19. Archipelago: where do the information platforms that are states live? The EU

> *'I would first of all like to say something about archipelagos. I think the idea of the archipelago – as a place where we can begin to understand and resolve the contradictions of the world – should be propagated. The archipelagos of the Mediterranean must encounter the archipelagos of Asia, and the archipelago of the Antilles. These archipelagos must encounter each other because, across their many islands, interdependence and difference coexist – and, in this way, they carry the energy that is necessary for our whole globe, our whole world.'*
>
> *Edouard Glissant*

***Synopsis**: Where do the information platforms that are states live? If the information platforms that are states can be visualised as informational islands living in a vast ocean, meaning, our planet, some of them have decided to come closer together and form larger constellations, that is, to form archipelagos: information platforms for the information platforms that are states; The EU is the first such archipelago (1); States are still in the 'state of nature' (2–3); International law and the UN (4–7); The EU as the platform for platforms (8); Cosmopolitanism, and other (utopian) alternatives (10); The EU (11); Interoperability versus integration (12); What the EU is and what it does (13–15); Archipelagos enlarged (16); Are archipelagos natural? (17–20); The differences between an archipelago and a federation—or an empire (21).*

1.

Where do the information platforms that are states live? Within their respective platforms each state individualises its citizens and makes it possible for them to live meaningful lives[558]—in fact, giving (human) life, meaning.[559] However, states do this internally, within the confines of their infor-

558 See Chap. 7, par. 3.
559 See Chap. 8, par. 1.

mation platforms, their borders.[560] Where do these platforms themselves live?[561]

In human development terms, states are still living in a 'state of nature', where life is precarious and recognition by others, if any, is bilateral and conditional. For humans, this was the stage when, having just acquired self-consciousness and developed language, they presented themselves to the other members of their tribe or the community they lived as a separate individual with a new name that they had chosen for themselves, and asked for recognition as such. These are unquestionably distant, prehistoric times.

More specifically, these are the times when, out of this prehistoric soup, the first states emerged, in the sense of self-conscious separately named groups of individualised humans, that is, the first tribes or extended families to call themselves by a name different from that of the others around them—the first states that were created out of the fact that each of its members had his or her own name. It is these groups that allowed the newly self-conscious, language-using humans to individualise, to uniquely identify themselves in space and time.

In the same manner, the EU is the first state of states, the first named constellation of states, within which individual states retain their self-consciousness and individuality while having their own names, warranted each time in the relationships among them by the EU.

In other words, if the information platforms that are states can be visualised as informational islands living in a vast ocean, meaning our planet, some of them have decided[562] to come closer together to form larger constellations, that is, to form archipelagos. The EU is the first such archipelago, the information platform for information platforms that are states, a state for states, and the precursor of things to come.

All of the above will be elaborated in the paragraphs that follow.

2. States are still in the 'state of nature' *

It is in what we can imagine as far-distant, prehistoric times in terms of human development that states are found today. States are thousands of years behind in their development compared to humans. In other words,

560 See Chap. 17.

561 In the sense that they are Beings, they therefore can and will process information, see Chap. 2, par. 9.

562 Acting through their governments—an assumption that is made throughout this chapter. On the relationship between a state and its government, see Chap. 12.

humans may have developed within their states to the level of human civilisation we are living in today, but the states themselves have been left behind, in the time of the prehistoric soup from which human civilisation emerged.

3.

One needs only to think briefly about the 3,000, or fewer, years of human recorded history before the reality of this finding hits. State individualisation, in the way that states individualise 'their' citizens, had never occurred until very recently, with the emergence of the EU.

The empires of the past, be they Iron Age ones, Imperial Rome or even the empires of the nineteenth century, never looked or asked for the recognition of anybody. Confident in their power and might, these empires self-identified, decided on their own name and insignia, and imposed these on others. Nor was this only the case for imperial powers: city-states from Athens to Florence did not ask for recognition from others either—even when they were troubled by neighbouring empires. They too chose a name for themselves and imposed it on other states, even when they were conquered.

4. International law and the UN*

The situation changed only a little with the emergence of international law and the establishment of the UN. International law was first introduced in Europe some 400 years ago to regulate matters of war and management of the seas—these being matters not regulated internally by states. This was the first time that (more than a few neighbouring) states realised that they could work together.

International law resulted in the world we live in today, in the Westphalian nation state[563] (the Westphalian peace was entered into in 1648, shortly after the initial cooperation mentioned above). The Peace of Westphalia warranted that states existed (as named in its text and acknowledged by their peer states), and that their internal matters were managed by themselves alone.

Of course, the Peace of Westphalia only included some of the states in Europe. It took hundreds of years for its system to expand to cover all

563 See also Prologue, par. 4.

of the planet, to create the system in which we live today in the form of the UN. Effectively, however, the same system is more or less still in effect today, based on the same basic principles: states enter an international (cross-state) treaty, recognising each other and warranting certain rights among them (with the right of non-interference still much contested).

5. *

If, however, one were to remove the grand and impressive veil of the UN and the system of international law, one would quickly realise that states are still effectively in a 'state of nature'. In essence, the UN and international law are permanent *fora* for cooperation, providing formalised, permanent opportunities to discuss and to collaborate,[564] not mechanisms that provide firm state identification and individualisation—no such thing exists (other than the EU).

If accepted in the UN, a state may, perhaps, discuss with others and, potentially, enter into case-specific agreements (on human rights, citizenship etc.), potentially subjecting itself to international law. Other states which also participate in the UN may or may not accept part or all of the above, and may perhaps enter into bilateral agreements with the first state. Incentives[565] to participate (in anything from loans and bailouts to military assistance) are introduced; however, participation is ultimately voluntary.

Similarly, no one, no state that is, is obliged to accept the (self-)identification of any other state simply because it has joined (or has not joined) the UN. No state is obliged to interact with that state on the terms of its self-identification (or UN membership) or to accept that it exists at all. It is entirely possible (as is frequently the case) for a state (or a group of states) to refute everything about another, self-proclaimed state, to deny its existence altogether.

Therefore, as far as states are concerned, there is no individualisation mechanism in international law today that automatically grants them recognition as separate and distinct entities, uniquely identifiable in space and time, in the way that states do this for their citizens. Instead, states (and

564 Therefore, no *agora* of a *demos*, but rather a *Hyde Park Speakers' Corner*.
565 These naturally being self-serving for the same international order.

empires) come and go, deciding for themselves how to be named and identified, and may be unrecognised and potentially even ignored by others.[566]

6.

However, it is not only an individualisation mechanism for states that is sorely missing. Language, and thus common meaning, among them is missing too. Whatever common language there is today among states has been developed through international treaties in a technical and case-specific manner. Today international law is the only way for states to collaborate, that is, to speak a common language, to understand each other. For example, in order to agree that a ship is a ship (including their various categorisations) or that a book in one state is also a book in another (so as, for example, to protect books through regulation), a specific international legal treaty is needed each time. Evidently the same is true for every other aspect of human activity—hence the scarcity of international legal treaties and other instruments, because of the tremendous effort required each time to achieve common meaning among states.

7.*

Thus states are self-conscious, but without any individualisation mechanism in space and time, and without any substantially developed language to communicate: this is their stage of development today. As has been said, in human development terms this would be the equivalent of finding humans deep in the prehistoric soup from which they emerged as individuals through the assistance of (their) states.

8. The EU as the platform for platforms

The first state for states to emerge out of this prehistoric soup, hundreds of thousands of years after humans formed states for themselves, was formed in the 1950s. The EU is an informational superstructure where states can

566 Or, as is also frequently the case, later historiography not recognising them in the way that they self-identified (for example, the Byzantines identified themselves as Romans, but we do not).

live a meaningful life[567]—it is the information platform for the information platforms that are states, and a precursor of things to come.

9.

Essentially, states are like humans; they are, whether they like it or not, social (indeed, political) Beings.[568] They need to collaborate with the other states around them—or at least, even if enemies, need to share a common language and a common understanding (of such basic things as borders, peoples, acts of aggression or goodwill, etc.). An isolated, insulated, lonely path for any state is (and always has been) impossible.[569]

If this is, however, the case, then why have states stayed in a 'state of nature' for so long, so immensely outdone by their own citizens, who (relatively) quickly turned themselves from humans into individuals through their states?

This is because states are Beings and need to process information, but do not themselves need to augment their information processing—they just need their own citizens to do so.[570] Therefore, whereas humans quickly moved from self-consciousness to individualisation, states did not follow; it was enough for them to simply continue to exist, to remain alive. There was no need for them to individualise, to be uniquely identifiable in space and time. Whenever they were outdone in their usefulness for their citizens, in terms of the processing opportunities offered to them, they were succeeded by another state,[571] following need and opportunity. In the meantime, whatever limited (because of similarly limited processing capacity) common meaning it was necessary to develop for cross-border transactions was imperceptibly gradually achieved, because exchanges occurred anyway among neighbouring (territorial[572]) states. (Tellingly, huge clashes of understanding occurred when states expanded across oceans, for example.)

567 *Mutatis mutandis*, the same as for humans (see Chap. 7, par. 3): each (humans and states alike) having no specific purpose, the conditions necessary for the fulfilment of any purpose are in place.
568 .And thus there cannot be only one, see par. 10.
569 See also Chap. 17, par. 5.
570 See Chaps. 10 and 5.1.
571 See Chaps. 15, and 18, par. 3.
572 See Chap. 9, par. 5.

10. Cosmopolitanism, and other (utopian) alternatives*

With the advent of the digital world, states can no longer operate as information processing silos, fortified informational castles or closed gardens, as was the case in the past.[573] They can no longer rely on bilateral, unarbitrated[574] relationships, within which each party must on every occasion first convince the other bilaterally of its existence: the formation of informational archipelagos is thus the only way forward.

Before, however, elaborating upon informational archipelagos, one ought first to examine possible alternatives. What about humans having only one state—could only one state exist on the planet (i.e. following the concept of cosmopolitanism)?

Discussions about a single-state planet are certainly not new; however, nothing of the sort has come to fruition—or is ever likely to do so. This is because it is unnatural, in the sense that it is contrary to the nature of the state itself: a state has always been defined through its juxtaposition with another, a necessary other. Individuals belong to one state[575] and not to another (neighbouring one), this is how they self-identify.

In technical terms, in a single-state planet one of the two basic components of identity (citizenship) would be abolished (there cannot be a group or a category, as in Aristotelian categorisation, if only one group exists overall). Therefore another individualisation mechanism would have to be discovered to replace it, a mere name not being nearly[576] enough. While this may sound technically feasible, one ought not forget the tremendous change the introduction of any such (necessarily invented and artificial) mechanism for identification (unlike states, which are natural to humans) would bring—reversing the human way of thinking since we first set foot on the planet (or in any event acquired self-consciousness[577]).

The same would be the case for archipelagos: why not have one state individualisation mechanism on the planet, perhaps using the EU as its

573 See also Chap. 12, par. 10.

574 Unless they voluntarily submit to international arbitration mechanisms, which are themselves voluntary—and thus effectively unarbitrated.

575 And, for that matter, family (see also Chap. 2, par. 9).

576 Hence today, long after surnames, parental names and other characteristics are also added (see also Chap. 8.1, par. 2).

577 This also accounts for why there can be no two states for the same individual—no two digital and analogue world citizenships: what happens in practice is that the second, or additional, states take the identification information from the state of birth; see also Chap. 8, par. 6.

blueprint? This, however, would also not appear to be a viable option, even taking into account the transitory stage (towards archipelago formation) that humanity is living in. This is because, similar to states, archipelagos are defined through their juxtaposition with other archipelagos and, more importantly, with the ocean. An archipelago, such as the EU, will always be defined through its juxtaposition with other archipelagos (and any remaining states)—otherwise, a new way to define it, and the states that are individualised through it, would have to be invented, which would, as above, most probably be an invention too many for humans to bear.

11. The EU*

It was certainly not realisation of any of the above that led to the formation of the EU in the 1950s. The EU was formed out of need, the need for Europeans to end the wars among them that had lasted for 2,000 years, from the moment Julius Caesar decided to move north. By the 1950s certain states in Europe had a history of around 1,000 years and Christian dogma, which was common among them, had an even longer history. It was need and opportunity that led to the formation of the EU.

Whatever its cause and original purpose may have been, the EU assumed a life of its own once established. From modest beginnings emerged a unique structure, an (informational, virtual) environment for its member states to live in without forfeiting their individuality. In this way, the first information platform for all other information platforms was formed. In other words, European states, which can be viewed as separate and independent islands (as is the case for other states too), decided to form an informational archipelago.

However, none of the above ought to be understood as invoking a linear development (e.g. as in Aristotle, from family to city-states, in the sense of moving from simpler to more complex forms) or an evolution, by selection or otherwise, that led to the EU. There was no following of rational steps on a state-formation ladder or any grand-scale design that caused the EU to come to be; rather, need and opportunity were in play here too.

12. Interoperability versus integration*

One can visualise and quickly understand what it is that the EU actually does and how it differs from contemporary international state order if the notions of (system) integration and (system) interoperability are compared.

Interoperability is the ability of systems to communicate with each other to a larger or smaller degree. While it is a notion developed in computing (and enforced by regulation), it can be seen as the dominant principle in international law today. States, as information platforms, have become able to interact with each other, that is, they have developed throughout human history in a way that enables them to, at a minimum, communicate with each other. For example, the unique identifiers of one state (identification numbers, tax numbers, business registration numbers) are recognised as such, by means of bilateral agreements, in another state, even if the other does not internally have an exact equivalent. However, this is as far as communication goes, and can go. Each state continues to function independently, with each information platform developed within its confines. Whenever the need arises for more communication (for example, through the development of more complex regulation as in intellectual property law or more complex accounting systems) then the list of functions that are interoperable expands. Nevertheless, communication is always on an *ad hoc*, case-specific (and thus fragmented) basis, through small, restricted and closely guarded access points.

By contrast, system integration means that systems share components, and thus the boundaries between them are removed. While retaining their individuality, they no longer communicate through specific, identifiable (and thus controllable) access points, as in the case with interoperability, but through the sharing of resources, information, meaning and understanding. In the example above, the unique identifiers provided in one state are not only recognised by another but they are common or matched —they also exist in that other state. The issuing authority may change (each state continues to provide its own name and citizenship to its citizens) but datasets, and their attributes, are basically the same.

13. What the EU is and what it does

In essence, the EU is an informational archipelago, a network composed of separate, individual (peer) information platforms (islands), meaning its member states, which have been individualised and uniquely identified by it. The EU warrants that communication among the member states is seamless without any losing its individuality, despite being integrated into this new super-platform. Having formed the archipelago (i.e. the network having been established), system integration among the various individual information platforms that are its member states is what the EU actually

does, while each member state continues to function as an information infrastructure for its citizens—that is, it continues to grant to each of them at birth a name and a citizenship, to issue regulation, to maintain a language or an official morality (religion), and so on.

In effect, the EU is the tacit interlocutor when two of its member states talk to each other. In the same way that a state does this for its citizens, it is the EU that, silently and in the background, intervenes whenever two of its member states interact, warranting that the other state is who and what it claims to be in order to enable the communication to proceed seamlessly.

For example, if Belgium and Italy are interacting, the EU is silently present each time, warranting[578] that each party is who it claims to be in order for the interaction to continue as intended (essentially, as if the countries were a single state). However, were they not EU members, for example, if Belgium and Canada interacted, each one would first nervously try to validate the other, be it through bilateral agreements or a third-party validation mechanism (e.g. the UN and/or any other international system), before the interaction could take place. Furthermore, even if this validation occurred, the interaction would always be restricted by the boundaries of the validation mechanism used (the terms of the bilateral agreement or the international treaty/-ies signed by each party[579]).

In the example of John and Maria in Chapter 7, if they happen to be citizens of different states, the interaction between them can go in either one of two directions: if both of their states are EU member states then, through the identification mechanism described above (essentially, with three silent parties present), the interaction can take place as if both John and Maria belonged to the same state; understanding and meaning is common to both. However, if their states are non-EU member states, then the two silent parties present (their states) will have to check if, bilaterally, they accept the existence of the other (and on what terms and to what extent): interaction between John and Maria is thus always framed under the terms of this tacit but ever-present check.

In other words, from a state point of view, an EU member state cannot ignore, refuse or challenge the existence and self-identification as such of

578 Of course, for the purposes of communication, within its own borders each party can be whoever it claims to be (this equivalence, however, not working in terms of individuals and their states).

579 In reality the situation today is even more complicated than that because the EU also conditions the bilateral agreements of its member states, but there is no need to complicate the example any further given the difficulty of the scheme already.

another EU member state. It must be treated as one of their kind and taken at face value as irrefutably existent, in the very same way that citizens within a state (as well as when crossing borders) treat one another. State individualisation and unique identification are achieved in this manner through the EU, the state for states. In addition, through the *acquis*, understanding and meaning is common among all of them: any one EU member state citizen is to understand and treat all Things and Beings in exactly the same way as another EU member state citizen, as if they existed on the information platform that is their own state.

This state-within-a-state condition, unique to humanity,[580] is caused and warranted by the EU. All states are created[581] equal with regard to the EU, the platform for platforms, if they are its member states. All others, unfortunate enough not to be individualised and uniquely identified by any mechanism, have to undertake a bilateral struggle to convince others of their uniqueness and existence, until such time as a relevant mechanism is established for them.

14. *

In terms of datasets,[582] the EU is a Being, specifically an organisation. However, in the same way as states and unlike any other organisation,[583] an informational archipelago has no specific purpose. It has only a function, which is present simply because of its existence: system integration for its member states. This is both an impediment and an opportunity. The former, because the EU is not itself a state, and it therefore cannot assume state-like functions, that is, it will always follow what first and foremost preoccupies its member states and their citizens, whatever purposes they set for themselves to each time. At the same time, however, it is an opportunity because, liberated from state-like preoccupations (internal politics and strife prominent among them), it can carry out its function unhindered.

For the larger part of its life so far, the EU has given priority to market considerations out of expedience: what better (in the sense of quicker) way to avoid war, if not by financially integrating the previously conflicting parties? Having accomplished this quick, superficial fix, the EU has recently

580 On its differences with already known formations (e.g. federations, empires), see par. 21.
581 In fact, admitted; on whether the EU is natural see par. 17.
582 See Chap. 1, par. 2.
583 See Chap. 2, par. 9.

moved in the direction of influencing the formation of values, thus establishing a distinct 'European way of life' and a morality of its own, a project that remains underdeveloped.

The question, however, remains: how can the component parts best be integrated without damage?

For the moment, the solution intuitively (and understandably) adopted replicates the state–individual relationship, along the lines of liberalism:[584] individuals have a core with which the state should not interfere, and this model seems to be followed at the EU level too (through the triple effect of its principles of subsidiarity, proportionality and EU legal supremacy). Is this the best way forward? Could what has effectively not been satisfactorily resolved for humans after more than 2000 years of intense thinking[585] work for states? Essentially, the same problem remains: states know everything because they are the necessary individualisation mechanisms for their citizens, and the EU (its system integration ever-expanding) is on its way to becoming exactly the same thing for its member states.

15.

As such, today the EU archipelago is unique, the first of its kind and clearly distinguishable from all the other information platforms that are states and that can be found around it (or within it).

This accounts for the bizarre effect still caused by it with regard to interstate relationships. Non-EU states find it strange that they have to communicate at the same time with both a member state and the EU. This is understandably confusing for all the parties involved. Because the EU breaches the prehistoric model, being the first of its kind, it is bound to create confusion for some time longer.

16. Archipelagos enlarged*

On the other hand, informational archipelagos need not be geographically located; the fact that the EU emerged, out of need and opportunity, as a localised entity does not mean that it cannot include member states that

584 See Chap. 26.

585 See Chap. 26, par. 5, on the inherent conundrum that individualistic theories have to deal with.

are not in Europe. Archipelagos should not be viewed literally, spatially; because they are informational, they transcend space, unhindered and unperturbed by analogue-world limitations.[586]

17. Are archipelagos natural?

As it has been claimed that states are natural to humans, should archipelagos be considered natural (to states) as well? States formed naturally, so as to individualise humans, to uniquely identify them in space and time. Because the first archipelago is doing the same for states, should they be considered natural to them, in the same way that states are natural to individuals?

At first sight this would appear a counter-intuitive question: the EU was established through a treaty signed on a specific date and in a specific place—nothing can be more artificial than that. How could it ever claim to be natural to its member states? Such considerations should, however, be quickly put aside: in the case of housing, despite the fact that the field of architecture is constantly expanding, houses are still considered natural to humans. As has been established,[587] it is the idea behind them (houses for humans, like nests for birds) to which attention should be paid.

Is there a need, then, for an individualisation mechanism for states, as there was for humans, who needed states in order to augment their information processing as soon as they gained self-consciousness?

Again, intuitively, the reply would have to be negative: if it is natural to them, why did it take so long for such a mechanism to emerge? And, furthermore, being the result of need and opportunity, for totally unrelated reasons (to avoid war, instead of state individualisation)? It is, however, exactly in this pivot that an answer can be found as to why (following the arrival of a more recent need and opportunity) this mechanism emerged (or rather, is developing into an 'ever closer union'): because of the advent of the digital world.

As has been seen,[588] in the digital world states can no longer afford to operate as information processing silos. They can no longer rely on bilateral relationships where each party first has to convince the other of its

586 See also Chap. 17, on (state) territory.
587 In Chap. 5, par. 5.
588 In par. 10.

existence on each occasion. Mere interoperability[589] is no longer enough. Informational archipelagos are the way forward, specifically because the digital (state) territory transcends analogue-world borders and humans have become users.[590] From this point of view, archipelagos are natural to states because, similar to humans who needed to become individuals to augment their information processing, archipelagos are sorely needed.

18.

However, the answer to whether archipelagos are natural to states cannot rely only on *ad hoc* problem-solving. After all, while need and opportunity may motivate humans, if no pattern emerges out of their combination, no specific need (in the form of an underlying idea) can be identified—only the one that has gone before it.

In the case of states, because they are Beings, they need an individualisation and identification mechanism—all Beings have one. Humans have their states, animals their packs or herds (or their humans, as the case may be), organisations are individualised through regulation. This is a matter that ultimately relates to the Unique Human Observer Perspective, to the way in which we view and understand Beings. However, such a mechanism will not emerge until it is needed. In the case of states, it has now emerged, dragging states out of their 'state of nature' slumber. (In the case of artificial Beings, specifically computer programs, which have only recently come into existence, their 'state of nature' is perhaps only just beginning.)

19.

Of course, this leaves open the question of whether this is a process without end, *ad infinitum*: if archipelagos individualise states, what will individualise archipelagos?[591] Following the reasoning of paragraph 17, a post-archipelago-level development seems imaginable but unforeseeable, taking into account the thousands of years it took for the individualisation mechanism for states to emerge. However, as long as there is a need for unique identification mechanisms, for humans or other Beings, there

589 See par. 12.
590 See Chap. 17, pars. 11 and 12.
591 Of course, taking into account that there can never be only one, see par. 10.

seems, from the Unique Human Observer Perspective at least, to be only one way to address it.

20.

Even if this realisation is accepted, what can possibly be done about it? As has been seen,[592] in state-making change frequently, but not necessarily, comes through violence. The same is true of the EU: violence is exercised not in the form of war but through regulation. The formation of its archipelago has not been achieved through geographical but informational conquest. The EU *acquis* has, in essence, a double meaning, it is a modern Janus of sorts: new member states must adopt it in full and adhere to it.[593] There is violence in regulation, just as in war, but one that hurts humans infinitely less.

21. The differences between an archipelago and a federation—or an empire*

The above paragraphs[594] also serve to showcase the differences between an archipelago of states, such as the EU, and a federation. Within a federation, the individuality of its component parts, of the states forming it, is lost. In practical terms, names and citizenships are granted by the new, super-state and not by the individual parts. States within a federation are absorbed into a new entity, a new information platform that replaces them. In contrast, states within the EU retain their nature as information platforms for their citizens.

Could archipelagos, then, constitute modern empires? The great empires of the past mostly left their component (conquered) states untouched, allowed to mind their own business as long as they complied with the empire's authority. This may of course have been the result of expedience, because effective control by the (new) centre could not be exercised due to a lack of information processing abilities. If so, have need and opportunity

592 In Chap. 15, par. 2.

593 This is not unprecedented—it was anticipated in Europe by the Napoleonic codes, which long outlived their instigator. Of course, even in that case, his example followed that of Imperial Rome and, in any case, was that of a lawyer following legionaries or grenadiers, and not vice versa.

594 See particularly par. 13.

led to the creation of a modern-style empire, in the form of the EU? The obvious difference (voluntary participation, rather than conquest by war) aside, the EU differs from an empire because there is no centre, there is no dominant state, there is no EU nationality coveted (or abhorred) by the nationals of its member states. In this respect the EU is unlike, for example, Imperial Rome, which privileged its citizens and granted Roman citizenship to non-Romans only as an exceptional gift. By abolishing the dominant centre,[595] the EU avoids any likeness with an empire, holding the role of a precursor of things to come rather than that of an updated and modernised relic of the past.

595 Most likely as a result of Christian dogma.