President *Ursula von der Leyen*. She was elected president at short notice at the request of *Emmanuel Macron*. This allowed her to escape the problems she had as German Federal Minister of Defence. The German CSU politician *Manfred Weber* was the intended choice. Macron intervened and Weber resigned «voluntarily».