WHAT HAS THE EU EVER DONE FOR US?

by Bruno Cordoba

IS THAT BERLIN ALREADY?

HMM?

YES, THAT'S ALEXANDERPLATZ TOWER, CAN YOU SEE IT?

AND GRANDMA'S HOUSE?

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, SHORTLY WE WILL BE LANDING. PLEASE MAKE SURE YOUR SEATBACKS AND TABLES ARE IN THEIR...

WHAT ARE THOSE PEOPLE DOING THERE?

SHOULD WE DO THE SAME?

THEY COME FROM OTHER COUNTRIES, SO THEY NEED TO DO SOME PAPERWORK...

BUT FRANCE IS ALSO ANOTHER COUNTRY.

BEFORE THEY ARE ALLOWED TO ENTER GERMANY.

WELL, FRANCE AND GERMANY ARE PART OF THE EU...
...And that means we can travel almost like if it were one big country.

But... that’s unfair to them, right?

Well...

Maybe... I don’t know.

Only within the countries of the EU-I think travelling is so... easy.

...We would have to do the same things they do to come here.

But what is the EU, exactly?

WOW!

That’s... a bit hard to explain, actually...

We could say it’s a group of countries that work together, like a club or something.

It’s more complicated than that, actually...

The European Parliament... Blah, Blah... some sort of central bank... Blah, Blah... the Euro... 2nd or 3rd biggest market... Blah, Blah... Brussels...

Thus...

I’m not explaining it very well, right?

No, no, wait... Here’s a good example...
THE EU WORKS PRETTY MUCH LIKE OUR HOUSE

WHERE EACH FAMILY HAS ITS OWN APARTMENT...

BUT THE BUILDING ITSELF IS RUNNED BY A COOPERATIVE.

THAT'S WHY WE HAVE SHARED AREAS, LIKE THE GARDEN, THE BACKYARD, THE BIG KITCHEN...

WHERE WE EAT TOGETHER EVERY SUNDAY, AND SO ON...

THAT'S CALLED A COMOUING PROJECT.

RIGHT, TO TURN OUR OLD BACKYARD INTO A PLAYGROUND WAS ALSO A DECISION OF THE WHOLE COMMUNITY.

LIKE EVERY DECISION, IT WAS REACHED THROUGH CONSENSUS: THAT MEANS WE ALL HAVE TO AGREE.

IF YOU THINK THAT EACH APARTMENT IS A DIFFERENT COUNTRY...

... AND THAT THE BUILDING IS THE EUROPEAN UNION...

BECAUSE OF THAT, THE FAMILIES GET TO DECIDE THE COMMON RULES LIKE... WHERE WE'LL PARK OUR BIKES OR HOW THE RECYCLING IS DONE.

EVERY MONTH, A PART OF THE RENT GOES TO A COMMON FUND WHICH IS THEN USED TO DEVELOP THE COMMUNITY PROJECTS LIKE MAKING REPAIRS, BUILD NEW THINGS OR ORGANIZE THE SHARED AREAS...

FOR EXAMPLE, WHEN WE TURNED A PART OF THE GARDEN...

... INTO A VEGETABLES GROWING AREA - WHERE YOU HAVE YOUR TOMATOES NOW...

AND THE PLAYGROUND WE ARE BUILDING?

... YOU GET A PRETTY GOOD IDEA ABOUT WHAT THE EU IS.

DO YOU THINK THE PLAYGROUND WILL BE FINISHED WHEN WE GET BACK?

I SURE HOPE SO.
But... is the EU really like that?

Will we have a slide?

Hey! Sure!

I haven't put much thought on it...

And those things for climbing?

Will we have those, too?

Hello, Oma! Wie geht es dir?

Wow, Sarah!

How can you grow that fast?

Oma!

Was the flight all right?

And how is my daughter doing?

Oh, she really sorry, not being able to come.

But she works too much!

Well, that's a family thing...

O.K., Sarah...

Will you help me take care of these things?

We need to free the table from all these games if we want to eat.

Can we play?

O.K., one?

All of them?
Adrian?
I thought you were sleeping.
Everything okay?

Oh, yeah... just doing some research.

Was that work related?

Oh, no... today Sarah asked me about the EU...

For me the EU was always this abstract thing that's just there and doesn't really make a difference.

I'll make some tea. Want to join me?

That would be great.

And I've realized how little I've cared about it. Wanted to check if I had it right...

I mean, sure... it's easier to travel and all that. The first time I had my passport done...

...was to go to Italy. To Italy! Can you imagine that now?

But then I noticed that if it weren't because of this freedom of movement thing...

...I wouldn't have come here to study.

In the end, the Union really played a huge role in our family's life. And what I was just reading about...

The EU really does a lot of things that improve our daily lives and we just take it for granted...

Well, all the environmental regulations, for example...

...and better labor conditions, the supervised quality of food at fair prices, and so on...

We wouldn't have met with Anne...

Or at least it would have been a lot harder to move in together...

...get married or for her to get a job in Paris.

All the economic support to local farmers, the politics towards gender equality...

...and better parental leaves when Sarah was born. We know that the toys with which she plays are safe...

On a more personal level, we've enjoyed better parental leaves when Sarah was born. We know that the toys with which she plays are safe...
I don't know the roaming fees...

It seems like a small thing, but nevertheless...

Well, when I think about the European Union...

The things that come to my mind are quite different. I mean, don't get me wrong, all those things are ok...

But I have lived the Second World War...

I was only a child, but still, I remember. I remember the horror, the death, the fear...

In the aftermath, I got the impression that something like that could happen again was very present...

Mostly the fear...

I've seen my country split in two, the Wall, the Cold War...

The EU brought us, above all, peace.

That's what the EEC first and the EU later meant to my generation.

Countries that were in constant conflict throughout history...

And the chances of an outbreak are very low because of this interdependence...

They are now working together in peace. For the longest period of time yet.

No, it's not only peace. The EU gave me hope again.

But the fear is always there. I must say... maybe because of the things I've lived.

I can't help but to remember that a lot of conflicts are just paused thanks to the borders...

Ireland, Gibraltar, South Tyrol...

These kind of latent conflicts are all over Europe, and without the Union it would be a totally different story.

Now peace is really something we've always taken for granted.

Well, it should be this way...

I am very happy that you three have grown free from the menace of war.
It’s true that war is a very distant concept for us.

I guess that for my generation…

The EU is mostly about comfort and advantages…

Peace…

Of which we are hardly aware.

While for Ulrike’s generation…

It meant leaving behind a long history of war and confrontation.

I wonder what it will represent for Sarah to be an European citizen.

The daughter of the nationals of two countries historically rivals and in constant conflict…

In a way, she is some sort of symbol of the EU herself…

That now work together…
WELL, THE PLAYGROUND IS NOT ENTIRELY FINISHED YET... BUT IT HAS COME A LONG WAY

WE HAVE SWINGS!

WHY IS IT SO COLD HERE?

SURE, WE CAN STAY FOR A WHILE...

LOOK, MARCUS AND EMMA ARE THERE... CAN I GO PLAY WITH THEM?

BUT LEAVE YOUR BACKPACK!

...THE POWER THAT THE EUROPEAN COURT HAS OVER OUR LEGISLATION

STILL BEATING THE DRUM FOR EUROSCERPTICISM?

HEY... AFTER ALL, WHAT HAS THE EU EVER DONE FOR US?

ANGELA AND SVEN...

WELL, I COULD TELL YOU A FEW COUPLE THINGS.