Restructuring the State:
the taboo of the presidential campaign

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EDITORIAL FROM DENIS KESSLER

Imagine a company with monopolies granted in several fields, that has recorded losses constantly for the last forty years, that is deeply in debt, that has not stopped hiring, that keeps increasing its costs disproportionately, that has clients that are increasingly dissatisfied with the products and services offered, that is beginning to find itself in a situation of real competition with other similar companies due to the markets opening up, that has just been downgraded by rating agencies... Then comes the AGM, and upon reading the resolutions, we find out that the candidates for management claim that the solutions to these problems are massive price hikes, the continuation of a disorderly pricing policy based on ceilings and lower limits, harsher conditions, in particular those granted to its best clients while simultaneously criticising them vocally, taking on tens of thousands of new employees, asking shareholders yet again for highly-dilutive recapitalization without offering dividends, requesting sanctions so that clients and shareholders cannot go elsewhere - thus establishing an absolute monopoly.

This is how many business leaders would sum up the current presidential campaign. The State is struggling considerably, as indicate the public, social security and foreign trade deficits, and no candidate for the role of manager believes that in-depth reform is the only way to bring the country back to positive growth rates. Instead, the candidates speak of taxes, levies, contributions, deductions, fees and duties. Soon we’ll be back to tolls, tithes, salt tax and window tax...

The blind spot is far-reaching reforms of State organisation. What a paradox to see that all who want to take the helm of a State that is expensive, unsuitable, ineffective, inefficient, powerless and immobile speak of one thing: increasing its revenues massively! This would only further sterilise civil society, which is already starved and treated as a child in the country of the liberal thinker Toqueville, and weaken production, which is highly taxed and regulated in a nation that led the world’s second industrial revolution. Strictly speaking, it is incredible that politicians from all sides, who want to win power, spend
their time talking about companies in the competitive sector, to attack them, interfere in their management and responsibility and plan only to tax them further. According to them, the private sector is responsible for public deficits... while public spending accounts for 55% for the French GDP and has increased constantly for decades, while the pension schemes for public-sector employees have been insufficiently reformed and while the totally out of date status of civil servants remains for the most part unchanged.

France was at the origin of the founding of modern states at the beginning of the 19th century with other states long drawing inspiration from our systems. Yet it has been unable to adapt its missions, functions and organisation to enter the 21st century. Globalisation now means that states are in competition with each other, the increasing power of the EU is redefining legislative power, and new technologies are changing the ways we operate. There is a stark contrast between the constant process of transformation undertaken by competitive businesses that know how to adapt to far-reaching changes in their environment, and the chaotic changes made by the State scattered with postponed, badly-thought-out and incomplete reforms. It is not surprising then that our country has conducted the most emergency and crisis plans for its poor suburbs, education, employment, farming, hospitals and prisons...

Those who want to govern should understand that France is ungovernable as it is. Both learner and experienced pilots promise bright horizons and sunny climes. These pilots want to take us there and yet seem to be unaware that they have to take off in an aircraft made of lead, with broken engines, almost empty fuel tanks, faulty linkage, and no navigation instruments. It is unrealistic to hope that it will all be alright by telling passengers that the fares will be increased, especially those for first-class seats, and that they will have to push the aircraft faster along a runway full of potholes. The restructuring, refounding of the State, could have and should have been at the centre of the campaign. Our future is at stake, as is that of the production sector that is sick and tired of offsetting the increasing costs and inefficiency of our State organisation.