Forced federalization, continuation of the current slump, dislocation of Maastricht Europe, which of these three scenarios would be the worst?

Taking into account a medium- to long-term perspective, how to assess what would be the worst of these three scenarios for France; between a European integration-federalization, a continuation of the European project as it is, or a European dislocation.

1-From a political point of view, particularly in terms of liberal democracy, institutions and values?

As I am conservative or, if you prefer, realistic, in the sense that this term has in medieval philosophy, I will start by answering you that I do not like the term "values", which dates back to Nietzsche and which is the open door to relativism. You will notice that the "values" carried by individuals do not weigh heavily against the value of the market-king. We must return to the pre-Machiavellian period and reaffirm, following Plato, Aristotle, Cicero or Saint Thomas, that there are good and bad governments. The government of one can be good (monarchy) or harmful (tyranny); the government of an elite, likewise, can be aristocracy, government of the best, or oligarchy, confiscation of power for the benefit of a few; the government of the people, democracy, can turn into ochlocracy, government of the undifferentiated crowd. Liberal democracy is a type of mixed regime, as recommended by Aristotle, which ideally combines a share of aristocracy (when the representatives of the people are chosen among the best, including an elite aware of their duties) and sovereignty residing in the people. But we can see, in the European project as it is or as the federalists imagine it, a drift towards oligarchy and a tendency to discard the control of representatives by the people; as a result, populism has appeared, which is a kind of call for ochlocracy. Should we therefore want European dislocation? I fear that we will soon no longer be able to decide for ourselves because we will have allowed the forms of good government to fall apart. But ideally, France should be the bearer of a new subsidiarity: we would reduce the number of areas that concern Brussels. It would not only be to restore national sovereignty - the power of the citizens; it would also require the national power to agree to decentralize, to return to the level of the city, to the municipal level, a certain number of subjects that will be better dealt with by local democracy than by democracy representing national authorities. This is how we would respond to the Yellow Vests' request to restore people's control over the issues that matter.

2-From a geopolitical point of view, particularly in the balance of power between the major current complexes?

Twenty or thirty years ago, supporters of a federal Europe insisted, at least in France, on the need for a "Power Europe". Basically, this is still the reasoning of Emmanuel Macron, who expresses his desire to build a European sovereignty, to meet the challenges of the time. The question is, of course, whether this makes sense at the time of the third industrial revolution. The information revolution has consisted in the exponential increase in storage capacities, their permanent miniaturization, according to Moore's law. Information is becoming more and more abundant and available at all levels. Hierarchies collapse, replaced by networks. The average size of companies is constantly decreasing. This is the ideal trend, of course, that must be protected. In practice, there is also the possibility of accumulating so much information and having it processed by machines with ever more powerful computing capabilities that we arrive at the constitution of giants, such as Google, Amazon, Alibaba. *Big data* feeds the development of artificial intelligence and we can well imagine how we could move from the omnipotence of Google to the reign of machines. Is the future not, after all, in the hands of the Transhumanist United States and neototalitarian China? To this, we can respond in two ways: we must put an end to the very harmful competition policy of the EU, which prevents both the constitution of European champions and the possibility for States to respond with the legal means of sovereignty and the political weapons of power. If it is possible to establish digital sovereignty, at European level, why deprive yourself of it, even if recent debates on the taxation of GAFAs do not prejudge what could happen? In any case, at both national and European level, it is absolutely possible to restore balance with the giants of the digital economy, provided that the political will is there. Amazon is shaking on its foundations due to the divorce of its CEO but also to growing complaints about staff abuse. Facebook is aware of its fragility and is starting to work on the ethical issues of data processing by working with European universities..... We see both how vulnerable we are with a European federalist dynamic that weakens states without substituting effective government at EU level. On the one hand, the Europe of Brussels lacks many of the attributes of power to resemble China, India, Russia or the United States. On the other hand, it is not certain that these continental states will be viable in the medium and long term in the post-digital world. Europe has, in its history, the secret of creativity: the proliferation of territories of moderate size, balanced metropolises, centres of innovation spread throughout the continent. It is a decentralized model that we could defend.

3-Economically speaking?

We will never tire of underlining the economic absurdity of having created a sub-optimal monetary zone without prior political union. The fixed exchange rate policy in a heterogeneous whole has not only created divergences but also increased political resentment, within nations (Yellow Vests crisis) and, to a certain extent, between them (verbal fights between Emmanuel Macron and Matteo Salvini). At the same time, we should hope that the euro will finally be transformed into a real currency (abolition of national central banks, creation of debt on a euro zone scale by an ECB that would finally pursue a policy in the service of growth and employment instead of being obsessed with the fight against inflation and contenting itself with a *quantitative easing in the* service of banks). But haven't we crossed a point of no return? Is Germany able to question its own apprehension of financial transfers within the euro zone at a time when AfD is disrupting the entire German political landscape? At the opposite

end of the spectrum is the spectre of a dislocation of the euro zone. Are intermediate scenarios possible? Contrary to what was said at the time of the debate between Marine Le Pen and Emmanuel Macron, the idea of moving from a single currency regime to a coexistence regime between the euro and national currencies was not a bad idea; simply, Marine Le Pen had not taken the time to understand the idea she was putting forward - she was quite unable to pick up Macron's mistakes that evening, who claimed, for example, that unemployment was higher before the introduction of the euro, while on the contrary, unemployment increased with the disappearance of monetary flexibility. But it must be understood that such a scenario - the transition to a common currency - must be accompanied by a radical change in our vision of money and credit. In the digital age, it will not only be a question of recreating national currencies: we can also imagine a proliferation of local currencies and cryptocurrencies, private or not. Central banks will probably have to be largely restricted to their role as guarantors of last resort. And for the rest, trust the market – including all the new forms that the economy of the digital age is inventing: collaborative, circular, symbiotic economy etc.....

If we take another example, that of ecology, it is obvious that we must turn our backs on these great summits, which do nothing but damage the planet by burning kerosene unnecessarily; and instead we must trust the innovative capacity of small and medium-sized companies rooted in local practice and experience; we must think in terms of local or regional energy networks, adaptation to microclimates; we must also think about sustainable cities within their territories. Europe could excel at this, provided it abandons the Gosplan side of the Sustainable Development Goals and summits to save the planet, which are a huge waste of money and energy, in every sense of the word.

4- Taking into account all these points, what would be the most desirable scenario?

Between the supporters of the status quo or of a *top down* integration dystopia, and the populists, there is, in any case in France, a great democratic force of *take back control*. The British Conservative Party, from the moment it is able to reunite, as in recent days, offers a still somewhat simplistic version of the challenges ahead. From the French point of view, one could wish for the emergence of a political force with a real alternative element: demanding the renegotiation of the European treaties according to the principles of subsidiarity and making the long-standing commitment to give priority to the will of the people. I imagine a multiple effort: pressure on European partners to reduce the competences and the number of areas affected by Brussels; a return to the fundamentals of national sovereignty: superiority of national jurisdiction, control of the Commission and the European Council by the national parliament; return to the original form of the European Parliament, an assembly made up of delegates of national parliaments; abandoning the utopia of a European army and restoring national military service for all; reaffirmation of national borders whenever it is impossible to establish a European consensus; return to the ECU (European Currency Unit) and establishment of a monetary system and a decentralised credit system. At the same time, in France, decision-making levels should be abolished (regions, metropolitan areas, departments, communities of municipalities, communes,

etc..... cannot be kept in a stack); the criterion for abolition would be the ability of citizens to participate in the bodies of the preserved levels. In any case, the French *take back control* will mean a transfer not only from the European level to the national level but also from the national level to the local level.