**Comment to Aiginger K. And Handler H. “Europe taking the lead in responsible globalisation” by Gian Cesare Romagnoli, Università Roma Tre**

The paper by Aiginger and Handler is built on some phallacies: a. it proposes a role for Europe as if it were a political union; b. it moves from disputable observations i.e. the empirically verifiable alleviation of poverty produced by globalization, while the number of poors has been doubling in Sub-Saharan Africa, remaining stable in South Asia and South America while sharply declining in East-Asia and Pacific; c. it adopts the logic that globalization is to stay, eventhough people objects it, since some public goods are global; d. polls confirm that globalization yields advantages (net?) and this is also the view of the majority of Europeans (sic); e. the loss of European economic power could be slowed by further enlargement to the West Balkans and the Black Sea region, overlooking either the fact that these enlargements increase internal EU economic divergence which reduces potential vertical integration (Rodriguez-Pose, 1999) and, consequently, the chances for a political union, or that the eventual inclusion of Georgia and Belarus in the EU brings with it a serious geopolitical tension with the Russian Federation; f. the past international agreements and the agenda of international organizations were built on the principle of mutual advantage and as win-win contracts for all members (Doha Round?). It is possible that populist requests for renationalization of policy stem from this way of looking at reality.

The world population totals now 7.5 billions (United Nations, 2017) and the world income, which amounts to around 40.000 billion dollars, could guarantee to every inhabitant the means to live (per capita income amounts to 5.300 dollars which, according to the World Bank, is over the threshold of the upper middle income countries). This aim is anyway unattainable because of the world income distribution inequality.Even though the per capita income has increased on average, also in the low income countries, the gap with the high income countries keeps growing. In the Nineties, when the Third Wave of Globalisation began, the difference between the average per capita GDP in the low income countries and that of high income countries was 18.373 dollars (OECD, 2016). In 2015, this gaphas increased up to 34.000 dollars.

The point that “the world is flat” was made by Thomas Friedman (2005) with the expansion of trade, the internationalization of firms, the galloping process of outsourcing and the possibility of networking. On the contrary, with the rise of the New Economy, economic inequalities have been increasing spatially, including the emerging digital divide, as a result of regions attracting talented workers instead of developing skills at a local level. Despite increasing inter-connectivity through developing information communication technologies, the contemporary world is still defined through its widening social and spatial divisions, which are increasingly gendered. Danny Quah (2009) explains these spatial divisions through the characteristics of knowledge goods in the New Economy: goods defined by their infinite expansibility, weightlessness and non rivalry. These divisions in the new economy are much more difficult to overcome as a result of few clear pathways of progression to higher-skilled work.

Furthemore the paper produces disputable statements on which the authors take no stance i.e., for instance, “if unemployment and migration coincide”.

Finally the paper is prone to wishful thinking: elimination of tax shelters, circular migration, my country first failure (Trump, May, Visegrad countries, Macron?), potential game changing instruments *vis à vis* market forces, etc.

References

Friedman T. (2005), *The World Is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-First Century*, Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, New York.

OECD (2016), *Income Distribution Database*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

Quah D. (2009), *Knowledge: The driver of economic growth*, in Swee-Hock S. and Quah D. (eds.), The Politics of Knowledge, ISEAS and LSE, London, Ch. 4.

Rodríguez-Pose, A. (1999), *Innovation prone and innovation averse societies: Economic performance in Europe*, Growth and Change, 30, 1, 75-105.