Vol.: 9

# CULTURE REPORT

EUNIC YEARBOOK 2018

# Cultures of We?

## Europe and the search for a new narrative

ifa | Steidl

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With Brexit and the election of Donald Trump, the world has changed. And so have the parameters for Europe's external relations. It is time to reconsider the continent's role in the world. How can it respond to isolationism and populism, but at the same time to wars in Syria and the Ukraine, the refugee crisis and climate change? What answers can Europe find to these challenges, while still defending its own democratic structures and the core values of human rights, multilateralism and international solidarity? How is it possible to bridge the divide within European societies and prevent the rise of populist movements and nationalism, xenophobia and extremism? What role can culture play in finding solutions to these problems? 30 contributors from 25 different countries seek answers to these and other questions.


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*European Life* is the name of the series of photographs by Berlin-based photographer Edgar Zippel that is featured in this edition. Zippel travelled around Europe capturing people as they went about their daily lives, unfurling Europe from its easternmost edges. The people appear strangely disconnected, fragile, turned in upon themselves. The scenery is rather sad, seldom glamorous. As we look at the photos, we ask ourselves "What's worse, their mood or their situation?" They seem to be far removed from the vibrant continent that is Europe.

## In search of lost meaning

The European Union is suffering a severe crisis of confidence. All over Europe, populist and Eurosceptic movements are attracting support. Fear of terrorism and social decline go hand-in-hand with nationalism, xenophobia and mistrust of elites, established parties and the media. European institutions have always been perceived as remote, so they are particularly affected by this. Europe is not currently in a position to shape its future in a constructive way. What is holding Europe together? Can culture help to breathe new life into the concept of a European community of values? Do we need a new narrative that offers an explanatory context and sheds light on the meaning of Europe? Or perhaps it's not that bad and Timothy Garton Ash is right when, in a variation on Winston Churchill's famous quote, he says that this is the worst possible Europe, 'apart from all the other Europes that have been tried from time to time.' Garton Ash is one of the contributors to this edition of the EUNIC Yearbook who takes a sceptical view of the argument that democracy is in crisis. After all, the continent of Europe has never been home to so many liberal democracies. Political scientist Mai'a Davis Cross from the United States agrees that the ideal of democratic governance has also become widely accepted internationally, especially at the United Nations.

And yet the division between those who welcome global economic, political and cultural interdependence and those who resist change is growing to such an extent that authors such as Jochen Hippler and Fatemeh Kamali Chirani even speak of a 'cultural civil war': 'This war is not being fought violently and with weapons, but in the minds of people. This war is not fought for territory but for cultural hegemony. It is about defining who we are, what kind of societies we are living in, and who our enemies are.' Political scientist Claus Leggewie sees European culture as being in resistance mode, and Slovenian philosopher Slavoy Žižek gets straight to the point when he says: 'The trouble with defending European civilisation against the immigrant threat is that the ferocity of the defence is more of a threat to "civilisation" than any number of Muslims'. Journalist Heribert Prantl warns that political extremism may not be a natural event like a volcanic eruption, but it is certainly spreading around the world like wildfire. Most of our contributors agree that the populist rhetoric of the nationalists is systematically exploiting two areas of weakness: the EU's remoteness from its citizens, and the crisis of representation in its Member States. It disseminates nationalist narratives and fuels people's emotions and fears. Refugees and Muslims are portrayed as invaders, a threat – with the help of outlandish conspiracy theories and talk of 'population replacement' and 'saving the West'. Our political culture is being systematically undermined. Parties, media, governments, courts, in short, the pillars of the political system, are constantly being accused of conspiring against their own people. Social media serves as an echo chamber that reinforces our existing views and promotes radicalisation.

But when it comes to developing suitable counter-strategies, the only thing our authors agree upon is that appeasement and waiting for the nationalists to be found out is not an option. They also criticise the arrogance of the elites for rushing to call disagreeable opponents

populists and for denigrating people who have lost out because of globalisation. According to migration expert Jagoda Marinić, it is the job of culture to remind citizens of the 'higher purpose' that the EU should be serving. 'We will not see Europe catapulted back into the Middle Ages', and watch culture even being used as an argument for reverting to nationalism. Freelance writer François Materasso, stresses that: 'Europe is not a place. It is not a government or administration.' It is a place of encounter, and if culture is only diverse and tolerant enough, it can help to heal divisions. Leggewie adds that this means works that move, fascinate and may inspire people to change their lives.

Can the European Union's lost context be restored with the help of a narrative? Or is it a forlorn hope that we can once again create a public sphere for everyone, in which democratic society is in a better position to deal with fake news and attention-seeking? The idea of 'storytelling' is very much in fashion, and the advertising industry also uses it to trigger emotions in consumers. The style of objectivity that Europe has consciously cultivated for so long – originally without the symbolism of flags, anthems and parades – is now considered a hindrance: 'You don't fall in love with a single market'. The term 'narrative' goes back to the French philosopher Franҫois Lyotard, whose idea of the Grands Récits to describe basic historical and political concepts such as the Enlightenment and the West was translated into English as 'narrative'. But his readers may struggle with the idea that a single concept that originally served to deconstruct general basic assumptions should now contribute to establishing a context or overcoming a crisis of legitimacy. By exposing an unquestioned context as 'narrative', Lyotard was trying to call its credibility into question. However, as May'a Cross points out: 'If the other side sees culture as a weapon in war, there's no choice but to see cultural diplomacy on some level as a form of resistance.' She believes that network propaganda has become a serious problem, with right-wing thought leaders such as Andrew Breitbart and Stephen Bannon speaking openly of weaponising the narrative.

Just as we find ourselves in a time of existential crisis, the European Union has been working on new strategic proposals for international cultural relations. Will it provide urgently needed answers to the problems threatening the Union's cohesion? If Europe wants to hang on to what is left of its credibility, it will have to bear more responsibility for tackling global challenges. What chance does the proposed concerted approach have in the face of growing nationalist tendencies?

2017 proved to be a decisive year for EUNIC. By signing the administrative agreement with the European External Action Service and the European Commission, the network has taken a major step forward and created the basis for developing and implementing joint pilot projects between EUNIC clusters and EU delegations. The articles in this Yearbook reveal the importance of the task that faces culture. I hope you will find it an inspiring read, and would like to thank the contributors, translators and everyone who has been involved in producing this Yearbook. I would also like to express my appreciation to the Robert Bosch Stiftung for its valued support.

Sebastian Körber is Deputy Secretary-General and Head of the Media Department at the Institute for Foreign Cultural Relations.

# Chapter 1: Global challenges

**Trump, Putin, Erdoğan: Europe faces many challenges. What role can culture play in overcoming xenophobia, hate, anger and anxiety? How should Europe deal with post-truth populism, nationalism and Twitter democracy? And can culture be one of the keys to restoring Europe's lost confidence and breathing new life into European values?**

**Cultures of We?** The author is opposed to the one-sided stranglehold of the West, no matter how well-intentioned. A global narrative that is supposed to provide comfort above and beyond global divisions is not credible. Instead, Europe could develop a narrative that recognises cultural differences between societies and lead sto new political structures, beliefs and values. *By Chandran Nair*

Over the past year, there seem to have been two competing narratives. On the one hand, the world is more closely connected than it has ever been. Economies are more closely knit together, and information travels across the world instantaneously. Many of the traditional measures of prosperity appear to be improving, and technology is viewed as the great panacea.

Yet on the other hand, the world sometimes appears to be tearing itself apart, as cultural and national divisions become much more prominent and a new era of asymmetric warfare driven by age-old prejudices and resentments — and also enabled by technological advances — seems to be on the march. This has been especially marked in the West, which has both been the driver of our modern economic structure and now, perhaps, the place where we see one of the largest reactions against it.

In trying to make sense of this and bring forth global co-operation, comforting narratives and slogans are sought. One of these is that the world should develop a 'culture of we'.

I don't like the idea of a 'culture of we'. Such a culture assumes that the best outcome for human society is for everyone to believe the same things, live in the same kinds of societies, and consume the same things.

But it is important to note that those who push the most for such a universal culture tend to be Western or influenced by Western ideas. Their universal society is based on what they are most comfortable with — a Western society, with a Western-style democracy, a Western-style economy and Western-style values. It is often idealised, so that bad behaviour by Western governments, both in the past and today, can be excused away.

When the values being spread are non-Western, the conversation is suddenly viewed quite differently. When the Chinese point of view is expressed in the Western media,

or at international conferences, or through Chinese-funded think tanks, the arguments within it have been dismissed as 'propaganda'. The Confucius Institute, China's attempt to encourage study of Chinese cultural values, has been portrayed as a state-funded effort to spread soft power. President Xi Jinping's efforts to formulate and define a different model of Chinese governance were dismissed in the European media, which instead chose to criticise China for how it had failed to emulate liberal ideals.

It is certainly accurate to describe these efforts as state-funded and state-driven. But instead those terms are used to avoid engaging with the arguments being made. China is not arguing 'properly', therefore its arguments are dismissed, while Western governments are allowed to do the same. In truth, many do not want to face up to the fact that Beijing can now make its case on an equal basis with Western countries. China may be the first, but it certainly won't be the last.

It can be difficult to argue against the 'we' narrative, because the alternative is often portrayed as 'us vs. them': a world where cultural differences prevent us from coming together to solve the world's problems, where the strong are able to oppress the weak, and a world that is not able to provide a safe and secure life for ordinary people. At its most extreme, a world without universal values is argued to be a world without peace.

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## *The end of history*

The difference between a 'culture of we' and 'us vs. them' connects to one of the central debates since the end of the Cold War. The 'culture of we' is Francis Fukuyama's End of History. For Fukuyama, the fall of the Soviet Union meant the end of the only competitor to Western liberal democracy. Thus, all countries and governments would eventually become 'Western': there would be no other alternative.

The narrative of 'us vs. them', in contrast, is Samuel Huntington's Clash of Civilisations. For Huntington, humanity is irrevocably separated into different civilisational blocs. Societies would clash not on the basis of universal ideologies, but on cultural values, which were too fundamental for there to be any compromise. As the world globalised and contact between different peoples increased, these cultural divisions would become more obvious, and spark tensions and conflict between societies.

These works were written in the Nineties in the immediate aftermath of the Cold War, and were written from a Western perspective. Thus, neither of these schools of thought have held up well in light of recent events. Clearly, the rise of China and its alternate model for economic development and governance challenges the idea that Western liberal democracy is the only game in town. Even Fukuyama

has changed his tune, growing disappointed with his own school of thought during the run-up to the American invasion of Iraq.

The problem with the clash of civilisations argument is different. It is true that one could apply the model to today's world. But then the problem becomes self-fulfilling. If countries believe that compromise with other cultures is impossible, they will not try to work with them, creating the tension and conflict predicted by Huntington.

## *A healthy respect for differences*

We need something in between the universal values of the 'culture of we' and the constant reality of the conflict of 'us vs. them'. We need a narrative that recognises the cultural differences between societies, that will lead to different political structures, different beliefs and different values. But these differences should not make peace and cooperation impossible. A healthy respect for differences — and choosing not to impose one's values on another — may in fact open the space for forward momentum on global issues. No side will believe cooperation is a Trojan horse for cultural change.

The idea of a 'culture of we' has its roots in a liberal narrative of globalisation, where everything was meant to become like the West or, more specifically, like the United States and the United Kingdom. This wasn't just held in the West: many in the developing world were perfectly happy to be subservient to Western ideas. Technocrats ended up as leaders of many developing countries: a person that was Western-educated, perhaps with experience working for a Western multinational or bank, who promises to implement the 'right' economic policies as defined by Western economists and institutions. These arguments would trump even popular sentiment, as support services and protections by the government are removed in order for the country to more cleanly fit the Western model.

This narrative worked so long as Western countries were the world's most wealthy, powerful and respected. But the rise of the rest has challenged the prime position of Western countries and institutions. This has unnerved Western populations, who were used to considering themselves at the top of the heap. These populations have now turned against the elite schools of thought that pushed for liberalisation and globalisation, and populist politicians have capitalised on the fear created by the rise of the rest.

## *A tough pill to swallow*

Admitting that you're no longer number one is admittedly a tough pill to swallow. At least in Europe, there may be some acceptance of this on the intellectual level (which is more than one can say about the United States). But one can understand why an ordinary population, after years of being told about the superiority of their country and its values, suddenly finds itself challenged by the rest.

The rise of the rest means that we should treat the idea that different regions have different experiences, and thus approach the world from different places, much more seriously. For example, Europe's greatest fear is the re-

turn of interstate warfare on the continent. The rise of nationalism in the nineteenth century, followed by authoritarianism and fascism in the twentieth century, led to several devastating wars and conflicts. Even after the Second World War, Europe was always on the precipice of another world war, due to the tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union. Thus, one can understand why Europe values the European Union, democracy and liberalism so highly, as it sees them as the best way to prevent conflict in Europe.

### *Suffering from colonialism and imperialism*

The developing world, on the other hand, has a long history of suffering from colonialism and imperialism. Western colonial powers overturned traditional political structures, suppressed local cultural divisions, and remade societies for their own purposes. These actions were justified — when they were justified — as being necessary to 'civilise' the rest of the world according to Western norms. This was why elites were sent to be trained in Western ideas in British and French universities, or why the United States justified its own colonial endeavours on getting non-Western societies 'ready' for democracy.

In practice, colonial powers did little to improve their colonies. When they were granted independence after the Second World War, postcolonial states were left with little in the way of governing institutions, which often led to more conflict. It has taken decades for many of these colonies to make up the shortfall; some former colonies have yet to do so.

Thus, one can understand why the developing world looks sceptically at any attempt to impose a universal culture. They've seen how this language was used before to justify a programme of imperialism. Western leaders may claim over and over again that this time will be different — sometimes completely sincerely — but developing countries know where these words lead.

But the West and the rest are not just approaching the world with different experiences. They also face different futures as we move into a resource-constrained 21st century. It is clear that our overuse of resources is having a dire effect on society, from climate change and extreme weather to soil pollution, increasingly scarce commodities and overheated cities. The world will need to move towards a more sustainable economic model that does not rely on rampant consumption-driven growth at all costs and instead places resource management at the heart of economic planning.

But the developed and developing world will see this challenge differently. Western nations are wealthy, having benefited from many decades of economic growth. They have largely met the universal basic needs and provided satisfactory social services to their

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populations, which are relatively small and not growing in size (if not declining). Their growth happened in a time of more plentiful resources, allowing them to overuse common and public resources without suffering the consequences.

### *Over-consumption is not the answer*

The Rest are still largely poor, despite the eye-popping growth numbers they sometimes show. Even China — the largest and arguably most successful member of the Rest — still has an average income well below the OECD. Their populations are also growing quickly: the vast majority of people born in the next several decades will live in Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa, with India, Indonesia and Nigeria showing massive gains. This means more people to be fed, housed, employed and otherwise looked after, which will only increase these countries' resource consumption. To make matters more difficult, developing countries need to improve the lives of their growing populations in a world with much scarcer resources. The answer to this cannot come from a Western model, whose goal is a lifestyle that massively over-consumes resources.

The West often puts forward its own lifestyle and consumerist culture as the model to be followed. It may not do this explicitly (especially as more people understand how unsustainable this lifestyle is), but it does so implicitly through its dominance of popular culture, education and business. If 'universal values' are modeled on the West's consumerist society, then the planet faces a bleak future.

We know that Europeans' wish for a universal culture only stretches so far. Europe, for example, has a much longer history than the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand (who also share a language and common roots as former British colonies). Thus, European countries have approached certain issues differently from their Anglo-Saxon counterparts. For example, Europe is more willing to target hate speech and symbols, which is understandable given how such rhetoric was institutionalised to such deadly effect.

### *A narrative of 'us with them'*

Despite these differences, in practice, Europe often goes along with what America wants. Europe has never sanctioned the United States for a decision it disagrees with, never moving beyond verbal criticism. From the Iraq War to the current dispute over the Iran deal, Europe has never countenanced actually doing anything about decisions in Washington. This has limited Europe's ability to define its own place, role and self-understanding as it moves into the 21st century.

Thus, there are significant differences between different countries. But these differences should not be an obstacle to shared solutions. We instead need a narrative that allows societies with very different values to come together for mutual benefit, and to solve global problems. Instead of a narrative of 'we', and to push back against a narrative of 'us vs. them', we need a narrative of 'us with them'. As the balance between the West and

If 'universal values' are modeled on the West's consumerist society, then the planet faces a bleak future.

the Rest is restored (if not tilted towards the Rest), there is a chance to build a framework for how different cultures and countries can work together to solve problems.

But as the balance between the West and the Rest is restored (if not perhaps tilted towards the Rest), there is a chance to build a framework of 'us with them' again. What could be Europe's role in this? And how should we understand 'European culture' if it is no longer associated with universal values?

## *Willingness to be the student*

Europe may be better placed than other Western countries to work with the rest on a more equal basis. Unlike, say, the United States, Europe has had several decades to come to terms with its changing place in the world, nor does it have any expressed wish to dominate the world. This means Europe can work with rising powers like China without threatening its own self-image. The United States would find it difficult to do the same without contradicting its view of itself as the world's 'indispensable nation'.

But this requires working with China as an equal partner, with interests, values and ideas to be treated seriously. It means accepting that China may have solved some problems better than the West, which in turn means a willingness to act as a student to see what China has done right. And Europe should not lecture China.

The same goes for other countries and leaders outside of the West. Europe must not just be willing to work with countries like Russia, Turkey, the Philippines, and others, but to understand what is motivating them. All of these countries are reacting to a geopolitical structure that has largely denied them a place in global rulemaking, but now they suddenly have more resources to demand a greater say. For all the problems with leaders like Vladimir Putin, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Rodrigo Duterte (and there are several), their refusal to accept a Western model that has held their countries back, if not harmed their development, is why they remain very popular amongst their people.

## *Defining 'European culture'*

It can be difficult to define 'European culture'. It has sometimes been used to refer to some past imperial glory, and as a way to justify aggressive and racist behaviour towards other cultures. Some of the populist turn in Europe, sparked by the migrant crisis, has used 'Europe's culture' to justify Islamophobia and xenophobia.

I am not European, so it is not up to me to define what European culture should be. That should be left to Europeans. But they may decide that it refers to a respect for democracy and Western-style political and civil rights. Europeans may feel that this is under threat from both internal and external forces. But the best way to protect it is not to force other countries to adopt flawed democratic structures, but rather to bolster their own governance systems.

A Europe that focuses on self-strengthening its own institutions and governance, and using that strength to work with others to solve the world's problems, will be far more useful towards creating global peace, progress and prosperity than one that lectures others in pursuit of some ideal of a 'culture of we'.

Europe can, and must, be an integral part of a diverse human civilisation. But it must be willing to accept its place as one culture amongst many.

**Chandran Nair** is the founder of The Global Institute for Tomorrow, an independent think tank based in Hong Kong. He is a member of the World Economic Forum Global Agenda Council for Sustainability and has argued at numerous forums including APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation) and OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development) about the need for radical reform of the current economic model and strict limits on consumption. He is the author of *Consumptionomics: Asia's Role in Reshaping Capitalism and Saving the Planet*.

PARTY

## Strong and flexible

EU membership is like good health: you only value it once it's gone. This is how the author feels about Brexit. Europe too is fated to be always becoming and never to be. But that need not necessarily be a curse, it can even be a blessing. It means that our ancient Europe has a chance to remain forever young.

*By Timothy Garton Ash*

One of Emperor Charlemagne's chief intellectual advisers was an Anglo-Saxon, Alcuin of York. My university, Oxford, has been a European university for nine centuries. A history of Europe which did not mention all the separate and combined contributions of the English, Scots, Welsh and Irish, of Shakespeare, Adam Smith, Winston Churchill and George Orwell, would be like a symphony orchestra without a string section. (Or is it rather the brass?). As I observed on the day after the Brexit vote, Britain can no more leave Europe than Piccadilly Circus can leave London.

Yet everyone comes to a conscious self-identification as a European by his or her own individual route. I became a passionate European through my intense, unforgettable personal experience of living in a divided Germany, witnessing the emergence of the Solidarity movement in Poland, and sharing the struggle for freedom in Warsaw, Prague, Budapest and Berlin with great central European recipients of this prize such as Václav Havel, Bronislaw Geremek and György Konrád. In those inspiring times, the causes of freedom and Europe marched together, arm in arm: freedom meant Europe, Europe meant freedom.

I hardly need to add that not all my compatriots identify themselves quite so happily as Europeans. Rereading the acceptance speech of the last British recipient of this prize, Tony Blair, I could not resist a wry smile when I came to his central message: 'Britain must overcome its ambivalence about Europe'. But this ambivalence is no longer only a British speciality – the political equivalent, as it were, of fish and chips. 'British' Eurosceptic views, and nationalist populism, are now to be found in all corners of the continent.

Nor has the British ambivalence with

the Brexit vote disappeared as if by magic. In fact, I have never experienced so much passionate pro-Europeanism in my life as I have in today's Britain, especially Scotland, London and among young people. A significant proportion of the 48% who voted for Britain to stay in the European Union are still unreconciled to the result. It turns out that EU membership is a bit like good health: you know how much you should value it only when you are losing it. But rest assured, we British Europeans have not given up.

This leads me to an important question about the individual and the collective. The idea of a formal, legal kind of individual EU citizenship for post-Brexit British Europeans is surely unrealistic, but a political community that defines its members only by virtue of their belonging to a member state, and which, even in its intellectual and political debates, is constantly asking after your passport, is missing something. If we are to deepen our European sense of community, we must learn to see each other, to recognise each other, as individual Europeans.

## *Different clocks*

Politics and history have different clocks. A British prime minister once memorably observed that 'a week in politics is a long time'. History's clock, by contrast, is marked in centuries. Now one way of reading European history across the centuries is as a constant oscillation between periods of European order, however hegemonic and unjust those orders might be, and periods of usually violent disorder. In this perspective, our age is quite exceptional.

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For 72 years since the end of the Second World War we have not seen a major interstate war in Europe. I can find no comparable 72-year period in the last ten centuries. It is important to say at once that there have been very terrible wars in Europe since 1945, from the Greek civil war through the bloody wars in former Yugoslavia, all the way to the low-level armed conflict still being stirred by Vladimir Putin in eastern Ukraine. But there have been no major wars. That is the more remarkable because this period includes a tectonic shift from one order to another: the end of the Soviet empire and the cold war in the years 1989 to 1991. In the past, such a tectonic shift would have been accompanied by war. Never before have so many European countries been liberal democracies, most of them gathered together in the same political, economic and security communities. To adapt Winston Churchill's famous remark about democracy: this is the worst possible Europe, apart from all the other Europes that have been tried from time to time.

Yet the historian may look at this 72-year span and say: 'well, you're overdue for a big crisis.' And sure enough, the many crises exercising different parts of Europe combine to form an existential crisis of the whole European project as it has developed since 1945.

Here the historian and the politician, indeed intellectuals and politicians more broadly, have necessarily different roles. My job can be stated very simply: it is to seek the

truth, to find the truth, insofar as critically tested evidence and rational argument allow, and then to state that truth as carefully, plainly and vividly as possible.

So I'm doing my job if I try to identify the causes of this existential crisis and point to the vulnerabilities that nationalist populists exploit. For example: a directly elected European Parliament actually exercises considerable democratic control over European laws and policies, but most Europeans don't feel that they are directly represented and their voice heard in Brussels. Many European societies have great difficulty accepting the scale and speed of immigration, not least that facilitated by dismantling the internal frontiers in Europe while not adequately securing the external borders of the Schengen area. And I trust the Charlemagne prizewinner for 2002 – the euro – will not feel personally offended if I note that the Eurozone, intended to advance European unity, has in recent years fostered painful divisions between northern and southern Europe. These are perhaps uncomfortable truths, but I think the ghost of Alcuin of York would agree that it is the scholar's job to speak them.

## *Reasons for the existential crisis*

The politician, by contrast, has always to start from where we are, always to watch his or her words, and to convey a sense of 'yes, we can' – roughly translatable into German as '*wir schaffen das*'. The intellectual must spell out the truth that no empire, commonwealth, alliance or community on earth has ever lasted forever, so this one won't either. The politician must work to ensure that our unprecedented, voluntary, peaceful European empire-by-consent will last as long as humanly possible.

Yet if you are, as I am, a spectateur engagé, you can also contribute to that political enterprise simply by bringing home the historical truth. I would argue that for three generations after 1945, the most important single motor of European integration was individual, personal memories of war, occupation, Holocaust and Gulag, of dictatorships – fascist or communist –, and extremes of nationalism, discrimination and poverty. Now, for the first time, we have a whole generation of Europeans most of whom – not all, but most – have grown up since 1989 with none of those traumatic and formative experiences. They have known only a Europe largely whole and mainly free. Almost inevitably, they incline to take it for granted; for there is a universal human tendency to perceive what you grow up with and see around you as in some sense normal, even natural. Czeslaw Milosz describes this phenomenon memorably in his book *The Captive Mind,* comparing us to Charlie Chaplin in the film *The Gold Rush*, bustling around cheerfully in a wooden shack hanging perilously over the edge of a cliff.

I hope we're not that far gone but we do need somehow to convey to this generation that what they today take to be normal is in fact, in historical perspective, profoundly abnormal – exceptional, extraordinary. In his speech last year, Pope Francis mentioned Elie Wiesel's call for a 'memory transfusion'

to younger Europeans. Exactly so. Of course nothing can compare with the impact of direct, personal experience. Yet one purpose of studying history is precisely to learn from other people's experiences without having to go through them yourself. Among the encouraging signs in recent months is a new mobilisation among this post-1989 generation of Europeans, who are showing that their pulse does beat faster for Europe.

### *Means to higher ends*

Another, more general lesson from history is that what were originally just means to an end can come with time to be treated as ends in themselves. (Anyone who has ever tried to abolish a committee in a university, or any other institution, will know what I mean.) In his opening speech to the original Congress of Europe in The Hague in May 1948, the man who would subsequently be the first recipient of this prize, Count Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi, said: 'Let us never forget, my friends, that European Union is a means and no end'. This from a high priest of European unification, at a time when European Union was still only a dream. His warning is very relevant today. All the European institutions we have created are means to higher ends, not ends in themselves. At every turn, we should ask 'is this institution or instrument still fit for purpose, the best available for that purpose?' It is no use just parroting 'more Europe, more Europe'. The right answer will often be that we need more of this but less of that. Only an organisation capable of redistributing power both downward and upward, as changing needs require, will be seen by its citizens as alive and responsive.

Many European societies have great difficulty accepting the scale and speed of immigration, not least that facilitated by dismantling the internal frontiers in Europe while not adequately securing the external borders of the Schengen area.

And then there is the dichotomy most characteristic of European history: that of unity and diversity. Here in Aachen, we inevitably think of the Holy Roman Empire, Europe's longest lasting empire. The historian Peter Wilson argues that one reason the Holy Roman Empire did survive so long is that its overarching structures were seen as securing and protecting the enormous diversity of political, ecclesiastical and legal communities under its aegis, not threatening them with excessive centralisation and homogenisation. Its legitimacy and longevity derived from its ability to live with this complexity, and hence with a level of chronic discord: 'although outwardly stressing unity and harmony, the Empire in fact functioned by accepting disagreement and disgruntlement as permanent elements of its internal politics'. I think there's a lesson there for the European Union.

Our contemporary European diversity is not just of states and histories, but also of cultures and the languages in which they are embedded. These profound differences of culture, language and philosophical traditions also cut deep into the way we think about the state, law and politics, and therefore about the political order to be

constructed between our states and peoples.

Europe will be stronger if it can accommodate all these kinds of diversity. Medical science identifies two contrasting problems with joints: hypermobility, meaning the joint is too loose, and hypomobility, meaning the joint is stuck tight. Europe will be weakened if its structures become too loose, but also if they are too rigid. Like an Olympic athlete, Europe needs to be both strong and flexible: strong because it is flexible, flexible because it is strong.

By now you will have realised that I have been leading you in a kind of rapid motion Blue Danube waltz through a series of dichotomies: the individual and the collective, historical time and political time, the intellectual and the politician, means and ends, national and European, realism and idealism, and, last but not least, complexity and simplicity. For at the end of the day, what we want is really quite simple: it is for people in Europe to enjoy freedom, peace, dignity, the rule of law, adequate prosperity and social security. It's how we achieve those simple goals that are so necessarily complicated.

## *Germany's 'second chance'*

Let me in conclusion say a few words to Germany and the Germans.When I first came to Germany, in the early 1970s, the shadows of the Second World War and Nazi dictatorship were still omnipresent. (My first research project was on Berlin in the Third Reich.) The country was still painfully divided, and I experienced at first hand that second German dictatorship which the whole world now knows by one short ugly word: Stasi.

Then came the year of wonders 1989, and Germany received, quite unexpectedly, what the historian Fritz Stern famously called its 'second chance'. For more than a quarter-century now I have watched with growing admiration how well united Germany has used this second chance. I personally find it extremely moving that refugees from all over the world now look towards Germany, as if it were the Promised Land. It is rather wonderful that Germany now stands like an island of stability, moderation and liberality in the midst of an ocean of nationalist populism. Every time I contemplate this historical turning from darkness to light, it fills me with real delight.

But – there's always a 'but' – the second chance, or to be more precise the second half of the second chance, is still before you – the all-European half. With a new, decidedly pro-European French president, Germany and France once again have the chance to go ahead together, as so often before in the history of European integration. This second half of the second chance will, however, not be easy. Germany still faces the old, familiar problem of its 'critical size' – too small and yet too large; too large and yet too small. Wise leadership in Europe requires a highly developed ability to see Europe also through other Europeans' eyes – it needs *Einfühlungsvermögen*. It also requires steadiness, confidence and courage.

President Frank-Walter Steinmeier made 'courage' the central keyword of his inaugural address. That must include the 'courage to speak the truth' of which president Emmanuel Macron has spoken so powerfully. But it also includes the courage to compromise. The courage to live with uncertainty,

incompleteness, even ambiguity – as in the Holy Roman Empire. In short: life is not a *Gesamtkonzept*. And that's especially true of the political life of Europe.

In a book on the history of Berlin published more than 100 years ago, Karl Scheffler wrote that Berlin is 'fated always to be becoming and never to be'. One could say something similar about Europe. We will never arrive at that sublime moment when we can cry: 'there it is, the finished Europe! La belle finalité européenne – Verweile doch, Du bist so schön!'

No, Europe too is fated always to be becoming and never to be. But that need not necessarily be a curse, it can even be a blessing. When you're somewhat older you realise that the years of becoming are often the best years of one's life. Thus our ancient Europe has a chance to remain forever young. Let us then shape it together – Europe's never ending becoming.

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**The governance gap** Western democracy has a credibility problem. A study of 17 Latin American countries showed that half the population doubts the practice of democracy and is actually convinced that democracy is a system organised for the rich. The author believes that, given the socio-economic disparities, we cannot afford to ignore this disaster in slow motion. The problems will not disappear unless we organise ourselves to solve them. A plea for a new 'Global Deal'.

*By Ladislau Dowbor*

What keeps me awake is not that the most powerful nation is governed by a guy such as Donald Trump, it is the fact that such a prosperous country, with all its journal and universities, and so rich in information, voted for a such a guy. I mean, for his arguments. The country of the Statue of Liberty, Thomas Jefferson, Lincoln, all these symbols. Gunnar Myrdal, in his classic *The American Dilemma*, was right after all: the mystery is how people manage to be simultaneously inhabited by the ideas of freedom and democracy and by so much hatred. Sing the national anthem and get excited about the Klu Klux Klan. Unfortunately, 'Make America Great Again' has been popularly translated as 'We're the best, f... the rest'.

Let us not make this strictly American. We have Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité and Le Pen. The greetings in the Middle East are either Shalom or Salam, so much for peace. Turkey is drowning in violence and hypocrisy. With democratic elections, of course. Are the Philippines any better off? What lingers in the political memory of Russians, who have never known a day of democracy? Is Maduro the only bad guy? After El Salvador and Paraguay, Brazil has reinvented the light coup d'état, the soft dictatorship. Argentina is doing no better. Poland is building a new version of catholic fundamentalism, bringing down democratic rights. Is Brexit any more intelligent, deciding to go it alone, *pisser en Suisse* as the Swiss name it, in their seldom-used sense of humour?

Terror is the big thing. But let us face it: if someone is ready to kill himself with the sole aim of killing anyone, anywhere, with a plane, a car or a hammer, there is no protection, no amount of police, no make-believe of security. It can be anybody, anywhere, at any time. And we're speaking of homo sapiens, frequently guys with diplomas. And they

can be in Charlottesville and profess any or no religion. How can we forget that the US has 4.5 per cent of the world's population yet represents 25 per cent of world incarceration, mostly people of colour and stupid sentences relating to marijuana?

### *A credibility problem*

Brazil had 60,000 assassinations last year, quietly doing worse than Syria and Iraq put together. A study of 17 Latin American countries showed that half the population doubts the practice of democracy and is actually convinced that democracy is a system organised for the rich. Are they wrong? Shouldn't we get a little more to the roots of our dramas?

The whole Muslim world has seen the Abu Ghraib documentaries, vivid images of merry lads and girls torturing naked prisoners and taking selfies. Those who haven't seen them in the West would do well to take a look. The West has a credibility problem. Is anyone surprised at the now declassified British government papers revealing excitement about the opportunity for arms sales on the eve of the Iraq invasion? And by the way, is anyone seriously looking at the flourishing world trade in sophisticated weapons? When the wretched of the earth have to look to charities to resolve their basic needs, be it AIDS or hunger or whatever, what has become of democratic government, of public policy? Is out-shouting Kim Jong-Un the priority?

How can we forget that the US has 4.5 per cent of the world's population yet represents 25 per cent of world incarceration, mostly people of colour and stupid sentences relating to marijuana?

### *Frying the planet*

Back to basics. We are frying the planet, slowly, admittedly, but homo sapiens hates looking at the long term. We are cutting down the rainforest, contaminating water, sterilising agricultural soil, destroying biodiversity, clogging our cities and polluting whatever we touch. Under our present system of governance, some 7.4 billion inhabitants are all looking at who can grab a bigger piece. We are not the last generation on earth, yet we behave as if we were. And forget Musk, the man that wants to travel to Mars. This is the only planet we have.

The social issues fare no better. The astounding Crédit Suisse and Oxfam figures show us that eight families own more wealth than the poorest 50 percent of humanity, and that the 1 per cent own more than the other 99. Inequality begets dramas, suffering and political chaos. How can we govern ourselves, let alone respond, if we do not understand how this came to be, and how it continues. The basic issue here is that people get wealthier not according to what they contribute to our global wealth, but how far they can twist governance according to their interests, and how much they can squeeze out of the productive world.

Even Albert Einstein got it: 'Compound interest is the eighth wonder of the world. He who understands it, earns it; he who doesn't, pays it.' The rest of us, not necessarily Ein-

steins, must resort to simplicity. The average annual stock market return, according to *How Money Works*, has been around 7 per cent. But GDP growth is around 2 or 2.5 per cent. This simply means that if you invest in production, you work a lot and earn very little. But if you invest in papers, which means calling an appropriate intermediary, or typing in some instructions on your computer, you earn three times as much, and work much less.

And the money you earn on interest is reinvested, generating magical wealth. You didn't have to produce anything, but you now have a fat account which gives you rights to other peoples' produce. The work of the French economist Thomas Piketty is wonderful, but you don't have to read the 720 pages of *The Capital in the XXIth Century* to get it. In my last book I call it an '*era do capital improdutivo*'. You understand the idea even in Portuguese: money-speak is an international language. The former Chief Economist of the World Bank Joseph Stiglitz calls it 'unearned income'.

## *Navigating the austerity fairytale*

The 99 percent basically use their money to pay for rent and mortgages, kids, transportation and so forth. But big money tends to flow to where it earns most, which is not production. We can thus have rich societies, or rather societies with rich people, much inequality and a stagnating economy. In the US, for example, the bulk of the population has hardly seen any improvement in the last four decades, and their perception of democracy has deteriorated fast, and for sensible reasons. Europe has spent some time navigating the austerity fairy tale, involving huge quantitative easing on the part of banks – which again did not use it to fund productive activities but to invest in whatever papers pay more. The distinction is easier to grasp in French, since *placements financiers* relates to financial papers, and *investissements* to the real economy. The basic fact is that we have a system which does not compensate productive effort, and does compensate what *The Economist* calls 'speculative investors'. It is not a detail, but a systemic flaw.

But of course this unproductive capital must have access to the real world economy, the one that produces goods and services. Through public debt, student loans, credit card rates, instalments, derivatives and an impressive number of complex mechanisms, the real economy is simply plucked and loses its growth and job generation capacity. Thus the basic moral feeling of justice, based on honest work and fair retribution, is deeply eroded. Most people do not understand the workings of it, but they do have a feeling the system is wrong. This leads to the general feeling that the political system is not representative anymore. The basic fabric of our political stability is deeply weakened.

This systemic deformation generated by what has been termed 'financialisation' goes far beyond the 2008 crisis. It is a question of how the corporate decision process works, how the supposedly important compliance mechanism has lost its capacity to keep even simple legality. The CCP Research Foundation tallies the misconduct bill for the peri-

od 2012 to 2016 at a staggering 340 billion dollars, 'raising doubts about efforts by the major financial services players to restore trust in the sector.' All the big banks we know are on the list. But the corporate governance chaos goes much further, as in the real economy businesses have to make profits.

Here we find the absurd VW swindle, the GSK fraud on medicine, Apple's tax evasion and so forth – there is barely a major corporation that is excluded. It's all about short-term financial gains, forget social and environmental responsibility, or even basic respect for the rules of the game. Whistleblowers are the only ones on the run, not the culprits.

## *Staats Volk and Markt Volk*

For corporations, ensuring major stockholders' short-term interests has become more important than social and economic benefit, and they are lavishly and proportionately paid. But governments are also divided between two constituencies: the voting citizens they are supposed to represent, and the pressure for financial results and public debt servicing. The German sociologist Wolfgang Streeck has neatly shown this divide between the *Staats Volk* and the *Markt Volk*. So-called market confidence, meaning the satisfaction of rentier interests, and if possible investment grade, have become the measure of good governance. The overall result is quite clear: the system is destroying the environment for the benefit of the few, and the resources needed to fix the planet and to reduce inequality are out of democratic control. In Streeck's words, it is not the end of capitalism, but of democratic capitalism.

In the US the bulk of the population has hardly seen any improvement in the last four decades, and their perception of democracy has deteriorated fast, and for sensible reasons.

And yet...We are a rich planet, awash with technology, capable of impressive science, producing more than 3,000 dollars a month of goods and services per four-member family. Can we not ensure children get the food they need, that young people can see a future for themselves, that different cultures can learn to live together? The basic fact is that we know what should be done, we know how to do it, and we have the money for it. The key, obviously, is rescuing governance, the capacity to control the use of our resources in a useful way. The philosophy of it all is fairly simple. François Villon wrote it down many centuries ago in his marvellous *La Prière*: 'Lord, give everyone for his needs, and don't forget about me.' Even the Russians sing it, in the moving melody by Boulat Okudjava.

## *A huge power-grab*

The huge power-grab by the financial moguls of the world can be seen in another light. They certainly are powerful, but they are unproductive, wasting the precious resources we need for positive initiatives. Any small business that produces real goods and services, even if it frequently exploits its workers, at least produces something, pays its taxes, and generates jobs. These parasites, as Michael Hudson presents them, are killing the host.

This is not overstating the matter; we are not even speaking of bad guys, but of a bad system. As a system, Martin Wolf, chief economist at the *Financial Times*, weighs it correctly: it has lost its legitimacy.

Of course we know what works. Roosevelt's New Deal heavily taxed the super rich who were drowning in money like useless fat, and funded social programmes and public investment, which expanded demand, which in turn stimulated business to get back to business. And when the economy started running again, the tax flow expanded, balancing the financial effort of the government. Europe had its 30 golden years with the help of the welfare state, which expanded family consumption and gradually stimulated the whole economy. Lula applied this for ten years, with impressive results that earned it the name the Golden Decade in the World Bank's recent report on Brazil. Taxing idle capital, unearned income, also stimulates the rich to do something useful with their money. Once rent is taxed high enough to make productive use of money more profitable, and if we decide to exert some control on tax havens, it might work. In any case, putting the economy back on track means using our resources where they best serve the population. Directly, including universal basic income.

And it is important to realise how absurd the alternative is, based on making the rich richer so they can invest. Joseph Stigliz summed it up: 'The solution is always the same: lower taxes and deregulation, to "incentivize" investors and "free up" the economy. President Donald Trump is counting on this package to make America great again. It won't, because it never has.'

We cannot afford to continue ignoring the slow motion catastrophe we are creating in the world. The problems will not disappear, unless we organise to face them. We are one world, one humanity, and a multicultural world. No wall will solve anything, we should have learned this from China. Overall, there is no way of avoiding the Global New Deal, or the Welfare World, whatever you call it, that is needed to save us from big, big trouble, as Trump would put it. Instead of proclaiming ridiculous, highbrow, environmental scepticism and locking out the poor, we have to face the challenges and concentrate our financial and technological resources on saving the planet and solving poverty. This will make us great.

Will this solve all our problems? Well, humanity will continue to be the boisterous, babbling, bickering crowd we know so well. But it will set us in the right direction and, considering the present trends, some civilised capitalism would already be quite something.

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Restoran

# The promise of the city

Brexit, refugee crisis, populism and climate change. This is a moment when the European Union should be using all the tools at its disposal to respond, including those of cultural diplomacy, but how can this tool be applied to rebuild cooperation? If we see diverse cities as part of the solution then it makes sense to prioritise city culture as a diplomatic strategy for Europe. A view from Los Angeles. *By Nicholas J. Cull*

This is a difficult moment for Europe. The nations of Europe and the West more broadly face a daunting array of shared problems, including climate change, extremism (at home and abroad) and the rise of disruptive anti-democratic powers, and yet our collective response has been undermined by a marked retreat from cooperation. Within Europe the EU has to manage the implications of Britain's decision to leave the Union, formally initiated in the spring of 2017, and a range of unilateral rumblings from elsewhere in the region.

In the wider world the EU has to cope with the uncooperative stance taken by the new Trump administration in the United States, grandstanding unilaterally rather than collaborating on issues of mutual concern. Especially worrying has been Trump's willingness to back off from the commitments of his predecessors: the Paris Climate Agreement and Iran Nuclear Deal being the most obvious examples. The situation is compounded by the absence of any compelling vision of a collective future to tempt publics away from the comfortable old certainties of nationalism. It is a moment when the European Union should be using all the tools at its disposal to respond, including those of cultural diplomacy, but how can this tool be applied to rebuild cooperation?

2017 was a year of irony in European cultural diplomacy. In some ways it represented unprecedented progress, with High Representative for Foreign Affairs Federica Mogherini developing her vision of cultural diplomacy as a key aspect of European Union foreign policy. The year brought new initiatives and platforms for facilitating cultural exchange and a flurry of new initiatives in the educational sector, including master's degrees dedicated to Cultural Diplomacy at

Catholica University, Milan and Goldsmiths College in London. Yet in other ways the year saw renewed cultural challenges in all aspects of European life. The refugee crisis brought out the worst in many of the region's citizens: culture was more likely to be invoked as something sacred to be protected than as an area for development or collaboration, or a zone in which experience could be constructively shared. Plainly an effective European cultural diplomacy will require an honest look at all the issues in play.

### *Shiny new nation-branding strategies*

European countries have tended to look at culture as their automatic positive. When, in the wake of the Cold War, Harvard's Joseph Nye articulated his concept of soft power and argued that international actors with attractive values and culture were able to do more in the world, European nations almost uniformly ticked off two boxes: Great values? Check! Admirable culture? Check! These countries dutifully moved culture to the fore of the shiny new nation-branding strategies which they were developing at around the same time. The truth is that the attractiveness of European culture cannot be taken for granted. Culture is not just the heritage of a shelf of fat Baedecker guides full of architectural marvels and high art or the well-loved intangibles of photogenic folk practice. Culture includes the sum of attitudes at large in a society. It is the foundation for politics. A slice through Europe in 2017 includes much in culture which would repel rather than attract. Intolerance at the bottom of society is easy to flag: the strengthening of populist parties; the marches against migrants and so forth; but intolerance at the top is hardly less in evidence. One of the most shocking elements of the past year has been the willingness of the leaders of certain European nations to trade the agreed foundational principals of European culture – rights of free expression and dissent – to consolidate their own hold on political power. Brussels is not without blame of its own. In the presence of economic difficulty and a renewed challenge from Russia the European Commission has apparently preferred stability to democratic principle in tutoring Western Balkans neighbours for accession.

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*The Economist* dubbed the resulting hybrid policy 'stabilocracy' and noted the willingness to sideline issues of freedom of media and creative expression. It is essential that culture be recognised as being connected to politics and therefore requiring certain political priorities, the foremost of these being protection of freedom of speech.

It is fallacy to imagine that Europe's culture is attractive because it is pure or insulated from its neighbours. Its most celebrated elements are built on mixture and exchange, both regionally and globally. The easiest place to see this is in the galaxy of

European culinary culture, shaped by a range of experiences with trade and empire. Coffee may be the quintessential European drink but it didn't come from local plantations. Frederica Mogherini has stressed that this exchange includes a centuries-old conversation with Islam and that Islam is already part of Europe. One might say the same of Asian and African cultures. They are already here. Why, then is Europe so reluctant to acknowledge the fact, let alone develop it into an effective cultural strategy?

## *Building blocks*

Part of the problem facing Europe is the poor fit between the traditional building blocks of European identity – the conceptually stable constituent nation states – and the task of assimilation and collaboration at hand. The work of assimilation has always been carried out locally, in streets and neighbourhoods where communities mix and new ways of living and thinking are born. The best building blocks for a strong and collaborative Europe are the European cities.

There are a number of factors which recommend cities as ideal actors to improve international relations. For one thing many can claim a prior title: they predate their host nation states. For another, cities now often seem more cohesive than nation states. Many mayors have majorities which are unthinkable in national politics and are able to reconcile interests and identities in ways that national leaders cannot. It is noticeable that many of the new nationalists, from Brexit Britain to Orban's Hungary, are strongest away from the great cities. In soft power terms cities have a number of advantages: they are the engines of their national economies, typically generating more than 80 per cent of GDP. They fly under the wire of prejudice: vendettas build against nations rather than cities; cities seldom intimidate; cities are understandable to outsiders and to their own inhabitants. The human imagination seems comfortable with a city-level view, like some kind of default setting established in the distant past to which it reverts. It may be that future generations will see the resurgence of the city as a function of technology: just as nation states were built in a symbiosis of printing press and railroad, so the internet has separated us into groups of interests and nodal points on a network in which city-level convergence simply makes most sense.

The idea that cities should take a greater role in diplomacy has been growing for some years now. The great post-war reconciliation of France and Germany began with multiple connections in the area of city diplomacy as mayors reached out to like-minded peers in the neighbouring country and a connective tissue of twin towns was born. More recent initiatives have included the creation of city diplomacy platforms dedicated to nurturing collaboration in such fields as security, environment and culture. 2016 saw the launch of a Global Parliament of Mayors as a venue for city to city dialogue and for the generation of solutions to shared problems.

In 2017 the retreat of the nation states into a populist fantasy and the failure of their leaders to effective tackle some of the most

pressing issues drove the creator of the Global Parliament of Mayors – the American professor Benjamin Barber – to further sharpen his proscription. In his book *Cool Cities* Barber argued that not only was city diplomacy a good thing, but also that the cities of the world had a right and a duty to act in the matter of climate change. His argument was deceptively simple. Sovereignty rests with the people and has been surrendered up to the nation state as part of social contract in which security is provided in return. If the nation cannot provide the citizen with security in as crucial a matter of climate then sovereignty reverts to the people and should now be extended to the most effective level of government in which they participate, the city. Sadly, Barber died in the spring of 2017, and did not have the opportunity to develop his insight more broadly.

### *Culture in civic terms*

What is the implication of this resurgence of the city for cultural diplomacy? Firstly, by conceptualising culture in civic terms we are forced to break open the often sealed canisters of national culture and work at a level where identity is more accessible and less essentialist. Secondly, the shared experience of civic life is readily recognised across frontiers, creating a foundation for cultural collaboration. Thirdly, cities are already home to a whole cultural infrastructure of interlinked museums, galleries, festivals, biennales, sporting tournaments, universities and so forth. EUNIC clusters already operate in these networks and have become part of many of the most significant cities of exchange around the world. If we see diverse cities as part of the solution then it makes sense to prioritise city culture as a diplomatic strategy for Europe.

Nurturing city culture offers a way forward in a number of Europe's most worrying issues. Take for example the challenge of Russian-speaking minorities located in the Baltics and elsewhere beyond the borders of Russia. In between the entertainment and tendentious news programming, the Kremlin media argues that Russians living abroad should align with a one-size fits all essentialist vision of a Russian world aligned with Mr Putin and can/should have no other identity. The reality on the ground is that when given a chance these citizens can and do embrace opportunities to develop identities specific to their cities which reflect the reality of their life and allow them to be -- say -- European, Estonian, Russian-speaking and citizens of Narva all at the same time. Cultural programmes of organisations like the British Council or Swedish Institute are hard at work helping this process: midwives at the birth of strong and inclusive local identities. In terms of combating radicalisation, finding ways to include historically marginalised groups within civic life makes sense

The work of assimilation has always been carried out locally, in streets and neighbourhoods where communities mix and new ways of living and thinking are born. The best building blocks for a strong and collaborative Europe are the European cities.

and it is good to see cities across the world, including many European cities, sharing their best practices through fora like the Strong Cities Network. It also seems that a high level of cultural engagement goes hand-in-hand with a high level of political engagement, so building cultural integrity and participation in a city should help enhance political integrity and participation.

### *Connections at city level*

In terms of relationships where the national government poses a problem – the United States included – connecting at the city level offers an important way forward. There are American mayors who care passionately about the environment and American civic institutions looking to partner across frontiers. An excellent example of this may be seen in Los Angeles. At the self-same moment that the president is talking of building walls and insulating his country from foreign influence a group of forty museums and galleries across LA have joined in a joint project – Pacific Standard Time: LA/LA – to work with galleries in South America and showcase the artistic and cultural interconnections between Los Angeles and Latin America. The model is one which European cities would do well to consider. Such joint civic projects could explore the heritage of diversity which Federica Mogherini has identified. An entire season of Berlin or Parisian galleries all collectively exploring their interrelationship with Islam or East Asia would be an amazing thing.

What of the future? The collective solutions required to overcome the great challenges of our age are foundering as nationalism surges back. The precedents are worrying. Competing unilateral nationalist agendas underpinned the greatest crises of Europe's past: the First and Second World Wars. Conversely these crises were resolved not merely by the application of violence but by the articulation of visions of the future so compelling that not only the winning sides embraced them but the losing sides also. These visions had cultural dimensions: drawing forth art and literature as part of a reinforcing loop. In both these historical cases the visions of the future were helped and even driven by the sitting American presidents: Wilson and Roosevelt respectively. It seems highly unlikely that the world will be rallying behind an inclusive vision of the future articulated by President Trump any time soon. And so the world waits for Roosevelt. Can cultural diplomacy serve as midwife to a vision that can reverse the centrifugal impulses of the moment? That is a daunting task but the process of cultural diplomacy, with its emphasis on building shared experiences in areas of life where mutual suspicions are lower, is a proven mechanism for developing the kind of trust that would help the reception of a vision in due course. Perhaps networks of dialogue, creation and exchange established in the course of cultural diplomacy can actually generate the vision of what Europe and indeed the world still can be.

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paganda in international history. He is the author of two volumes on the history of US public diplomacy: *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency: American Propaganda and Public Diplomacy, 1945-1989* (Cambridge 2008), and *The Decline and Fall of the United States Information Agency: American Public Diplomacy, 1989-2001* (Palgrave, New York, 2012). His first book, *Selling War*, published by OUP New York in 1995, was a study of British information work in the United States before Pearl Harbor. He is the co-editor (with David Culbert and David Welch) of *Propaganda and Mass Persuasion: A Historical Encyclopedia, 1500-present* (2003), co-editor with David Carrasco of *Alambrista and the U.S.-Mexico Border: Film, Music, and Stories of Undocumented Immigrants* (University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque, 2004). He is an active film historian who has been part of the movement to include film and other media within the mainstream of historical sources. His publications in this area include two books co-authored with James Chapman: *Projecting Empire: Imperialism in Popular Cinema* (IB Tauris, London, 2009) and *Projecting Tomorrow: Science Fiction in Popular Cinema* (IB Tauris, 2013). His most recent volume (co-edited with Francisco Rodriguez and Lorenzo Delgado), *US Public Diplomacy and Democratization in Spain: Selling Democracy?* (Palgrave,New York, 2015).

**Cultural civil war** We have to realise that Europe and the United States are currently in a state of cultural civil war. Our two authors argue that this war is not being fought with weapons but in people's minds. This war is not about territory, but about cultural hegemony. It's about defining who we are, what kind of society we live in and who we view as our friends.

*By Jochen Hippler and Fatemeh Kamali Chirani*

Europeans and Americans have for a long time enjoyed presenting themselves as examples of being civilised, cultured, and democratic. They liked to brag about the uniqueness of their Enlightenment, which finally lead to the codification of human rights, among other good things. During the Cold War, Westerners imagined themselves as the democratic counter-pole to Communist dictatorship, and after its end, as the libertarian alternative to ethnic chaos and Muslim extremism.

They were the good guys, which had to do with their values of liberalism, liberty and democracy, at least from their perspective. It did not seem too relevant that from the perspective of former colonies such as Namibia, Algeria, Vietnam and so many other places, or from the perspective of Auschwitz, this self-perception might have raised some doubts. On the other hand, Westerners liked to imagine that their countries and values, or economic system, were a shining beacon to guide all of humanity. Historical 'progress' meant that after going through 'development', all other countries and cultures would become more and more like the West. The modernisation theory of the 1950s and 1960 expressed this expectation very openly, and the drunken triumphalism after the end of the Cold War produced many examples of such wishful thinking. A case in point was the extraordinary idea that even the whole of history had come to an end. Western values were the fulfilment of this human history.

Looking back, it is tempting to make fun of such excesses of cultural narcissism. But in fact, they were not funny. Self-delusion is sad, at least when we remind ourselves where the US and Western Europe ended up, culturally and politically, and how quickly.

What do 'Western values' mean today;

what are 'European values' in 2018 and beyond? The United States of America are – still – the most important country globally, and while we would hesitate to still call it 'the leader of the free world', it remains both democratic and Western. However, what happened to 'Western values'? US President Donald Trump seems to despise anything that is presented as such. He is recognisably proud to be racist. He is xenophobic, at least if people are not from Norway. Haiti, El Salvador and Africa are 'shithole countries', as far as he knows. Mexicans are drug dealers and rapists, Muslims even more dangerous. In his own country, Trump neither understands nor accepts the rule of law or the separation of powers.

He systematically considers lying to be his unalienable right, because his lies are 'alternative facts'; while everybody else is berated for not telling the truth (even if they do). He does not know and does not care about the importance of free media or a democratic opposition. He threatens a foreign dictatorship with – nuclear – destruction, and briefly thereafter turns around to stress, 'I probably have a very good relationship with Kim Jong-un'. Who happens to be the same person whom Trump had called the leader of a 'band of criminals' just before, and later said he was a 'madman' and 'a sick puppy'. It is 'probably' not reassuring that suddenly the US President thinks he has a good relationship with this gentleman.

There are two points here to make. Firstly, it is quite difficult to identify anything approximating the much-talked-about 'Western values' when this leader of the free world is talking – or texting. Secondly, the main problem is not Donald Trump as a person, but that his presidency is an indication of a major cultural shift in the US. Not too long ago it would have been unimaginable that a person could be elected to the US presidency who arrogantly bragged about his ability to 'grab pussy' because of his status as a celebrity. The cultural climate in the US has dramatically changed, and the effect on political values has been considerable.

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### *Confused emotions and xenophobia*

In Europe and beyond we can see corresponding developments as well. The Brexit campaign in Britain sacrificed reason, rational debate and logic to confused emotions and xenophobia. To a large extent it was a referendum against migration, with undertones of 'Britain first'. At the same time, we have governments in Poland and Hungary that are cultivating extreme nationalist discourses, again with strong xenophobic elements and anti-Muslim hysteria. Remarkably, they are also weakening the independence of the courts, restricting freedom of expression and aiming for a kind of democracy controlled from above. Playing by the rules and accepting the values of the European Union seems to be unacceptable to these EU members. In France, the Netherlands, Austria, Germany, and Italy we can see the rise of right-wing populist movements, which are doing very well at the polls. While all these movements and governments are different from each other,

they still share several cultural (and political) characteristics. First of all, nationalism is a key element of their rhetoric. It is an ethnically defined nationalism, not based on a common political system, on democratic and inclusive values, but on ethnic identity. Secondly, this identity often connects to very conservative or right-wing cultural and political rhetoric. Gays and lesbians, progressives and minorities are excluded, ideologically. Thirdly, xenonophobia is a key element. Foreigners in general and, in many cases, Muslims in particular are perceived as a threat, as invaders, or as a fifth column. Fourthly, while democracy generally is not officially rejected, it is limited, redefined, narrowed. Democratic culture is systematically undermined.

Such trends are not specific to EU member countries alone. Putin, Erdoğan and Duterte are part of the right-wing populism that has emerged on every continent. However, for the US and the EU the problem presents itself differently. Russia, Turkey and the Philippines have not systematically presented themselves as symbols of enlightenment, democracy, tolerance and liberalism, and have even less been perceived as such. But for the EU and the US, it is precisely these values that have been their trademark. Even NATO presents itself not just as a military alliance, but also as a community of values.

Three aspects are important. One, the EU's credibility is at stake. Lecturing other countries about human rights, freedom of speech, separation of powers and democratic values in general is much less convincing if several EU member countries are busy undercutting, debasing and questioning these values. Two, European identity will be affected, undercut, or deformed. The meaning of being 'European' (or 'Western') changes. While in the past the positive self-perception of (Western) Europe as civilised, democratic and enlightened was to some degree hyperbole and boasting, it was not completely wrong. Instead of describing reality, it was more of an ongoing project, still waiting for fulfilment.

## *A cultural civil war*

Still, it was not wrong, but just pretending to have reached a destination when there was still a long way to go. Compared to the disasters and barbarism of the first half of the 20th century, its second half was much more democratic, more civilised. Compared to many other regions of the world, Western Europe was indeed a positive exception, and it still is. The possibility of further progress in this regard is now threatened from within. Three, taken together, democracy, liberalism, and human rights are under attack. This goes way beyond European borders. Putin, Erdoğan, Sisi, Assad, and the spectacular success of authoritarianism in China, among others, are globally undercutting the further expansion of these values. Now, with the US President, the Polish, Hungarian and other Western und EU governments joining in, together with relevant sectors of their populations, humane ways of organising human societies are on the defensive.

We have to accept that today Europe and the United States are going through a cultural civil war. This war is not being fought

violently and with weapons, but in the minds of people, at the grass roots of society, online, on radio and TV, and in print media. Major media channels are accused of 'conspiracy against the people' or of 'treason', are called *Lügenpresse* or 'fake news' if they happen to disagree with the cultural insurgents, or with Trump, Orban, Putin, or Erdoğan.

This war is not fought for territory but for cultural hegemony. It is about defining who we are, what kind of societies we are living in, and who our enemies are. In Germany, mainstream politicians have repeatedly been called *Volksverräter*, a term well-known from the Nazi dictatorship when it justified juridical mass murder.

We are in the midst of a cultural civil war, whether we like it or not. In some places, the insurgent barbarians have already conquered the citadel, while other hordes are still gathering noisily outside the gate and city walls. Appeasement will not work. Accommodation would be suicidal, culturally speaking. European and other Western intellectuals have to a large extent tamed themselves and restrict themselves to lamely lamenting the empty-headedness of the cultural insurgents. True enough. However, being a 'moron' (according to former US Secretary of State Tillerson) did not keep Donald Trump out of the White House. Being demagogic fools did not keep these people out of the Austrian Government or the German parliament. What is needed today is not more of the fashionable self-pity, nor an arrogant ignoring of this ongoing conflict. A war strategy is needed that recognises the struggle will be long and require blood, sweat and tears. Which, in cultural terms, means it will require lots of effort, patience, and commitment.

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## *Distant 'elites'*

To win this war, two things are absolutely necessary: Firstly, we have to deal with the causes of the breakdown of political culture in Europe and the US. Secondly, we have to go on the offensive culturally, and re-conquer the hill of cultural hegemony. The second aspect will not be possible without the first.

The cultural insurgency did not happen by accident; it has reasons, which we should take seriously. These are often linked to a growing rejection of what is seen as distant 'elites'. The Trump phenomenon, Brexit, the rise of right-wing populists in Germany and elsewhere are an outflow of this rebellion against 'the elites', which are perceived as selfish, arrogant, and patronising. The problem is that this criticism is not without merit.

The problem in responding is that in many regards the criticism might be articulated in very crude ways and is linked to surprising scapegoats. (Attacking refugees and Muslims is often justified by stating that the 'elites' are acting for 'them' and not for 'us'.) But it is true that political, economic, and cultural

elites today are more distant from their own societies compared to 30 or 50 years ago. In addition, often our societies are regulated in a very opaque, anonymous und bureaucratic way, which can appear frustrating and incomprehensible. Years ago, even former German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt publicly remarked that he could not even understand his public utility bills at all, which should be much easier than understanding the workings of our society and politics. Besides this, our elites, as far as they can be identified, seem to have lost both the ability and the interest in actually ruling their respective countries.

## *Muddling through*

Globalisation (supported by those elites) has, after more than two generations, dramatically reduced the ability of the state to improve the economic and social wellbeing of society. To a large degree, power is no longer controlled by national governments (or the EU), but has moved to anonymous global markets. So, why should people vote for a government if it will be helpless to overcome social ills? No wonder participation in elections has weakened over time. Our rulers now seem to accept being administrators instead of political leaders. Muddling through has displaced confidently creating a better future. The New Deal, Social Democracy, the Welfare State, Socialism, even the *Freie Marktwirtschaft* are dead or dying, while nothing has taken their place. There is no credible narrative for shaping our future politically, and no vision. Nobody can tell us where we want to go.

The elites are self-absorbed and playing games, but they are not doing their job of actually leading. Why should anybody trust them? The rebellion against 'elites' might therefore be crude, often silly, reactionary, and threaten many cultural values that have been achieved since the Enlightenment and especially after the Second World War, but it is not difficult to understand. Beneath all the racist trash and authoritarian nostalgia is buried a point that has to be appreciated – and dealt with – if the cultural civil war is to be waged seriously. Most Western elites are politically bankrupt, and do not even recognise it, since they themselves are doing well.

Connected to this is another key point: Western intellectuals have proven as sterile as the political and economic elites. Academics have largely turned into bureaucrats, sacrificing rigorous and critical thinking for self-referential and fashionable boredom. We, too, are just muddling through. Radical, critical analysis and visionary thinking is not at the centre of our work, but rather producing mainstream-oriented, acceptable contributions that either justify the status quo or are satisfied with minor adjustments. This is not good enough. European societies are in crisis, starting to stagnate, and rotten. Not just because Europe and the West are falling behind in global terms, but also the economy, education, and systems of governance are slowly eroding. The job of intellectuals should be to brutally and self-critically analyse the causes of decay, and then come up with creative and bold ideas for major reform. We need a vision for this, and only intellectuals can develop this. We as intellectuals are not just failing, we are not even trying. The result is a lack of orientation, a general confusion,

and an intellectual vacuum, which leaves the field wide open to demagogy and right-wing populism.

The battle against the self-barbarisation of the West has begun. It is a struggle for the Western soul and identity. To succeed, the EU has to recognise its causes and the fact that the cultural insurgency is the result of the crisis of a political and, to some degree, economic system. It is a self-inflicted wound. Today, it is pressingly urgent to overcome the decay and to build a functioning strategy to create a better future for the affected societies, not just for the top ten percent. Intellectuals have the duty to devise and popularise a vision to achieve this, a vision that is both workable and provides meaning. With these two elements in place, the demagoguery and ideological idiocy we are exposed to today can be pushed back into the gutter. If Europe fails to do this, the battle will be lost. Not today, not tomorrow, but incrementally, over the next one or two generations. We can't let this happen.

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**Responsibility not fantasy** How can we overcome the hate-filled division of society into urban elites and opponents of globalisation? The author believes a unified European culture, let alone a world culture, cannot and should not be the solution. He argues that local culture is the only way out of the crisis, and that the political engagement it generates will provide the basis for a credible representative democracy. *By Bernd Reiter*

It appears, at least to this observer, that a global divide has taken shape over the past decades: the divide among people who define themselves as progressive and modern – and those who stand against change, or at least its pace, which they perceive as being too fast. At the forefront is a political division, which we can witness every time new elections take place, no matter where they are held. In the United States, a black president who legalised gay marriage and enacted a broad health care reform for all was, for some, too much too soon. They stand against what they perceive as 'special' rights for minorities and find the debate about transgender people using the bathroom of their choice an abomination.

In Europe, every EU Member State and those who are lined up to join have their own, similar, 'anti' movements. People are mobilising and organising against the EU, immigration, and asylum seekers. In the UK, this protest has led to Brexit, whatever the economic consequences might be. The fact that it was mostly older people who voted for Brexit points to the conservativism and backlash character of these movements.

Beyond Europe, we have witnessed people marching for equal rights, democracy and modern lives in such countries as Iran, Turkey, Tunisia, Egypt, Syria, and Libya – even if many of these protests were quickly subdued by those who are against change because they have something to lose from it. It may not be comfortable, but seen from this perspective, the difference between ISIS, right-wing anti-immigration activists and Erdoğan's AK party is merely one of quantity and means – not of quality – as they all stand against change.

In most countries, the majority of people are facing each other along a divide that is

mostly cultural in nature. Some embrace modern lifestyles while others fear them; some embrace change, while others seek to avoid it. The dividing line seems so deep that one camp is unwilling, or unable, to even listen, let alone consider the positions and opinions of others. Look no further than the United States, where democrats are mostly disgusted by the Trump administration, while Trump supporters in turn view democrats and liberals with contempt and disdain. The level of distrust and hate is far beyond political disagreement, which, after all, could be solved with a minimum level of tolerance and willingness to compromise.

What we face instead in the USA, but also in Germany, Austria, the Netherlands, France, Poland, Hungary, the UK, Turkey, Iran and everywhere else, is a profound cultural division that goes far beyond the possibilities of political pragmatism. Stereotypes abound on both sides. For self-declared 'progressives', in the United States the Trump camp is made up of 'deplorables', (to quote Hillary Clinton), that is to say, stupid, hateful chauvinists. For those supporting Donald Trump in the US, Marine Le Pen in France, Frauke Petry in Germany, Heinz-Christian Strache in Austria, Victor Orban in Hungary, and so many others, the 'progressives' are arrogant, cowards, sell-outs, and traitors. The level of mutual distrust and lack of understanding is so profound that the only possible way to understand it is through a cultural lens that is a division of very basic outlooks on the world and life. The fact that culture is the cause of such division is further evidenced by the fact that both sides have long ago lost any coherent political programme. Much of what the left argues is in fact traditionally right-wing (such as anti-globalisation).

In the United States, a black president who legalised gay marriage and enacted a broad health care reform for all was, for some, too much too soon.

The right has similarly embraced non-coherent and even contradictory ideological and political positions, arguing for strong government on military matters and reproductive issues, while advocating weak government on most economic matters. To most people on both left and right, politics has deteriorated into a culturally infused lifestyle performance. As such, it seems to be determined by the way we dress, consume, and live. In this way, insiders display that they belong to different, culturally defined communities and signal 'I don't want to talk to you or listen to you.'

## *Culturally infused lifestyle performance*

While this conflict plays out in the political arena in most countries in the contemporary world, in this essay I argue that what lies at the heart of this divide is indeed culture, not politics. Most cultural anthropologists define culture as a symbolic system that humans use to make sense of the world in which they live. In essence, culture is therefore an established and broadly accepted way of making sense and giving meaning. Change thus inevitably threatens our ability to understand our world, make sense of it, and find meanning in

it. One solution to this problem of potentially sense-eroding change is religion, as religion can absorb meaning and deflect it away from the material world towards a divine, eternal, and never-changing symbolic world, where salvation, and hence orientation, has a clearly prescribed path. Another perceived solution is ethnic nationalism, which promises, at its core, to allow people to remain among those perceived as essential equals and thus better withstand the maelstrom of change and modernity. The fact that ethnic nationalism is embraced by so many these days clearly points to the core threat that lies within modernisation and change: otherness. It seems that many people feel threatened by the presence of unfamiliar others – people they do not know and who they perceive as fundamentally different and hence 'unknowable'.

### *Culture requires community*

Culture is a group effort, and one person cannot create and sustain a culture. As such, culture requires community. Culture thus requires a minimum number of participants, but it also seems to have upper limits, probably imposed by our own, very human, cognitive limitations to processing complexity. A 'world culture' or even 'European culture' might be forever out of reach and we might never be able to fully identify and feel solidarity with people and groups whose language we do not understand and whose ways of making sense of their worlds and surroundings are different from ours.

It is also far from evident that having something like a 'European' culture is a good thing to begin with, as it raises the question, 'which culture will it be?' There is good reason to fear that a broadly encompassing European culture will be a slightly modified German or French culture, thus bringing back a situation similar to the one pursued by the Nazis who sought to 'heal the world with German culture' (*Am Deutschen Wesen soll de Welt genesen*). A unified European culture, let alone a world culture cannot, and should not be the solution to the ongoing and potentially sense-eroding process of change and modernity.

What then? The humble position of this writer is that the only way to find and renew the ability to find and make meaning and sense out of a changing world is in local culture, firmly anchored in local communities. Here, then, also lies the problem we face today and the root cause of the cultural divide I have described above. Over the past 200 years, we have all witnessed a massive and ever-accelerating destruction of local communities, mostly done for the sake of profit – that is to say, the profit of the few to the detriment of the many. Whether it is under direct colonial rule, as during the first half of these short 200 years, or during the latter phases of post-colonial Western and Northern dominance (in the case of former colonies) or simply during late capitalism (among the former colonisers) – capitalist 'development' has meant, almost everywhere and with very few exceptions, the destruction of local communities and with it their ability to provide meaningful cultural frameworks in which local people can

find meaning and orientation.

*Losing face-to-face interactions*

To put it strongly: if and to the extent that we become individualised consumers of mass culture and lose our face-to-face interactions with our neighbours and friends, we lose those bonds that give meaning, sense, and direction to our lives. As we are, by our very constitution, profoundly social beings, what happens next is all too familiar from experience: we seek to replace the loss of gennuine connection and friendship with secondary and artificially-created bonds. For some this might mean churches, mosques and synagogues; for others it may be yoga, consumerism, travelling to ever-more-exotic places, and other institutions that seem to offer sense and meaning once it has been lost. All these efforts, however, are either incapable of providing sense, orientation, and meaning (such as yoga, consumerism and travel), or they come with severe and potentially undesirable side-effects (like religion, which can easily be transformed from an effort to care for others into an effort to hate and fear non-believers).

Local community is, however, the proper place to find meaning, sense, and orientation through friendship, love, care, commitment, and shared responsibility. If and when we become active members of a local community, then we do not need to seek sense and meaning elsewhere. The Greek-American-Turkish cultural anthropologist Dorothy Lee (1905-1975) has provided one of my favourite explanations of how culture, local community and freedom interact: 'Yet actually it is in connection with the highest personal autonomy that we often find the most intricately developed structure; and it is this structure that makes autonomy possible in a group situation.' (See her book *Freedom and Culture*. Long Grove: Waveland Press 1987).

Change inevitably threatens our ability to understand our world, make sense of it, and find meaning in it. One solution to this problem of potentially sense-eroding change is religion, as religion can absorb meaning and deflect it away from the material world towards a divine, eternal, and never-changing symbolic world.

Lee found in her research among different native societies of the Americas and the Pacific that being strongly anchored in a local culture, often called 'tribal' in the Anglo tradition, provides not only a firm framework for understanding one's place in the world but also creates the conditions to be free and autonomous as a person. The idea that local culture has to be restrictive and limiting is true only when the freedom sought is egotistic. As long as personal freedom overlaps strongly with the freedom of others in the same community, the local community is the guarantor and enforcer of personal freedom – alongside the freedom of the whole community.

The key to this possibility of finding personal freedom and autonomy in a strong and meaningful local community is, to the best of my understanding, grounded in responsibility and duty towards that same community. Only when people are actively involved

in their communities can there be an active process of confronting change together and responding to it in ways that make sense to the community as a whole as well as its members.

What 200 years of capitalist development have instead brought us is massive individualisation; the destruction of local communities; the dilution of responsibilities and civic duties; and a world of utterly disconnected individuals, who feel lost.

While the problem of the current polarisation of the world seems cultural in its roots, the way to overcome such deep division and mutual mistrust is political. This is because culture, while persistent and at times resistant, is also changeable and malleable in that it can adapt to new circumstances and challenges. A culture of mutual trust and cooperation has limits – cognitive and logistic – but it can survive and thrive if people become active citizens in their local communnities, taking on responsibilities and duties.

## *Living in a fantasy world*

This is however, precisely what our currently dominant systems of liberal, capitalist, representative democracies undermine. Instead of taking on responsibilities and organising ourselves, we delegate our roles of citizens to elected officials who act for us, supposedly on our behalf. The more they do so, the less chance we have to interact with our fellow community members and the more isolated we become. Instead of learning, and practising with whom we can achieve common goals, we end up relying on stereotypes and fears about different 'others' who cannot be trusted. We end up living in a fantasy world, nurtured by fears, fed by isolation, and fertilised by a lack of actually doing things together – particularly those things that should matter most to all of us: how to live and what to do in our own, local communities.

## *Mutual cooperation*

It is indeed only possible to think that someone is a potential friend only because he or she has the same skin colour, nationality, religion, or political orientation as long as this belief is not based in practice. Once we actually work together with others, we quickly come to realise that skin colour, nationality, religion – even a shared language – are no guarantors for getting along. It is only in the practice of mutual cooperation that we can find out that a different-looking fellow can still be a fellow and is indeed not so different after all; that someone with a different religion is still adhering to the same moral principles; that someone with a different sexual orientation can still be trusted and become a good and reliable friend.

The only solution to the problems of increased mutual suspicion, misunderstanding, division, and terror is rooted in mutual cooperation, where mutual cooperation can best be done in local communities – even if this is not the only place and scope for it. It cannot flourish under conditions of exploitation, which is why there cannot be a genuine cooperation with those whom we exploit and use. Colonialism and postcolonial paternalism have thus undermined the very conditions of genuine cooperation across different communities of the coloniser/colonised divide. Capitalist exploitation has done the same among the colonisers, dividing them

into haves and have-nots.

Representative democracy, the system that colonialism and Western hegemony has produced and sought to spread and propagate across the globe, has undermined even the very possibility of genuine active community participation everywhere because it has undermined political participation and transformed active citizens who take their destinies into their own hands and mould their own futures into passive consumers of politics. As such we consume politics along with all the other things we do not need, that make us sick, and that further undermine the very possibility of fulfilling our destinies as political beings, able and willing to make and give direction to our own lives.

Cultural division can only be overcome in the practice of mutual responsibility and engagement, working together to achieve shared goals. The best place, even if it is not the only one, is in vibrant, open, local communities. Capitalism, colonialism and the exploitation that structures them both have undermined mutual cooperation. Political representation, a system where politics becomes something average people watch and consume, has undermined mutual responsibilities and duties, stripping average citizens of the very essence of what being a citizen actually means. The good news is the solution lies in mutual cooperation and working together and in political participation in general. To achieve this, we need fewer professional politicians and more avenues for direct citizen involvement and participation.

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Forthcoming book on the same topic: http://www.rowmaninternational.com/blog/the-crisis-of-liberal-democracy/

**New poles in uncertain times?** The election of Trump, Putin's Crimean intervention, Erdoğan's extremism: the parameters for Europe's external relations have changed. In this setting, will Europe and China have closer relations? This requires Europe to take a more united and coordinated approach, despite the Eurozone crisis, the refugee crisis and Brexit. *By Xin Xin*

There are a number of complex geopolitical uncertainties that could hinder China-Europe relations in future in ways that are unpredictable. In spite of this, it is not difficult to identify symbolic embodiments of the spirit of (cautious) optimism in public and academic discussions on the future relations between China and Europe. This is especially the case in China. For example, Professor Wang Yiwei, an expert in International Relations based at Renmin University of China, published an opinion piece on the front page of the *People's Daily Overseas Edition* on 31 May 2017, a day before the start of China's Premier Li Keqiang's official visit to Europe, in which he painted a rosy picture of future China-Europe relations.

He also suggested that the global impact of these relations will be stronger in future as both a 'Global China' and 'Global Europe' are emerging as important poles in the 21st century. Such optimism can in part be seen as a by-product of China's increasing assertiveness in handling its external relations in general and its relationship with Europe in particular. More importantly, China and Europe have reached the same conclusion: that they need each other's cooperation and partnership more than ever before in order to handle various global uncertainties in the age of Trump. They also share a long-term goal to build a truly new multipolar world order. From China's point of view, handling its relationship with Europe is considered as a less tricky affair than handling relationships with the USA and neighbouring Japan. There is neither an intensive geopolitical rivalry (such as that which exists between China and the USA) nor the burden of history (which has compromised the relationship with Japan) to create obstacles to the present or future of China-Europe relations. China-Europe relations are thus relatively free of baggage and can be more forward-looking.

From China's perspective, this is indeed the right time to strengthen its 'strategic partnership' with the European Union. At

least two main reasons can justify the timing. First, President Xi Jinping has just started his second five-year term (2017-2022). Second, under Xi's leadership, China's ambitious Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) was launched in 2013, and is now in full swing, covering Eurasia and surrounding areas.

## *Strategic partnership between China and the EU*

The 'strategic partnership' between China and the EU was officially established in 2003. Since then China-EU relations have experienced ups and downs. There have been disputes, which could be seen as unavoidable for a partnership between the largest group of developed liberal-democratic countries and the world's largest developing authoritarian country. These disputes have been partly trade-related and partly involving different interpretations of fundamental human rights and key political values. Some of these disputes, mostly those which were trade-related, have been settled; others, mostly concerning political values and ideologies, are unlikely to be resolved in the foreseeable future. In this context, then, where are China-Europe relations going in the next five years?

Since 2014, Chinese policymakers and scholars have openly called for a further strengthening of the multidimensional relationship between the two major civilisations, represented by China and Europe. According to some Chinese scholars' newly adopted view, inspired by Martin Jacques, a UK-based China expert, China deserves to be treated as a 'civilisation state', which has managed to survive with a continuing/unbroken civilisation, just like Europe as a whole.

China and Europe have reached the same conclusion: that they need each other's cooperation and partnership more than ever before in order to handle various global uncertainties in the age of Trump.

In order to rejuvenate Chinese civilisation, in recent years China has begun to pay more attention to the relatively underdeveloped cultural dimension of China-EU relations, which is seen as serving the country's long-term foreign policy priorities. Moreover, under the leadership of Xi, China is no longer shy about revealing the ambitions that lie behind the new objectives, with an emphasis on culture in a broad sense. Although the concept of 'culture' is notoriously difficult to define, unlike 'ideology' to which it is related, it carries no negative connotations, especially in liberal democratic countries. In spite of the rhetorical use of culture in public and media discourses, China's new inclination towards strengthening cultural exchanges with the outside world, specifically European countries, indicates that the evolving Chinese society is willing to engage in intercultural dialogues with 'different others' instead of isolating itself or forging a new ideological war.

This shift is undoubtedly a positive gesture made by the world's second largest economy towards the world at large and Europe specifically. Meanwhile, China's effort to boost cultural relations with European countries also fits well with the EU's long-standing blueprint for promoting multipolarism and multiculturism, both inside and outside Europe. In this respect, this is also the right moment for EU Member States to collectively reconsider

their relations with China, including their cultural relations. Both China and Europe have changed significantly over the last decade and their influence in terms of handling major global and regional issues, such as climate change and global economic integration, has increased.

## *A pillar of power*

Thus, broadly speaking, highlighting the importance of culture in China's external relations somehow signals the country's willingness to continuously pursue a long-term benign development, notwithstanding its increasing economic, political and military power. Moreover, this is a significant development for a country that until not too long ago used to let its GDP growth targets overshadow any other initiative that did not bring immediate economic returns.

Yet, the greater emphasis given to culture does not diminish the importance of trade and commerce in China's relations with European countries. Quite the opposite: foreign trade and investment will remain as important as they have been in the recent past, given the fact that China's economy is slowing down and growth is needed to keep the country's unemployment rate low. Therefore, the most likely outcome of all these combined forces is for China to stress the role of culture as a vehicle for economic growth in the years to come.

The greater emphasis on culture in China's existing economic growth model is already reflected at the domestic policy level in the push to foster the growth of the national cultural and creative industries. Extending it to China's external relations under the BRI framework is arguably not only possible but also necessary. This is in keeping with China's medium-to-long-term plan for making its burgeoning cultural sector a pillar industry in its national economy.

However, China's plan for a cultural rise does not stop here. Increasingly, China has been using 'culture' as a new hegemonic tool for its global positioning and repositioning in parallel with the country's steadily strengthening economic and trading power. So have other emerging powers, such as India, which are also eager to learn from the experience of European countries in terms of how to wield 'soft/smart power'. For China, the importance of culture has also been framed in relation to concerns over the country's continuing cultural foreign trade deficit with developed countries and national cultural security.

In other words, the importance of culture to China has reached the national strategic policy level. In practice, a number of Chinese cultural initiatives worldwide, including the Confucius Institutes, (arguably the most successful one), have been launched since the early 2000s under the 'Going abroad' banner, with the aim of promoting the Chinese language, cultural heritage, traditional artefacts and intercultural dialogue. The vast majority of existing cultural initiatives continue to receive governmental funding, while generating, until now, few or no economic returns. Although these cultural diplomacy/relations projects have prompted criticism both within and outside China for not being cost-effective, the Chinese government is determined to offer continuing support to them in order to pursue long-term foreign policy objectives as well as to boost the country's

soft power. The Chinese government's position in relation to its long-term soft power project has been restated in the current national development plan as well as in a number of recent policy papers about the reforms of media, cultural and creative industries. Subsequently, culture has also been turned into a pillar of China's rising soft or smart power, not only in theory, but also in practice.

In spite of policy support and the increased resources invested since 2009, China's soft power project has its shortcomings too. According to both the Pew Research Centre and the BBC World Service's global opinion surveys conducted in 2017, the perception of China across Europe remains generally negative with the exception of Greece, where 50 per cent of respondents held a positive view of China. Spain (15 per cent), Germany (20 per cent) and France (35 per cent) have the lowest opinions of China in Europe, as revealed by the 2017 BBC survey.

This is clearly worrying from China's point of view. Chinese scholars have identified both 'internal' and 'external' reasons for the lack of improvement in how China is perceived in European countries. Internally, China's image problem is due to its internationally unpopular communication system, which needs improving in terms of how to tell 'a good story about China' to the world in order to strengthen the country's media and cultural influence overseas. A number of state-owned central news organisations, such as the Xinhua News Agency, the People's Daily, China Central Television, the China Daily and China Radio International, have taken the opportunity to expand their infrastructure and business activities in Europe and other parts of the world.

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They have also begun recruiting talent locally, including veteran European journalists. Externally, Chinese scholars see China's failure to win hearts and minds in Europe as mainly a consequence of the fact that coverage of China in Western media has over a long period of time been predominantly negative, mostly due to ideological differences. This was seen as the major cause of the clashes between Chinese patriots and global civil societies/non-Chinese protesters during the 2008 Beijing Olympic Torch Relay in Europe. Since then, China has sought to boost its soft power in Europe, particularly in countries of strategic importance to China such as the United Kingdom and France. However, China's soft power efforts, though eye-catching, have not been very effective in resolving negative perceptions of China in Europe. This has motivated China to search for other solutions to handle the perception issue such as the employment of 'smart power' tools, combining overseas commercial investments with intercultural exchanges.

Nevertheless, boosting China's soft power worldwide and in Europe specifically is now part of a long-term national development plan. Its importance has recently been emphasised again by Xi in his new blueprint for building 'socialism with Chinese characteristics for a new era', unveiled in a keynote speech addressed to all party members in October 2017. Xi's blueprint outlines a two-step approach to turning China into a great modern socialist country recognised by the world by 2035.

This illustrates the fact that culture is likely to be given an even bigger role to play in China's national economy as well as its external relations in the next five years and beyond. In relation to the EU specifically, more resources for enhancing cultural relations with European countries in general and people-to-people cultural exchanges in particular are likely to be allocated. State-run organisations and business entities are both expected to play a leading role in promoting China's cultural exchanges with the outside world. With more support from the government, they are also being encouraged to take the lead in adopting a more 'precise' communication approach in order to meet each target country/society/community's audience's special needs, as revealed recently by a Chinese think tank based at Communication University of China, Beijing.

Whether this new approach will work and how it is going to be implemented in European countries and elsewhere remains to be seen. But this message should serve as a reminder that China is not only prepared to deal with the EU as a whole, but also willing to engage with each Member State in its future cultural projects by employing a more tailor-made approach.

In the next five years at least, China's cultural relations with the outside world in general and with Europe in particular are likely to concentrate on three main areas: cultural trade and investment, cultural/public diplomacy and (people-to-people) cultural exchanges. The increase in China's foreign cultural trade and overseas investment might result in the gradual opening-up of the Chinese market, which will however remain highly regulated. Cultural/public diplomacy and people-to-people cultural exchanges, in practice, largely overlap.

This mixed nature is also likely to be maintained in the near future, as the current government tends to centralise control over China's cultural activities, both internally and externally. More non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and non-state funding bodies are expected to be involved in the three areas, but their activities in China will remain subject to strict regulation and supervision. Ultimately, China's external cultural relations are intended to serve the following purposes: to enhance the country's cultural influence in support of its foreign policy priorities; to stimulate its burgeoning cultural and creative industries; to improve China's overseas image; to engage in people-to-people cultural exchanges and intercultural dialogues.

Similar cultural relations objectives may apply to the EU too, though with slightly different collective and national foreign policy priorities. In terms of cultural influence, soft power, overseas perception and the GDP contribution of national cultural/creative industries, some EU Member States remain far ahead of China. But China is trying to catch up. It is also prepared to learn more from Europe in these areas and beyond, albeit rejecting any ready-made European political/economic model. More importantly, China is willing to cooperate with Europe in many areas in order to create a better international environment, which will enable China to realise

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its 'Chinese dream' or 'national rejuvenation'.

In these circumstances, the EU should take this as an opportunity or even treat it as a matter of urgency, strategically adjusting its relationships with China both in the short and long term. This also means that culturally and ethnically diverse Europeans should be more united and more coordinated, despite the Eurozone crisis, the refugee crisis and Brexit, in terms of handling their collective and national relations with China. They must move fast, preferably before China works out how to deal with each European state individually. In many ways, to elaborate a coordinated and effective approach to future cultural relations with China is to pass the first compulsory test for the future of the European project and the EU's standing in a developing multipolar world.

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**Post-rapprochement** China has opened up over recent decades but has also continued to upset Western expectations. China has been accused of either violating human rights domestically or ignoring laws internationally. In addition to China's growing economic power, the country's rapidly developing military strength has caused concern in the West. How should Europe position itself towards China?
*By Thorsten Jelinek*

Until recently, the West had assumed that China would eventually adopt a liberal democracy and a full market economy. This conviction was grounded in the West's own experience and history of capitalism and its belief that liberal democracy was needed for capitalism to flourish and function effectively. The collapse of the Eastern bloc in 1989 confirmed this conviction. Liberal democratic capitalism was an efficient system; it provided the highest level of collective wealth and dignity in the 20th century. This deeply rooted liberalisation premise coupled with concrete economic, cultural and geopolitical strategies determined the West's foreign policies towards China for decades.

In the 1970s, the United States began pursuing policies of normalisation and intended to open up to China after years of isolation. Initiated by Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger, this policy was broadly followed by subsequent U.S. administrations. Over the years, America continued to grant China access to international organisations, nurtured economic trade, people-to-people exchanges, and even offered joint military activities. The intent and hope was always to liberalise and draw China closer to the West. Europe followed a similar policy of détente by focusing on economic trade. Great Britain, France, and Germany engaged in deeper diplomatic relations and accounted for most of Europe's trade with China in the 1970s and 1980s. However, the U.S. continued to determine the course of diplomatic relations. Its goal was to weaken the Soviet Union and contain communism, especially after the USA lost three wars in Asia during the Cold War period.

China subsequently opened up and, since the 1978 reforms, started benefiting tremendously from its gradual introduction of liberal market forces. After Chairman Mao Zedong's death in 1976, China also adapted its political system from a totalitarian to a modern authoritarian collective leadership system. In 2001, slightly more than a decade after the collapse of the Eastern bloc, the U.S. granted China access to the World Trade Organisation (WTO), a move that highlighted the West's optimism regarding China's reforms and path towards liberalisation. For China,

WTO membership provided a new stimulus for economic growth and internally justified further economic reforms. At that time, the WTO was still a young organisation but it symbolised how globalisation was expanding faster than ever before. China was on the path towards becoming the U.S.'s largest foreign creditor and export market. BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) became an increasingly known acronym, not only in terms of potentially large markets for Western products and outsourced supply chains but also for the rise of a parallel world order and the start of the West's relative decline.

China did open up but also continued to upset Western expectations. China was accused of either violating human rights domestically or ignoring laws internationally. In addition to China's rising economic power, China's rapidly developing military strength triggered concerns in the West due to China's market protectionism and lack of political liberalisation. Retrospectively, according to Kurt Campbell and Ely Ratner, the relationship between China and the West, especially the U.S., unfolded as a regression from presumptuous optimism and rapprochement to scepticism and attempted containment.

For some time, America continued to remind China of the 'universality' of Weststern liberal values. In the 1980s, George H.W. Bush asserted that China could not just import Western products 'while stopping foreign ideas at the border'. In the 1990s, Bill Clinton declared that without freedom and democracy, 'China will be at a distinct disadvantage, competing with fully open societies'. George W. Bush, who was occupied with America's fight against terrorism and deregulating an economy leading to the biggest recession in history, said that 'the people of China deserve the fundamental liberty that is the natural right of all human beings'. In the meantime, China's president Hu Jintao emphasised the country's 'peaceful rise' to reassure the West. From 2009, however, the diplomatic relationship between the U.S. and China reached a low point. Barack Obama sought to contain China by rebalancing military forces and excluding China from the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). He reminded China that it should 'uphold the very rules that have made [China] successful'.

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Only a few scholars questioned whether China needed a Western-type democracy to lift millions out of poverty and manage the downsides of rapid and uneven GDP growth, which had characterised the first three decades of China's development. In 2004, Cambridge professor Peter Nolan argued that China was embarking on its own 'Third Way'. It was a gradual reform path, which did not mean a gradual withdrawal of the state to give way to a liberal order. On the contrary, it was the continuation of the one-party system and a strong state to ensure China's stability and to help 'marry the "hedgehog" of market dynamisms with the "snake" of social cohesion'. This 'symbiotic interrelationship between state and market' was, to Nolan, not simply a position between socialism and capitalism but also something that China had already practised for centuries and that was deeply ingrained in China's culture. China could draw upon its millennia-old history of

an 'agrarian empire' and Confucian culture to propagate 'state benevolence' and ensure long periods of stability and prosperity. For Nolan, Hu Jintao's focus on building a 'harmonious society' and 'balancing between GDP growth and people's welfare' was a clear expression of that culture and history.

Four decades after Deng Xiaoping initiated the reforms in 1978, China has still not turned into a liberal democracy or a free market economy, and it is even more unlikely that such changes will happen any time soon. On the contrary, since President Xi Jinping assumed office in November 2012, China's 'exceptionalism' has never been so clearly and actively promoted at home and abroad. At the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party in October 2017, President Xi heralded the beginning of a 'new era of socialism with Chinese characteristics'. This involves developing China into a 'moderately prosperous society' by 2035 and becoming a 'great modern socialist country' by 2049, which will mark the 100th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China. The concrete policies for reaching those distant goals are the inwardly directed Made in China 2025 programme and the outwardly directed Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

Made in China 2025 is a comprehensive industrial policy agenda to 'build one of the world's most advanced and competitive economies'. Similar to the West during its own rise, China wants to become self-sufficient and technologically independent by targeting 'all high-tech industries that strongly contribute to economic growth in advanced economies'. To accomplish this agenda, China seeks to collaborate with the West, but the West views the policy agenda with caution as China may well overtake them in key industries.

The BRI goes further than China's industrial policy agenda. For the first time, China offers, as President Xi promoted during the 19th National Congress, 'a new option for other countries and nations who want to speed up their development while preserving their independence', which is based on 'Chinese wisdom and a Chinese approach to solving the problems facing mankind'. This new option refers to a multitrillion dollar development programme to boost growth through strategic and cross-border infrastructure projects and the establishment of new economic supply chains that connect China with Europe through the integration of Eurasia.

Domestically, BRI clearly breaks with Deng Xiaoping's old dictum to 'keep a low profile and bide your time', by which he meant that 'by no means should China take the lead'. For Xi Jinping, China has 'grown rich and become strong' and is now ready to take the lead as a 'constructor of global peace, a contributor to the development of global governance, and a protector of international order'. However, Xi Jinping is not offering to renew the existing U.S.-dominated global liberal order. Instead, with BRI he is proposing an alternative development model that has the potential to become the platform of a new multilateralism.

President Xi mentioned BRI for the first time during his visit to Kazakhstan in 2013, but Western governments only took more serious note of this unparalleled development programme at the inaugural Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation (BARF) in Beijing in May 2017. While many non-Western high-level participants praised China's modern Silk Road as the 'project of the century', Europeans and Americans are only just beginning to realise its significance. Their scepticism towards China meant that they refused to sign BARF's joint trade statement.

These ambitious policy agendas have been defined at a crucial moment. When President

Xi assumed office, he saw the need to depart from the previous high-growth, GDP-focused development model and instead focus on rebalancing a debt-driven economy; shifting from rapid to high-quality and sustainable growth; alleviating poverty, especially in previously neglected rural Western regions; and countering high levels of environmental pollution. At the same time, as Professor Carl Minzner highlights, Xi Jinping faced spreading decay, lack of discipline inside the Communist Party, ideological polarisation, and a looming legitimacy crisis outside the Party. During his first five-year term, Xi Jinping was also fighting widespread corruption while increasingly centralising power for himself and a few trusted aides.

The tightening of the party-state apparatus and reinstalling of 'party discipline' also marks China's new era. For President Xi, a strong party and state are deemed necessary to ensure long-term stability and implement those ambitious policy plans. This has culminated in the abolition of the presidential term limit, allowing President Xi to stay in office beyond the usual two five-year terms.

The West has largely received these developments under Xi Jinping with scepticism, hostility, and a steady drumbeat of China-bashing. *The Economist* denounced Xi Jinping's strong leadership as a return from 'collective governance' to a 'single man rule' and stepping from 'autocracy into dictatorship'. For Carl Minzner, China's new era ultimately means 'the end of reform and opening up'. Made in China 2025 is judged as 'putting industrial policy ahead of market forces', which will mainly promote the development of indigenous technologies while adding a new set of barriers to foreign competitors. The BRI is denounced as China's self-serving 'Marshall Plan' because it mainly helps to integrate its underdeveloped Western regions, offset industrial overcapacities, secure future international markets, and assert its geopolitical power in Eurasia and other emerging Belt and Road economies.

To accomplish this agenda, China seeks to collaborate with the West, but the West views the policy agenda with caution as China may well overtake them in key industries.

In the past, the EU and U.S. have urged China to further open its markets and ensure a level playing field. Now, in addition to those trade-related tensions, the West is heading for more confrontation. It has started to denounce China as a competing system that is not compatible with the West. According to Sigmar Gabriel, former vice-chancellor and foreign minister of Germany, 'China is developing a comprehensive alternative system to the Western world, which does not build on our model of freedom, democracy, and individual human rights'.

The rhetoric in the U.S. has been much fiercer and has clearly reached a turning point. For the first time since the rapprochement of the 1970s, an American president has referred to China as a 'rival', a 'revisionist power', and a 'primary threat to U.S. economic dominance'. President Donald Trump's election campaign was built on hostility towards China. He is threatening them with a trade war and blames China for the tremendous trade deficit between both countries. Yet, America's trade deficit is mainly due to its domestic macroeconomic policies. Hillary Clinton also called China, like Russia and Iran, an 'existential threat' that triggers 'anxiety' and 'worries'. Despite the easy temptation to think China will coerce the world

with its economic, technological, and increasing military power and that President Xi will be able to control order at his will, one should not overlook the possibility that those representations reveal more about the West than about China. They also reveal how deeply rooted Western hegemony is and how it reduces the capacity to reflectively assess the consequences of the West's own relative decline and inability to adapt to an emerging multipolar world.

Professor Slavoj Žižek argues that not only did communism fail in the 20th century but so did liberal democracy in terms of coping with the disruptions of global capitalism. Neither the short-lived Fukuyamaist welfare state of the 1990s nor the push towards post-Keynesian policies in the early 21st century have helped to avoid the steady rise of income inequality. According to the French economist Thomas Piketty, the rate of return on capital has remained higher than the growth rate of an economy during this time. As a consequence, 'inherited wealth' has grown faster than 'earned wealth', which has caused a higher concentration of wealth and therefore wealth and income inequality. The economic crisis in 2008 was not an exception but an unavoidable outcome of this process of wealth concentration since the 1970s.

A disturbing outcome of those years of global capitalist development has been the rise of populism in the West. Income inequality and stagnation, unemployment, insecure employment, heightened risk of poverty, and social exclusion are the main reasons behind it. People have lost trust in established political parties and figures and blame them for not addressing their concerns about the perceived loss of security, culture, and identity. Globalisation, liberalisation, and digitalisation have weakened the nation state and slowly undermined the capacity of governments to address those disruptions. Charismatic populist leaders have increasingly capitalised on people's rage throughout Europe and America.

Populism poses the greatest threat to liberal democracy. As highlighted by Professor David Runciman, who teaches politics and history at Cambridge University, populists address the right struggles and fears but provide false answers, promising a quick return to an allegedly intact and culturally homogenous past. Their rhetoric polarises society and drives fear, which fuels rather than helps to overcome the public's rage. The legitimacy crisis, which has led to the initial rise in populism, is aggravated by an intentional 'disintegration of public morality' and 'manufacturing consent' (see US philosopher Noam Chomsky). What makes populism so dangerous is that it does not question but slowly erodes the institutions of democracy, such as free elections, free press, and the rule of law. Equally dangerous is that liberals continue to believe in the functioning of democracy, even though they know it has ceased to do so. Populism is not its own cause but the result of a broken process of equal wealth creation and dignity, which populists perpetuate in the West.

Against this backdrop, it becomes clear that the prolonged impact of the West's own marriage between liberal democracy and capitalism has caused the slow and relative demise of the West. China is portrayed as a scapegoat in order to distract from the West's economic and legitimacy crisis and lack of vision on how to renew the liberal order and its promise of dignity and equal wealth creation. There is no new vision because the West has increasingly lost confidence in the liberal order, which has

made protectionism a populist solution. The U.S.'s volatile Trump administration and protectionism, and the prolonged debt crisis in the European Union with its deeply divided economy and refugee crisis, have only exacerbated the current lack of confidence and undermined Western liberalism as a desirable transformation path.

Peter Nolan was right. China did not need liberal democracy to maintain four decades of successful reforms and cope with the disruptions of capitalism. It is questionable, however, whether a conceptual link to an ancient past will help modern China manage its future challenges in a globalised and digitalised world for which history offers no reference. However, it might help to explain why, unlike other authoritarian governments, China's government continues to be morally obliged to serve its people and exercise benevolence. State benevolence is a form of governance still beyond the comprehension of the West, who needed to develop a 'modern bureaucracy', 'the rule of law', and 'democratic accountability' to overcome its despotism.

China has clearly manifested its otherness under President Xi, and the West no longer believes in China's self-Westernisation, but China has still become more Western than the West has become Chinese. China has instilled the force of liberalisation—the infinite right of subjectivity that defines modernity. In conjunction with the profit ideal, it incentivised China's rapid and prolonged growth, which has become a major source of the legitimacy of the one-party-state apparatus. The liberalisation force can equally erode that legitimacy and demand the rule of law and accountability, which, to Francis Fukuyama, are the distinctive pillars of Western democracy that are lacking in China. China's modern bureaucracy, which existed long before the rise of the West, may not be sufficient to cope with an increasingly demanding civil society.

Globalisation, liberalisation, and digitalisation have weakened the nation state and slowly undermined the capacity of governments to address those disruptions.

However, recent history has questioned whether Western liberal democracy will serve its function effectively in the future. Western governments have become much more technocratic and interventionist in order to try to prevent market failure or cushion its disruptive impact. A stronger state might well become the norm rather than the exception. On a gloomier note, according to Israeli historian Yuval Harari, the rise of liberalism could well cause its downfall. Technological advances, not political interventions, may bring the end of liberalism. A stronger state may become unavoidable or even desirable, in the long run. In the meantime, the ideological differences between China and the West are prone to complicated diplomatic and economic relations. It might well be an ideological battle between China's 'benevolence' and Western 'liberalism'.

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# In defence of universalism

In a fragmented world, culture can help people to come together across divides. But only if this culture is diverse and tolerant. The author argues that Europe bears a particular responsibility in this respect. Europe is not a place, a government or an administration. It is a space for encounter.

*By François Matarasso*

In *Les Miserables* Victor Hugo wrote: 'La guerre civile? qu'est-ce à dire? Est-ce qu'il y a une guerre étrangère ? Est-ce que toute guerre entre hommes n'est pas la guerre entre frères?' ('Civil war? What does that mean? Is there a foreign war? Is not every war between men war between brothers?')

Hugo questions the habits of mind that seem to justify the designation of an 'other', saying that the way to go beyond 'us' versus 'them' is to reject the idea altogether. This is not a matter of piety or semantics. If we lose sight of the indivisibility of humankind, how can we defend concepts like the Universal Declaration of Human Rights? The crucial importance of that text, however often we fail to meet its obligations, is that it makes no distinction between human beings.

The effort to establish universal rights was dearly bought. I am a child of those who suffered the massive exercise in self-harm that was the Second World War – the globalisation of violence before the term. My parents' generation were the victims and perpetrators of unprecedented crimes. This was a civil war between people who had to convince themselves of their differences in order to kill one another. I regret bringing such sombre reflections into a discussion of culture and its potential for healing, but it is necessary because that conflict is the origin of the post-war settlement that is now falling apart. And the foundation of that settlement is the concept of universal human rights established in the UN Declaration of 1948 and the European Convention of 1950.

The present rise of nationalism is ugly and frightening. But the assault on the idea of universal human rights is worse. The signs are everywhere. Sometimes the attack is formal and legalistic, as in the UK government's

proposal to replace the 1998 Human Rights Act with a British Bill of Rights – not universal, by definition. Elsewhere, it is criminal and chaotic, as in the extrajudicial killings taking place in the Philippines since the election of President Duterte. Murder is not new, but its celebration by a democratically elected politician of his own part in it feels unprecedented. The American historian, David Armitage, writes that 'around the world, democratic politics now looks ever more like civil war by other means'. In such a context, is that really an over-statement?

### *Attacks on democracy*

I need not itemise the current attacks on democracy, the rule of law and, above all, the foundational concept of human rights. It is a global phenomenon that is all too familiar. Its causes are multiple but, insofar as it is enabled by democracy itself, the fear provoked by very rapid social and economic change is a decisive and a divisive factor. Many millions of Europeans now believe not just that their lives have got worse, but that their leaders consider their suffering an acceptable price to pay for prosperity. That is interpreted, not unreasonably, as making them less valuable than other people. Where then is the universalism of the human rights convention?

What is most striking about recent votes – whether you look at Brexit, the American and French Presidential elections or the Turkish constitutional referendum – is how close the results are and how much people's choice can be mapped on socio-economic conditions such as location, class, education and age. That sharp division makes thinking in terms of 'us and them' not just morally and legally wrong but dangerous too. To say it again, you cannot defend universal rights by dividing citizens into groups. I'm with Martin Luther King here. We must be judged for our acts, not our ethnicity, religion, culture or beliefs. Only our actions are a legitimate basis for distinction.

So how can we act well in such a divided world? And does culture have a role to play in the present crisis? Let me say first that I don't believe it is the task of culture to solve such problems. Apart from any other considerations, doing so is completely beyond its capacity. But it does have a valuable role as a space of encounter, dialogue and – perhaps – greater understanding.

Let me share some examples of how artists – professional and non-professional – are searching for, and often finding, ways of reaching across those divisions today.

In Friesland, the agricultural heart of the northern Netherlands, Titia Bouwmeester worked with farmers to create an interactive theatre performance that celebrates their knowledge and labour in dairy farming as they coped with the abolition of EU milk quotas. Lab Molke took place on a farm and the process of researching, creating, rehearsing and performing together was an open dialogue about different lives between people from urban and rural communities.

In Porto, Hugo Cruz and Maria João work in theatre with people from different parts

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of the city, including workers in the cork industry, the deaf community, old people, the gypsy community, refugees and children. After creating several productions with and for each group, they brought five of them together in *MAPA*, a spectacular community play about the city's past and future in which their different perspectives were presented at the Teatro Nacional in the city centre.

In Alexandria, Hatem Hassan Salama, brought intimate performances to neighbourhood cafes in working class parts of the city. Working with a storyteller, a photographer, a dancer and a musician, he created impromptu events in places whose traditional and masculine culture was unused to such modern art. But the result was to open such rich conversations about art, politics and morality that they went on for two or three hours after the show itself.

In Stoke-on-Trent, Anna Francis is using her visual art practice to talk with her neighbours in the run down area where she lives. Last summer, she created a temporary community centre in a derelict pub and about 600 people came to fifty different activities in the month: plans are now under way to make this a permanent facility. It will signal new possibilities in a very disadvantaged place that is not much heard.

## *Nurturing trust*

These projects, and hundreds of others in and beyond Europe, all see art as a place to begin conversations about where we are and what we might do about it. But they are art activities, not political or even social interventions. They nurture trust, skills, knowledge, confidence and networks because they do not try to produce those things. Those things happen naturally when people are engaged in and by a shared artistic project that speaks to their lives.

Art is a space where we can still meet, especially when the other platforms for dialogue, such as politics, the media and the online world, have become so polarised that we can no longer hear – or tolerate – each other there. Art can be safe because it does not check our identity papers on entry. It does not separate us from them. Indeed, as these examples show, art welcomes difference, complexity, even conflict – within the protective licence of character, symbol, metaphor and non-reality.

## *Art has room for all*

Art allows us to enact our unspoken, even unconscious feelings and encounter other people, including the feared foreigner or despised neighbour. It encourages and enables reflection. Art has room for us all, and it can put up with all that we feel, think and want to say – not because it's all good or even acceptable, but because it's there and art knows that denying our feelings is more dangerous than doing something creative with them.

But this is just one vision of art. I know that. It is neither inevitable nor uncontested. I respect but I do not share the fears artists sometimes express about instrumentalisation. Art is not self-sufficient. I believe in art for people's sake because without people art has no meaning. It ceases to exist. But the trap of propaganda – especially well-meaning propaganda – is dangerous. It attracts those who

strip art of precisely the complex ambiguities I value and enslave it to their vision. The risk is real and best avoided by listening, really listening, to those whose voices we find most uncomfortable.

As the Polish philosopher Leszek Koławkowski wrote, 'toleration is best protected not so much by the law as by the preservation and strengthening of a tolerant society.'

If art is to reach across the divisions in our fragmenting world, it will do so only by being democratic, diverse and tolerant – a culture that lives up to Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: 'Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.' That would be a truly universal culture.

Europe is not a place. It is not a government or an administration. It is a culture, whose greatest values have been forged in response to its greatest traumas. We needed it in 1945; we need it today.

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# A bastion of democracy

Those who fled to Turkey from Hitler's Germany were instrumental in building the young republic. But the author believes that today, in some capitals, a stable regime in Turkey is preferred to democratic instability. He hopes for a grassroots movement and describes his personal experiences with the Turkish regime: 'We have swallowed a lot of water, but we haven't allowed ourselves to be swallowed up by the water.'

*By Can Dündar*

On 17 September 1933 Albert Einstein wrote a letter to Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. He asked 'His Excellency' to allow 40 professors and doctors from Germany to continue their scientific and medical work in Turkey. In the elections six months earlier, the Nazis had won almost 45 percent of the votes. They were arresting opposition MPs and began to rule the country by decree. The universities were one of their first targets. Academics who criticised the Nazis were expelled from universities.

Most of them sought refuge outside Germany. The doors of Europe were closed, and America was a long way away. An association was set up to help them. In his letter to Atatürk, the famous physicist explained that the association had selected forty scientists from a large number of applicants who were prepared to work in Turkey 'for a year without any remuneration'. He reminded Atatürk that this was an act of high humanity from which Turkey could also benefit.

That was also true. The Republic had been in existence for just ten years, and it needed people who were capable of modernising the institutions that had been inherited from the Ottomans. In early 1932, the government invited Albert Malche from the University of Geneva to write a report on the planned university reforms.

As a result, 42 German academics were appointed when the University of Istanbul was founded. By 1933 this had risen to 300. For example, it was Eduard Hirsch who wrote the 800-page Turkish legal dictionary and simultaneously laid the groundwork for the establishment of the Freie Universität Berlin.

SPD politician Ernst Reuter was a consultant at the Ministry of Finance and taught

urban planning in the Political Science faculty at Ankara University. The composer Paul Hindemith founded the State Conservatory in Ankara.

The director of the Deutsche Oper in Berlin, Carl Ebert, initially fled to Argentina then moved to Ankara and laid the foundations for the Turkish State Theatre and State Opera. Ernst Praetorius, General Musical Director of the Deutsche Nationaltheater Weimar, went on to conduct the Turkish president's philharmonic orchestra. Music teacher Eduard Zuckmayer introduced modern music lessons at Turkish schools and adapted German songs for the Turkish language.

Clemens Holzmeister, professor of architecture at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna and president of the Austrian Werkbund, designed Atatürk's villa in Cankaya and the parliament building.

The paediatrician Albert Eckstein ran the children's clinic at Numune Hospital Ankara and, together with 31 German doctors, travelled around the villages of Anatolia providing medical services for the children who lived in rural areas.

Thanks to Atatürk's vision, these people, who had fled Hitler's regime of repression, made a tremendous contribution to building the young Republic. Untroubled by the National Socialist accusation that they were traitors to the Fatherland, they were able to continue exercising their professions and work with other exiles to outline a future for Germany.

The Republic had been in existence for just ten years, and it needed people who were capable of modernising the institutions that had been inherited from the Ottomans.

Their numbers increased steadily to around one thousand. When they returned home after the war, they built a new Germany.

When Ernst Reuter returned home in 1946 he became Mayor of West Berlin and left a lasting impression on Germany's history. Eduard Hirsch became Vice-Chancellor of the Freie Universität Berlin. Others, like Eduard Zuckmayer, found their last resting place in Turkey.

When I came to Berlin, I thought I was experiencing the fate of these people, whom we remember with admiration and gratitude, in reverse. The regime from which they had fled eighty years earlier was now clouding the skies over Turkey. A party that had won 45 percent of the vote in the elections was arresting opposition MPs and beginning to rule the country by decree. The universities were one of their first targets. Academics who criticised the government were expelled from universities. Now it was Germany's turn to open its arms to people who were threatened by this regime. And it was up to us, untroubled by the accusation of being traitors to our country, to continue to work to defeat fascism....

Soon after arriving in Berlin, I set about telling Germany and Europe what was happening in Turkey. In two weeks I visited nine cities in six states. As someone who had seen the fire, touched the fire and burned his skin, I raced breathlessly from one place to another, crying: 'Can't you see we're on fire?' I tried to shake up everyone I came into contact with.

The only secular and democratic country in the Islamic world, an early member of the Council of Europe, was being turned into a

totalitarian regime in front of our very eyes. But the stubbornly ignored 'other Turkey' was fighting against death.

I wanted everyone to realise that they were working for the democratic forces in Turkey, or at least not overshadowing them. Europe's governments closed their eyes and turned away. Their silence was implicit support for the repression.

Can a continent be afraid? Europe was afraid. Racked by fear that millions of refugees fleeing the burning Middle East would flood into their countries, steal people's jobs and turn their lives upside down, Europe temporised with tightly sealed gates and lips.

## *Europe keeps quiet*

The only way out was to give Turkey, which had generously opened its doors to three million refugees, money for their admission and the promise of visa-free travel for Turkish citizens. But there was another price to be paid: Europe had to close its eyes to any repression on the part of the 'guard' who was to guard the gates of the refugee camps. And abstain from any reactions that could upset this guard. Even the smallest complaint would lead the guard to threaten: 'I'll open the gates, then you'll see!'

Europe kept quiet when faced when this threat from Erdoğan. It was this submissive attitude that allowed Erdoğan to gain strength against Europe. And this fearful silence, this indirect consent, meant that we were also imprisoned or exiled.

Europe's attitude has disappointed millions of people who have suffered reprisals for defending European values, democracy, the rule of law, separation of powers, freedom of the press, secularism and gender equality. They have seen how easily the old continent will abandon its principles for the sake of political expediency.

When I talked to people about this, they hung their heads in shame and muttered: 'But you know, the refugee issue is really important.'

But it's not just about refugees. For half a century, Turkey has been the loyal soldier of the West, guarding NATO's south-eastern border. It is a vital market for European investment. And an excellent customer who makes every arms dealer salivate. The massive increase in arms purchases in 2016 alone meant that Turkey moved up from 25th to 8th place in the list of countries buying arms from Germany.

In some of Europe's capitals and their spheres, a stable, repressive regime in Turkey seems to be preferable to democratic instability. This also means that, in order to defend what are generally regarded as Western values, it may also be necessary to fight against the West. Just as Atatürk did during the National War of Independence in the 1920s.

Fortunately, the West does not consist solely of anxious heads of government, weak

The only secular and democratic country in the Islamic world, an early member of the Council of Europe, was being turned into a totalitarian regime in front of our very eyes. But the stubbornly ignored 'other Turkey' was fighting against death.

leaders and wheeler-dealers. Wherever I went, I also met politicians, non-governmental organisations, professional associations and journalist colleagues who criticised this policy, supported our struggle, and understood that we were not alone.

Many human rights organisations have been working for us, including the writers' association PEN International, Reporters without Borders, the Committee for the Protection of Journalists (CPJ) and Amnesty International. Now that European governments had fallen silent as a result of the refugee agreement, it was important for relations with Europe to go beyond the diplomatic and military level. The 'other Turkey' had to establish sustainable, personal and local links with European parliaments, municipalities, professional associations, NGOs and the public.

The aim was to promote town-twinning and exchange programmes for teachers and school students. Solidarity was needed among legal and other professional associations, trade unions, women's and youth associations, and journalists. Economic ties at small and medium-sized level had to be strengthened. Joint parliamentary committees had to be set up. Collaborative art projects and festivals were to be supported, films and TV series jointly filmed, books published in both languages.

Relations between Turkey and Europe, which during negotiations had gone off the rails at the highest level, should be boosted from the bottom up. We did not want charity from the West, we were looking for a lasting, healthy, democratic partnership of equals, one that was not based on dependence, exploitation and blackmail. Unlike the governments, 'opposition Europe' lent its ear to the voice of opposition Turkey. This interest was soon to upset Ankara.

## *'They're raiding Cumhuriyet!'*

On 31 October 2016, at five in the morning, the sound of my phone tore me from my slumbers. Calls at this time of night always mean bad news. It was Hasan Cemal. 'Hey man, get up, they're attacking! I sat bolt upright.

'What kind of attack?'

'They're raiding *Cumhuriyet*!'

I was in Cologne. It was the morning after a difficult night. I had driven to Cologne to attend a memorial ceremony for an old friend. Tarik Akan, the unforgettable star of Turkish cinema and staunch defender of democracy, had succumbed to his illness a few weeks previously. We had worked together on documentaries, talked, travelled together.

His family and friends were all invited to a memorial ceremony in Cologne. They included some of my close friends, including the lawyer Akin Atalay, the publisher of *Cumhuriyet*. 'See you there', we said on the phone. I waited a few weeks for an invitation, and when none arrived I simply drove over. Whatever happens, I'll see my friends there, I thought. I did indeed see my friends in Cologne, but I also saw how much their lives had changed. And I had one of the most difficult days of all my life as an exile.

When you've enjoyed a warm atmosphere

of friendship, you think your seat will always be kept warm, even with the passage of time – at least you hope so. But it can happen that life causes seats, food, friendships to cool. Some of my friends gave me a warm hug as usual, some were even more friendly than before, bringing me suitcases full of clothes from home. But in the eyes of others I saw the icy cold of suspicion. I froze.

Their behaviour clearly told me how put out they were that I had showed up uninvited. Didn't they trust me, or were they worried about being seen with me? Why hadn't they invited me, despite the fact that they knew I was in Germany? Or what...?

I discovered that I was not only being treated like a leper by the government, but also by certain districts in 'our neighbourhood'. Unprompted, one of the organisers felt obliged to make a statement: 'We supported you when you were in prison, as you know. But we wanted to keep politics out of this memorial event. Everyone knows about your situation...'

My situation? Then the light went on in my head. The wind had changed direction, and now I was a 'criminal', wanted by the state. This was an attribute that could endanger the event, but also the lives of the attendees when they returned to Turkey. Like a contagious disease, fear had also gained a hold.

'Don't get us wrong, but we were afraid that if you came it would change the direction of the memorial event. We only got the hall at the university because we guaranteed it wouldn't be a political event.' Every word they said to explain their reasoning just made me feel more disappointed. My late father used to say: 'It's not the sword that kills the hero, but the cruel word'. I was used to being excluded by my opponents, but I was unprepared for it to happen with friends. Erdoğan's barbed attacks didn't hurt me, but now I was being pierced by the thorn of a rose in my hand when I simply wanted to enjoy its scent, a rose that I knew.

I tried to hide how hurt I felt. We all went out to dinner that evening. Without asking for permission, I shared a photo on Twitter as a happy memory, with the caption: 'With friends/At the table of the sun.' It was only later that I realised I was putting them in a difficult situation.

And also that I was no longer 'the Can of old'. It was risky to be photographed with me, a risk that could cost them dearly. The regime's loyal media didn't even wait until morning, but denounced them on their websites during the night. I went to bed burdened by this knowledge. And the next morning I was awoken by the news of the attack.

Winston Churchill once said: 'Democracy means that if the doorbell rings in the early hours, it is likely to be the milkman.' Whereas we learned in school that if the doorbell rings in the early hours, it's the police. Sixteen doorbells rang that morning. The chairman of the foundation that publishes *Cumhuriyet*, the editor-in-chief, columnists and cartoonists, accountants and lawyers – the newspaper's entire management team were hauled out of their beds and arrested. We had been expecting this operation for months. Luckily, my wife Dilek was in Izmir. When no-one

answered the door, the anti-terrorist unit got the neighbours out of bed and told them to call Dilek. When I spoke to her she was once again calm and courageous, saying: 'Usually they get a locksmith to open the door and go in, but when I said I'd come right away, they said they would wait. I'm flying there now to let them in.' The plague was quite literally at our door. I immediately tried to reach my colleagues at the newspaper. The telephones had been cut off. Most of the staff had been taken to the police station.

I watched helplessly on the TV screen as my colleagues were led away by police officers. Friends arrived who had heard the news that morning. They were all worried, with some fearing that the newspaper would appoint an official receiver, while others panicked about being arrested on their return.

Members of parliament asked us in desperation: 'What should we do?'

My closest friends advised: 'Don't write anything for now, hide yourself in a village in the mountains and keep a low profile for a while.' These words, the atmosphere of defeat, the general sense of desperation, only served to spur me on.

I did my best to remain calm. Soon the story was fleshed out: investigations had been initiated and arrests ordered for allegedly 'supporting and aiding the PKK and FETO17'. Right from the outset, the investigation was kept confidential in order to prevent debate.

*Cumhuriyet* was a giant, as old as the republic whose name it bears. It was established by Atatürk himself and was the oldest, most respected newspaper in Turkey. Its influence was much larger than its readership. It had always defended democracy, secularism, freedom and the ideas of the Enlightenment; and time and again, it had ended up paying dearly. Six of its writers have been assassinated, with countless others being imprisoned, banned, shot at and censored, yet the newspaper had never been silenced.

'Democracy means that if the doorbell rings in the early hours, it is likely to be the milkman.'

Winston Churchill

Erdoğan had taken over the national media and built his own media empire, and *Cumhuriyet* was one of the last bastions of resistance. Now, in our absence, they had attacked the fortress and taken our colleagues hostage. It was time for us to fight for their freedom and defend our bastion.

In my column, which was to appear the next day, I wrote: 'We know why you're going crazy: you're hoping that if you manage to bring down this newspaper, you will have taken another important turn on the road to the abolition of the republic, whose name is *Cumhuriyet*. (...) You cannot accept that the republic will not surrender, but on the contrary, many people are standing up for it. You are furious, saying: "We are doing everything we can to harass them, but still they don't give up." Your culture is the culture of subjugation, so this kind of resistance is foreign to you. It is our duty to make it known to you.'

Around midday, Dilek came racing back to Istanbul from Izmir. Six police officers were still waiting on her doorstep. Loyal friends heard what had happened and immediately rushed to our house, arriving before Dilek. I heard what happened next live on the phone: the unit commander sent his people into

my study, saying: 'You know this is a digital search!' What he was saying was: 'Don't worry about the books, check the computer and phones!' They worked through my big study, searching in files and drawers, but after three hours they had found nothing of note and simply confiscated my old mobile. After the search I watched on TV how Dilek stood on the doorstep and spoke to the waiting cameras: 'Can has a lot of books, that's why it took so long.'

When asked whether her husband would be returning to Turkey, she responded: 'A warrant is out for Can's arrest. Unfortunately he has become a target here. If he returns he will be immediately arrested. I think it's better if he doesn't come back.'

Then we were confronted with the following question: 'Are you coming back?'

Could we stay away now that our newspaper had been raided and our colleagues put behind bars? Should we return home and join them in prison, or should we stay and continue the resistance? The best thing was to see what happened over the next few days and then make a decision with a clear head.

The following day, *Cumhuriyet* appeared with the headline: 'We won't give up'. Hundreds of readers came to the newspaper's offices and held a vigil in front of the door until the small hours. The head of the largest opposition party also visited the newspaper. Protests flooded in from all over the world. But the Erdoğan-supporting press were jubilant. The newspaper Takvim reported on the raid with the headline: 'The operation against the bastion of terrorism was overdue'.

Beneath a photo of Martin Schulz, President of the EU Parliament, who said: 'Turkey has crossed a red line' the newspaper claimed: 'Germany is panicking' Merkel had not even condemned the arrests. Only the Association of German Newspaper Publishers declared that the Chancellor's silence was unacceptable. It was something that had a precedent in Germany's past: on the evening of 26 October 1962, police officers searched the premises of *Der Spiegel*. Subsequently, publisher Rudolf Augstein and the authors of the article that had triggered the police operation were remanded in custody, just as we were being accused of betraying state secrets. Just like Erdoğan, Chancellor Adenauer accused Augstein of treason.

In Germany, the investigations against *Der Spiegel* were seen as an attack on press freedom, and the public supported the editors who had been detained, just as our readers and professional associations stood by our side. But that's where the similarities ended. The *Spiegel* affair became a turning point in the fight for press freedom in Germany. The Minister of Defence paid the price for exceeding his powers and was forced to resign, and soon afterwards the whole cabinet collapsed.

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In Turkey, on the other hand, after the publication of the video footage in Cumhuriyet, the people who were responsible for the scandal were promoted and Prime Minister Erdoğan became President of the Republic. The Turkish court sentenced the journalists for 'disclosing secret documents'; whereas Germany's Supreme Court dropped the lawsuit against Augstein, saying that the journalists had fulfilled their professional duty and blaming the politicians for abuse of office.

*Der Spiegel* came out on top in this affair, whereas 55 years later, a large-scale operation put the screws on *Cumhuriyet*. The difference between the two cases lies in the fact that Germany has historical experience of the appalling consequences of an uncontrolled, authoritarian power that disregards the separation of powers. And, of course, it attaches importance to an independent judiciary, the rule of law, parliamentary control and a structured civil society. We expected these same sensibilities to come to the surface.

## *Insults, distortions and fake news*

In Turkey, media loyal to the regime took my statements condemning the silence of the German government and published them under the headline 'Can becomes Hans'. Their lies knew no bounds. An incredible, negative propaganda campaign was under way, and we lacked the strength, patience and time to respond to it in detail. Day in, day out, the front pages attacked us with insults, distortions and fake news. All the 'material' that was later to find its way into the indictment had already appeared in the newspapers: our reports, our comments, our headlines. It was our fault that we were journalists. Politically engaged journalists who uncovered all the government's misdeeds.

It was a bitter blow when a few of our former colleagues at *Cumhuriyet* also joined in the chorus, criticising us and hoping to take over our jobs at the paper under new management. I discussed the situation with some of my *Cumhuriyet* colleagues who had come to Cologne for the memorial. I thought we should not go back. I knew what it was like in prison, and I saw the problem lay not so much in being arrested again as in the fact that the judiciary had now been completely suspended. Once we were behind bars, we would have little chance of getting out again. The journalist Cem Kucuk, who acted as the government's mouthpiece, began threatening us on television: 'You will perish, by legal or other means!'

If we were arrested, no-one would be left to run the newspaper. The official receivers could be brought in. I tried to persuade my colleagues: 'We can do much more from here.' On the day of the fire we hadn't been in the house, and now we debated whether we should rush in and save our friends and colleagues, or fetch water from outside. We tried to decide between prison and exile.

Being outside while the others were inside was a heavy moral weight. Added to that was the burden of people saying: 'He's run away.'

*Arrest of opposition politicians*

Three days after the attack on *Cumhuriyet*, Selahattin Demirtaş and Figen Yuksekdağ, the two co-chairs of the HDP, Turkey's second-largest opposition party, were arrested. Now Erdoğan was heading for the rocks. Turkey was escaping us and racing towards dictatorship.

In this climate, the newspaper's publisher, Akin Atalay, announced his decision: 'Yes, they will take me straight to prison from the airport. But as chairman of the Cumhuriyet Foundation, I can't stay away at this time. It has more impact if I'm in prison. If I stay abroad, it looks as if I'm guilty of something. And my return will give my colleagues moral support.'

'Then we'll go back together', I said. 'You have to stay here', he replied. 'It's not only your freedom that is in danger, but also your life. Even when you are in prison, there's a chance they will kill you. And from here you can still do your job, from here you can make your voice heard all over the world. That would be difficult for me.'

He had made his decision. Nothing I could say would change his mind. Should I go back too? Should I choose prison over exile? Should I accept being imprisoned for who knows how long? I would not be returning to my country, but to prison, to a concrete cell. And it would not be the same cell as the one I occupied the year before. The climate of repression that had gripped the whole country was also evident in prison. We no longer had the right to see our lawyers whenever we wanted or talk to them as long as we wanted. Our colleagues who were now imprisoned were only allowed to see their lawyers for one hour once a week. Family visits had been cut from one hour a week to every two weeks, as was the right to make phone calls. They were no longer allowed to receive or write letters. When I was in prison, I could write articles and speak to the world, but that was no longer possible.

Via his daughter, I asked Ahmet Altan, the well-known writer, journalist and publisher of the *Taraf* newpaper, to write something for the Turkish broadcast of *Aspekte* (a cultural programme on German television), but he told her to tell me: 'I will be silent. That is my message.' It was a writer's silent scream. We had come to this. In the studio I 'read out' Ahmet's message in the form of a minute's silence, and then asked the audience to think about the writers and journalists who had been silenced in prison.

Silivri, the location of the prison where political prisoners are incarcerated, had become the district with the highest literacy rate in Turkey. The books written by inmates were now kept in the prison library but they were not allowed to read them. Another bitter blow was the fact that the yard behind the cells, the only place where the prisoners could see the sky, had now been fitted with an overhead grille so that communication was impossible.

In his famous poem, Sabahattin Ali wrote: 'Hold your face up / Even though you can't see the sea / The sky is like the sea / Never mind, heart, never mind.' Now when you hold up your face all you see is the sky behind bars.In a deaf concrete cell, the political prisoners have

been silenced. Going back not only meant being imprisoned, but being silenced. I made up my mind: I would stay and speak. I would be the voice of those who cannot speak. The next day I saw on the news how Akin was led away as soon as he got off the plane. He was arrested for being a 'flight risk'.

After the attack on *Cumhuriyet*, Christian Mihr, the German representative of Reporters without Borders, passed on my request for a meeting. The German President immediately agreed to it, and one week later I was at his official residence, Schloss Bellevue. We were joined by five of his advisors and his partner.

This high-level meeting sent out an important signal in itself. First of all it sent a message to us, to the journalists who were fighting for press freedom, saying: 'You are not alone.' Then it sent a message to the Turkish government: 'We know that the people you call terrorists are standing up for truth and freedom.' And perhaps it also sent a message to the German government: 'Do not look away when universal rights are being trampled underfoot!'

I studied Gauck's biography before the meeting. I suspected that his interest was not solely politically motivated, but also had a personal component. His background and family history meant that he understood the meaning of a repressive regime. He himself had lived under such a regime. His father was convicted of espionage, mistreated and exiled. For a long time, Gauck himself was tracked by the Stasi in East Germany. After the fall of the Berlin Wall, he saw how this regime of oppression was toppled in a single day. Later on, he opened up the Stasi's archives to the public and revealed crimes committed by the police.

Now he was in his palatial residence welcoming a journalist from another country who had been charged with espionage and imprisoned because he had uncovered criminal government activity. In this way, he was sending out a strong signal of solidarity. I went to the meeting alone but felt as if all 150 journalists who were behind bars in Turkey were with me.

My colleagues at the newspaper who had been dragged from their beds at dawn were by my side. And all my colleagues who had been dismissed from banned television stations or dragged out of the offices of radio stations, some of them by the hair. And all the officials and staff of the banned newspapers, magazines and publishing houses. And all the academics and scientists who had been expelled from their universities, arrested and imprisoned, or exiled because they had signed an appeal for peace. I spoke on behalf of them all.

Less as a politician but more like a philosopher, the German President was interested in how an anti-democratic attitude can take root in a democracy; how this 'structural contradiction', this 'alienation' can flourish to

such an extent that it jeopardises democracy.

He gave me the floor, saying: 'We would like to hear what is going on in Turkey'. I told them how the stepchild in the furthest corner of Europe was fighting hard for democracy, secularism, freedom and human rights in the face of massive repression. And how European governments were taking the wrong side in this battle. How the ongoing repression and polarisation, and the escalating conflict in Turkey had an impact on Europe. That it would not only be a loss for Turkey if the only example of a secular democracy in the Islamic world were to be destroyed.

My report presumably took the President back to his East German past and reminded him of the harsh oppression he had experienced in his own country, the struggles of its citizens, and probably his family. Perhaps that is why he continued the meeting, despite the fact that his assistants politely but regularly reminded him of the time. After an hour and a half, he said: 'I would have liked to have heard more.'

When I left Schloss Bellevue, I felt as if I had not just spoken to a country's president, but to a fellow sufferer who knew exactly what it was like to be harassed and face reprisals and censorship. He had fought against this, and respected anyone who was also engaged in this struggle. Once again, I was convinced that Turkey would emerge from this dark period.

A wall that represented sorrow and suffering, that was considered to be permanent, could one day fall; 'traitors' could suddenly be transformed into 'heroes' and people who lived behind bars could take the place of people who lived in palaces. We too will see our wall fall, the archives of the secret police who persecute us will be opened up to the public; we must give hope to those who suffer and hold up examples from history.

In the evening after the meeting at Schloss Bellevue, I was awarded the Golden Victoria by the VDZ (Association of German Magazine Publishers), alongside Martin Schulz, who praised us in his acceptance speech. At the ceremony, I exchanged a few words with Frank-Walter Steinmeier, Germany's Foreign Minister at the time, about Turkey and Erdoğan. Without knowing it, within the space of an hour I had spoken to both the incumbent President and his successor.

That night, I flew to France. The following day, I was welcomed by the Mayor of Paris, Anne Hidalgo, who made me an honorary citizen. 'Your commitment is echoed here, we support you', she said. She then reminded me of the Latin motto on the Parisian coat of arms, in the hope that it would help me when times were tough. Alluding to a ship, the motto reads: *Fluctuat nec mergitur* – she is tossed by the waves but does not sink. Just like *Cemhuriyet*.

## *Protests from Erdoğan*

We didn't have to wait long for the Turkish presidential palace to issue its protest about my meeting at Schloss Bellevue. 'It is scandalous that the German President should receive an accused terrorist in his official residence', fumed Erdoğan. That was the com-

mand: 'Attack!' His armies of trolls and his loyal media immediately went on the attack. I was now accustomed to the fact that applause was always followed by boos. But this time I paid a high price for the applause. The day after the meeting, on 8 November, the government newspapers appeared with the following headlines: 'Gauck receives the traitor', 'Journalist accused of espionage invited to the German presidential palace', 'Give him the Grand Order of Merit!'

In the *Star* newspaper a columnist wrote: 'Now it's a matter for the secret service. Just as Ocalan was captured and taken to Turkey, an intelligence operation will bring Can Dündar back to face trial.' Another columnist even asked the question: 'Isn't there a hero in Europe who can deal with this?' But the really interesting headline appeared in *Akşam*: 'Can Dündar wraps himself in the US flag'. The accompanying photo in the paper showed someone sleeping on a leather sofa wrapped in the stars and stripes. It really was me. The photo went viral and triggered all kinds of comments. Now my true face had been revealed, and the photo proved which country I served. I was such a clueless spy that I covered myself with the flag of the country I was working for. Others defended me, saying it had been photoshopped, but they were also confused. Why was the *Encyclopaedia of Socialism and Socialist Struggles* lying next to the sofa? A academic who supported the regime even published a serious and detailed analysis, in which he wrote things like: 'It may seem paradoxical that both poles of the Cold War have come together in one photo, but in fact both have the goal of alienating Turkey from its own values.'

The photo had been stored on my old phone, which the police had confiscated. On that same day, at a signal from Erdoğan, the police had provided the obedient press ith the photo from my phone.

But what was really behind this photo? Why had I wrapped myself in the US flag? A few years ago a friend and I made a documentary about Deniz Gezmiş, the legendary student leader during the 1968 protests. We went days without sleep as we pored over books on the history of socialism in my friend's production studio, and tinkered with the film. One of the first political actions undertaken by Deniz and his friends was a protest against the US fleet that visited Turkey in 1968. On Istanbul's Taksim Square, students burned an American flag and then threw US soldiers who had come ashore into the sea. We acquired a US flag to symbolise this scene. We wanted to use it in the documentary by burning it in the background as we recounted the story of this protest. The night before we filmed the scene, I fell asleep in the office after many hours of editing work. My friend, the director of the documentary, decided to have a bit of fun by covering me in the flag that we were going to burn the next morning – as it was the only 'blanket' in the room.

The fact that the regime's faithful media turned this flag into a big deal had its funny side. But the scary side was that the photo had been stored on my old phone, which the police had confiscated. On that same day, at a signal from Erdoğan, the police had provided the obedient press with the photo from my phone.

They were capable of all kinds of crimes,

and on that day I was convinced of it yet again. But it all had consequences. One week later I ascertained that my column had not appeared in *Cumhuriyet*. I became suspicious. Because that was never a good sign in the history of the Turkish press. Whenever the phrase 'This article could not appear due to a technical malfunction' appeared in place of the column, it was clear that this was not a technical, but a political, malfunction.

On 18 November I was due to receive the Hermann Kesten Prize at the German PEN Centre in Darmstadt from the hands of *Tagesthemen* news anchor Thomas Roth. The writer Hermann Kesten was forced to leave his country during the Nazi regime and lived in exile for many years. The PEN Centre offered refuge to writers in exile. As my car pulled up at the hotel where the award ceremony was taking place, Dilek called and told me the real reason why my column had not been printed. Along with the police who had passed on the photo, the public prosecutor had also taken action. He had a meeting with one of the newspaper's managers, who had to testify at a hearing, and said about me: 'A warrant is out for his arrest. Why are you continuing to let him write?'

Normally the response would have been: 'That's none of your business', but these were not normal times. Our colleagues were behind bars, they were hostages, so to speak. Regardless of the content, the government was bothered that I was writing at all. And the fact that it was so concerned meant that it would not leave our people alone. Certain lawyers said it would be better if I didn't write for a while. I had always resisted pressure and had never said to one of our writers: Don't write! Not even to those who thought they had to teach me behind my back. It came as a bitter blow that now, after I had fought so long for freedom – in order to protect my detained colleagues – I was no longer allowed to write in the newspaper of which I had been editor-in-chief until just three months previously. Normally I would have resigned immediately. But in the midst of this storm, such a resignation would have been given a different interpretation and it would only have harmed me, the newspaper, and my colleagues in prison.

So I just had to accept it in silence. I said nothing. And so *Cumhuriyet*, the drum that I had once beaten so loudly, closed without a murmur. But I would continue to fight for this newspaper. And that wasn't all. I was politely told that it would be better if I did not go to the Alternative Nobel Prize, which was being awarded to the newspaper for its recent journalistic successes and its determined campaigning for the truth. I was told it might not look good if someone who was wanted by the police represented the newspaper at the award ceremony. 'As you like', I said and pulled out.

But that was still not the end. On the same day, November 18th, my Turkish publisher e-mailed me to say he couldn't print my new book. A campaign was underway to ban my books, people were being sent to bookstores to

My friends and colleagues who warned Turkey of the abyss it is falling into are in prison. They have been arrested for fighting against darkness and stupidity – by the guardians of darkness and stupidity.

make sure my books were taken off the shelves. Under these circumstances, it was 'risky' to print my book. 'They're trying to isolate you', he wrote, without realising that by writing this he was joining in with the chorus. Of course I once again felt bitter, but I said I understood.

On the evening when I lost both my newspaper and my publisher because of what I had written, I was on my way to receive an award for what I had written. I went to the ceremony in Darmstadt with a wry smile on my lips. In my acceptance speech I spoke of a wound that hurts when you scratch the scar. Darkness and stupidity give the masses, who tag along behind, the feeling that they are being lifted up, when in fact they are plunging into the abyss.

It is the writer's job to explain the abyss to people who are plunging into it with howls of triumph. It's really not easy. Stupidity makes them blind. And the darkness serves to hide the truth. The writer lifts the curtain on the darkness, like picking the scab from a wound. It hurts people, it opens up their wounds.

He calls out: 'The wind that you think is blowing past you is actually blowing you into the abyss.' That's why he is not much loved. People only realise the truth of his words when they are at the bottom of the abyss. Most writers no longer feel that their words are valued. My friends and colleagues who warned Turkey of the abyss it is falling into are in prison. They have been arrested for fighting against darkness and stupidity – by the guardians of darkness and stupidity.

They have been handed over to the darkness. Now they are forbidden to speak to the world. They are forbidden to write, speak, send messages. And those who force them to be silent are constantly telling people: 'You are on the up!' And people flock to the abyss in their hordes. Deep into the stupidity and darkness.

When you are fighting in the dark against the guardians of darkness, you have to be prepared to pay a high price for the fact that you dared to light a flame. Now we are paying this price and soon we will lose our jobs, our partners and spouses, our country, our freedom. But we know that we have to pay this price if we are to win the fight against darkness and stupidity. That's why we don't complain, we fight.

One hundred and fifty journalists and writers are behind bars who have tried to tell Turkey about the abyss, who have tried to change the direction of the wind. I accept this prize in their name. I know that every night is flanked by two days. I believe in the light. Mid-speech, my voice wavered for the first time, I couldn't go on, couldn't put a sentence together. I swallowed and paused. The audience thought I was being sentimental. But it was sadness.

The next morning, while travelling back on the train, I spoke to Dilek. We were due to make a mortgage interest payment on our house in Istanbul. The bank was pressing us. We had no money. Even if I sent all the money I had received for the awards and that I had earned during my three months in Germany, it wouldn't even cover half of the interest payment. I couldn't ask the newspaper or publishing house for a loan.

'Should we sell the house?'

'It looks like the land registry has been threatened, they won't allow the sale. And it's possible they might seize the house. I could rent it out and move into a smaller apartment.'

'Call ....., perhaps he'll give us a loan?' 'I've just rung him, he didn't pick up.' 'Don't worry, this will pass. We'll start again.' 'I haven't got the strength...', she said and rang off because she could no longer speak. It felt as though her tears were running out of the phone straight into my heart. I called her back, but she didn't answer. I had to give her strength, but how? I had very little strength left myself. Germany flashed past the train windows. Remote, foreign, indifferent and cold.

I put on my headphones and found a song on my phone by an old friend who had died in exile. I listened to him with a lump in my throat.

*Covered in dust from head to toe*
*Before me, behind me, shrouded in mist*
*My beard dirty and matted*
*How are you supposed to know*
*How much my heart is burning.*
*I was a shoot, I was snapped off*
*I was a storm, I was held back*
*I'm tired, so tired*
*How are you supposed to know*
*What anguish I suffer.*
*I tore down stone walls and came here*
*I tore down iron bars and came here*
*I burned my life and came here, hey*
*How are you supposed to know*
*Why I was ablaze.*

Media outlets that were loyal to the government outdid each other with their speculations on whether I was an American or German spy, and I flew to New York to receive an award from the Committee for the Protection of Journalists (CPJ). Perhaps for the first time I felt truly unhappy. I was gripped by a deep sense of loneliness, something that I had not even felt in my cell or in solitary confinement. I had always bought souvenirs at the airport, but now I had no one to give them to. Loneliness was where I was flying to, and where I would return.

My country was far away, my voice could not reach that far, nor could I hear the voices that emanated from it. All the voices I heard were foreign. On the plane, I watched a film called *Papa: Hemingway in Cuba*. Ernest Hemingway told his young admirers: 'The only value we have as humans are the risks we are willing to take.'

Going by this, I must have produced lots of value. I had already taught myself to ignore the hate campaigns of the regime's loyal media and the staged shitstorms on social media. At first they had affected me for hours. Then for minutes. And eventually I just stopped reading them. I had internalised a principle: 'Only listen to people whose opinion you value. Ignore the rest.'

But now the branches that I valued had broken off. I had lost leaves. When the plane landed I found my own storm was awaiting me. Donald Trump had just been elected. Not only America, but the whole world, was stunned. The chaos that swept through London in June and Istanbul in July had now reached

New York in November. I felt as if I had a black cloud hanging over me. It was the seismic event of the age and its tremors were felt in societies everywhere. An internal energy erupted and shook an unfortunate world.

*Power-crazed loutishness*

An ostracising arrogance that turned its back on the values accumulated by humanity for centuries, a selfish audacity, a power-crazed loutishness, a shoulder-shrugging power that knew no god but money, a blind hatred took advantage of the panic of the unorganised masses faced with the loss of their jobs and lives and swept through the whole world. The power of mediacracy: a sadomasochistic relationship between the people and their leaders. The sentiments that were imprisoning my country were also there in New York. They were laughing in my face. 'The tumour that you are fleeing has spread in every direction.' Driven by fear, humanity had fallen in love with its killers. Now it would try it out for a while, see itself being traded, would suffer, repent and turn back; but who knows how many years of our lives this pendulum will cost us before that happens.

An ostracising arrogance that turned its back on the values accumulated by humanity for centuries, a selfish audacity, a power-crazed loutishness, a shoulder-shrugging power that knew no god but money, a blind hatred took advantage of the panic of the unorganised masses faced with the loss of their jobs and lives and swept through the whole world. The power of the mediacracy.

The United Nations, Columbia School of Journalism, the New York Times, CNN, Reuters – in every building, on the tongue of every American I spoke to, there were the same stunned questions that we have asked ourselves so often in Turkey over the last fifteen years: 'How is it possible? Why has it happened? What will happen next?

On her show on CNN, I told Christiane Amanpour: 'Welcome to the club!' Now it was their turn to fight for the press freedom that they had taken for granted for so long. The best thing about New York was meeting Ege. I really wanted him to be at the award ceremony, and he came. As the Turkish government was also targeting my family, he, like me, could not go home to his country, couldn't see his mother. Not so much like father and son, but rather like two friends who share the same grief, we complained about our suffering in America.

When I was in prison he wrote me a letter, saying: 'When you get out we'll eat Nutella from a spoon, watch football, pour our hearts out, grow together.' Maybe we'll even race an old Cadillac through the dust of Highway 61... We had often dreamt of putting BB King on the stereo and heading into the backcountry like two cowboys. Time to do it. I managed to carve out a free day in my packed programme, and we decided to rent a car. Then... we saw the prices. We told each other that it would be much better to visit the Metropolitan Museum; we never mentioned the fact that we

couldn't afford the trip. When we found we didn't have enough money for smart shoes to wear with the rented tuxedos at the awards ceremony, we found an excuse: 'Our shoes are much smarter!' When the CPJ's guests in the ballroom of the Waldorf Astoria gave standing ovations for the copy of *Cumhuriyet* that I held in my hand, bearing the headline 'We won't give up', we both looked at our shoes and smiled at each other.

Back to Germany. The Maxim Gorki Theatre in Berlin is a temple of the arts, and it opened its arms to me from the moment I arrived in Germany. In my first week I began attending its plays and writing a column on its website. This relationship opened the doors to a fertile arts scene in Berlin and to new friendships. When artistic director Shermin Langhof suggested organising a panel discussion in memory of our friend, journalist Hrant Dink, I replied that I didn't think panel discussions achieved much but suggested 'How about a play?' 'If you'll write it, then yes!' was the reply, and I agreed.

I ordered books from Turkey and read about Hrant's life. I had travelled with him, talked to him and always admired his courage. Many of his ancestors were killed in the Armenian Genocide of 1915. He grew up in an orphanage in Istanbul. That's where he met Rakel, whom he later married. He was arrested and tortured during the military coup in 1980. But he didn't give up. Instead he set up the bilingual Turkish/Armenian newspaper *Agos*. In 2004, when he wrote in a report that Atatürk's adopted daughter was an Armenian girl from an orphanage, he became the target of nationalists. He was brought to trial and charged with 'denigrating Turkishness'. Turkish nationalists protested outside his office, chanting: 'Love the country or get out!' and showered him with threats.

When I read his old articles, I felt as if I had found an old friend in the vortex that was dragging me down. Hrant wrote: 'These are tactics to isolate *Agos* and plunge us into despair and hopelessness. But they don't know that people like us grow stronger the more they isolate us. Those who call me an "enemy of the Turks" literally torture me, and people around me are of course horrified. {...} They clearly care about me. And me? I couldn't say I wasn't afraid. But don't worry, I'm not planning to leave my country and run away. I'm used to living like this. From now on I will just be a little more afraid. That's all.'

In Turkey, writers all dig their own graves with their pens. The life of a writer in Turkey is inextricably linked to the fact that fear, threats and death haunt them like shadows that have to be consciously confronted. When writing, it's as if we were trying desperately to change the outcome of a film whose end we already know. In the credits, our names are accompanied by the words 'His memory lives on'...

Hrant stubbornly ignored the pleas of his nearest and dearest: 'Go abroad for a while!'

In other parts of the world, journalism is simply the name of a profession. But in places where truth is imprisoned, where people die for its sake, journalism is a priceless platform. A bastion that has to be defended for the sake of democracy.

He continued to live and write according to his beliefs and conscience, in order to 'create a kingdom of heaven out of the hell in which we live.' But he was worried. In his last article, which appeared on 19 January 2007, he wrote: 'This much is clear: those who have tried to isolate me, to make me weak and defenceless, have, in their own fashion, achieved what they wanted. (....) The message log and memory of my computer is filled with lines full of rage and threats. (...) For me the real threat, and the one that is really unbearable, is the psychological torture I have to live through by myself. (...) It's unfortunate that I am more readily recognised nowadays than I used to be, and that I sense more often people casting glances in my direction, saying: Oh look, isn't he that Armenian? And as a reflex, I wind up tormenting myself. This torture is in part sorrow, in part worry. One part is alertness, one part is being frightened. I'm just like a pigeon. Just like it, I am in a constant state of keeping my eyes out, looking left and right, in front of me and behind me. My head is just as mobile... and just as ready to swiftly turn at a moment's notice. (...) Do you know what it means to imprison a human being in the fear of a pigeon?'

## *Psychological torture*

I knew it. Because I felt the same in Berlin: my computer was also overflowing with threatening letters. The same psychological torture. The same sense of being a pigeon. Hrant finished his article with an optimistic note: 'Probably 2007 will be an even more difficult year for me. The court proceedings will go on, new ones will begin. Who knows what sort of additional injustices I will have to confront? Pigeons continue to live their lives, even in the midst of cities, amidst crowds of people. A little frightened, it's true, but also free.'

On the day this article was published he probably woke up once again with the pigeon's sense of unrest. He tried to conceal from his wife the black cloud of worry that hung over him. While his murderer was waiting for him on the corner, he read the paper, drank tea, kissed his wife as he left the house, not knowing that all this was happening for the last time. In a hurry, he probably paid little attention to what he wore, because he never dreamt that the shoe he was slipping on would appear on the front pages of the newspapers the next morning. He left the house at ten thirty. As usual, he probably looked around to see if anyone was following him. First he went to the editorial office, then to the bank to withdraw money; when he came out at three o'clock, two shots were fired into the back of his head. Police officers covered his blood-drenched body with newspapers as it lay in the street, but his shoe with a hole in the sole poked out.

His article, published the same day, was a kind of premonition of his murder. He was only wrong on one count: in his country there were a great many people who were in a position to hurt a pigeon. When I read out Hrant's last lines on the stage on 19 January 2017, I said that they seemed very familiar

to me today. Restless pigeons were fluttering in my heart.

In other parts of the world, journalism is simply the name of a profession. But in places where truth is imprisoned, where people die for its sake, journalism is a priceless platform. A bastion that has to be defended for the sake of democracy.

In Turkey, from your very first day as a journalist you are negotiating a minefield. The traces left by those who have gone before are like memorials before your eyes. Some of them are wounded behind bars, others lie in pieces in the cemetery. Writers dig their own graves with their pens.

'If you write this report, you'll annoy the government.' 'If you attack that man, you'll be next.' 'If you draw that cartoon, they'll shoot you.' Your head is swimming with such phrases. But journalism means writing the report anyway, attacking that man, drawing that cartoon. It's a test of bravery. It is a fight against fear even before it is a fight against the powerful.

Even before I arrived in Berlin, it was clear to me that in Germany I would continue to practise my profession, which was so persecuted in Turkey. Some of the young Turks who fought against the absolutism of the Sultan at the beginning of the 20th century in the final phase of the Ottoman Empire had to go to Europe, where they published newspapers and magazines in Europe's capital cities, and organised themselves to continue their commitment to opposition. One hundred years later, at the beginning of the 21st century, isn't it possible to do the same? Communication technologies are now more advanced, it has become much easier to get and distribute the news. And there was already a team at the ready: in Turkey, outstanding journalists had lost their jobs because their newspapers and television stations had been banned or pressurised, and now they were sitting at home. Could we not come together with them and set up an internet platform as a free media channel without censorship and without bosses, in order to spread the truth that was being kept under lock and key verbally and in writing? Could we not pass on to our readers and viewers the reports and comments that no longer had a place in the mainstream media and prepare Turkey for the future?

'Of course we can', I said at first. I'm still very optimistic. As I drove along the information highway, which was standing by for the information age, a mighty boulder stood in my way: fear.

The first thing I did was to call a journalist who was renowned for her courage. I had barely voiced my question 'Will you write for us?' before she cut me off: 'Impossible. No-one can do that. Just this phone call is enough for me to be arrested. You shouldn't have called me.' She hung up. That was the first shock. She was right to be afraid of putting herself in the firing line. Should I ask her to write for us under a pseudonym?

The police also read online correspondence. And reporters? For reporters in Turkey, it was dangerous to work as a dissident. On the spot, in the middle of what was happening, they had to report directly to the police and gendarmes and were put under

huge pressure. Anyone who worked for us in Berlin would also be threatened.

The first one I called preferred to remain unemployed rather than place herself in such danger. She said it would also be difficult to get access to news sources. Many people were afraid to talk to a media channel abroad that was critical of the government. Even politicians who visited our office preferred not to be photographed: 'Don't let anyone see me here!'

Even if we dealt with these hurdles, what should we do about the government's censorship of the internet? And if we managed that, how should we launch this kind of initiative? With foreign funding? That would be a major handicap for a journalist accused of espionage. With contributions from readers? Even if readers wanted to support us, how would they make their donations? Always with the risk of being registered? Days and weeks went by as we sought solutions to these problems.

In the end we got together with a few young people who lived in Germany but who were not journalists, rolled up our sleeves and set to work. Before long, the climate of repression in Turkey provided us with a fresh opportunity: more and more journalists who felt they had no way of continuing to work in Turkey, were coming to Berlin. They included very capable friends and colleagues. They were joined by dozens of academics who had been fired by their universities. The central role that Paris played one hundred years ago in the fight for freedom of the young Turks has now been taken over by Berlin and, until further notice, has become a hub for political refugees in the fight for democracy.

Semra Uzun-Onder came up with the name for our platform: *Özgürüz – We are free*.

The book that I wrote in prison gained its original title from a tweet that I posted when the arrest warrant was issued: *Tutuklandık – We are arrested*. So with our platform we also gave it a name that described our new situation. A gifted friend made a hash tag out of interwoven arms and created our logo with it. Another filmed a promotional video for us.

And soon we also had a security problem. It didn't take long for the Turkish secret service to find out our address, and a television team from a government-supporting channel in Istanbul was quickly sent to Berlin to attack us.

## *We are arrested*

*Özgürüz* was to be launched on 24 January. This was the anniversary of the car bomb attack on Uğur Mumcu, one of Turkey's most courageous investigative journalists.

Our launch was possible thanks to donations from a few key supporters in Germany, both individuals and institutions. We asked our readers to support us. The first donation of ten euros arrived from a Turk who lived in Germany. He promised to make this donation every month. We called to thank him. Others soon followed. Now our gaze turned constantly to the counter at the entrance, which showed how our circle of supporters was growing day by day thanks to the crowdfunding principle. Our piggy bank was filling up. Soon we had so much money that we were able to pay the salaries of a handful of editorial

staff, along with the fees of journalists who were willing to write for us. The adventure of being a media channel in exile could now begin, with all its ups and downs.

For a while the editorial team worked day and night and set up a website. We wanted to publish news and analyses in German and Turkish. We did not want to limit ourselves to reporting for Turkey, but were keen to generate greater understanding of Turkey in Germany and help the two societies to get to know each other better. We were completing our last preparations on 23 January when the news came: the government had blocked our site 'as the result of a technical investigation and legal decision'. We hadn't even started!

What had they seen that allowed them to give a legal verdict? The government had already confiscated an unprinted book from the printers, and now it was blocking a website before it even went online. We ourselves could not have found a better way of describing the huge extent to which the media in Turkey was being restricted.

So we came up with the title: 'The first website to be banned before it was launched'. So it seemed fear was not only widespread among the journalists and reporters I had asked to write for us. Even those who were used to being obeyed were afraid of being contradicted. We no longer cared about the ban, we would find other ways to reach our audience. People in Turkey were used to getting around internet censorship. The ban just attracted more attention to us: in the first ten hours we attracted 20,000 followers on Twitter, and our supporters quickly grew to 200. We felt a huge surge of hope.

When we went online, we published a few articles by writers from Turkey who had dared to write for us, and a study of the arms trade between Germany and Turkey. In the founding manifesto I wrote: 'In a freer environment, learning from past mistakes, we will return objectively and courageously to investigative journalism. We will do all we can to give the people, who are on the verge of making vital choices, all the news they need. (...) It is an initiative that will prove that free thinking can never be silenced.'

### *You cannot stop us*

Along with Hayko Bağdat, who had come to Germany and joined the editorial team when the pressure in Turkey became too great for him, I stepped in front of the camera and said: 'You cannot stop us.' The camera was on Hayko's son's phone. We borrowed it from him when he was taking a break from playing games. And as for broadcasting it, we weren't exactly a TV station. We called on a few technically minded friends to help us produce a programme for Periscope in the corner of our editorial office. We then posted it on Facebook, YouTube and Twitter. When one channel was blocked, we posted on all the others. Ten thousand people watched our programme. While we were online on Periscope, the comments were equally divided between good wishes and insults.

When high-ranking German politicians and, soon afterwards, politicians from Turkey spoke exclusively to us, doors opened for *Özgürüz*. Politically, we were stronger, but our lack of infrastructure was glaring. Every time there was a different problem, either the lighting let us down, or the sound, or the transmission. I'll never forget the shock when

our director told me after an interview I had conducted with Norbert Lammert, President of the Bundestag, which was packed with phrases that were each deserving of a headline in their own right: 'Unfortunately there was no sound.' We all did our best but we had to battle with all kinds of technical difficulties.

And soon we also had a security problem. It didn't take long for the Turkish secret service to find out our address, and a television team from a government-supporting channel in Istanbul was quickly sent to Berlin to attack us. One day a presenter was on our doorstep with his microphone, telling the viewers: 'Here is the nest of traitors!' During our transmission the following evening, he named the part of town where our editorial office is located, described the building, pointed to the windows behind which we worked, and announced when we went in and out. We had been put in the pillory.

My secretary quit, afraid that we could suffer a Charlie Hebdo-style attack. Another coworker bowed to the pressure of her family, who begged her to quit. But we carried on with the staff who remained. And other brave people joined us. Soon reporters and camera operators were working for us in Istanbul, Ankara and Diyarbakir. Our disadvantage was beginning to be an advantage: people who were unable to make themselves heard in the mainstream media, who were silenced or censored, contacted us and continued to have a voice. Informants brought us reports that nobody else dared to publish.

It was hard to get established authors to write for us, but it was also a chance to find new comrades-in-arms. Our brave local reporters were soon joined by civilian reporters. We tried to give people with something to say a platform on *Özgürüz*, we gave them our Periscope password. This led to some incredible scenes, such as when a woman who was arrested during a protest action sent a live stream from the police vehicle, reporting on what had happened via the *Özgürüz* account. Together we experienced how an alternative medium set up in exile in a sea of impossibilities and inadequacies used technology to break down walls that were considered insurmountable and reached those who were thought to be unreachable. As excited as school students making their own TV programme, we repeated in the face of all the difficulties: 'Isn't it great that we're journalists?'

In my office there was a TV where I could watch Turkish channels. Right next door was the studio where we broadcast our programmes. The country we were talking about was so different from the one I saw on the screen. Every time I walked the five or six steps from the studio back into my office it felt like I was crossing a huge gulf. Fear of Erdoğan had blindfolded the Turkish media.

On top of all this, we were all beset by thousands of problems – passports, visas, residency permits, insurance, work permits, looking for apartments, opening bank accounts, catching up with our families. The difficulties piled up and soon led to problems and cracks in our team. We then shifted the axis, turned our focus to Turkey and allowed the reporters to take the initiative. Now we tried out a local,

free, non-hierarchical publication with ten people in four cities, who did not know each other but shared the same ideal and communicated via a WhatsApp group. They travelled with a small phone that served as a camera, microphone, recording device, intercom, computer, spotlight and loudspeaker. This is how we maintained our right to information and reporting.

The internet portal was followed by the Periscope account and then the monthly bilingual Turkish-German *Özgürüz* magazine. Then we set up the *Özgürüz* publishing house for books that could not be printed because they were considered questionable. We also applied to set up a German/Turkish radio show. In this way, we gradually turned ourselves into a free media group that is exclusively run and managed by journalists. It is possible that the democratic media of the future will emerge from this original initiative, which grew out of the experience of repression.

## *A stage-adaptation of We are Arrested*

'This is the Royal Shakespeare Company. We'd like to adapt your book *We are Arrested* for the stage. What do you think? I couldn't believe it. The book I wrote in my prison cell in Istanbul was to be adapted for the English stage! Less than a year after I wrote it. 'When?' I asked. 'We're thinking the 16th of June', said the voice at the other end.

'Did you deliberately choose this date?' 'What do you mean?' 'It's my birthday!' 'No. We didn't know that.' The voice laughed. I flew to Stratford-upon-Avon and met Ege there. On 16 June 2017 I went into the theatre. A man stood on the stage before an audience in the round. He began to tell his emotional tale, but was soon overpowered by his feelings and sank into himself. He wrote, was charged, arrested, treated unfairly, was shot at, danced, laughed, cried. That was me.

As if nailed to my seat, I watched myself, a little stunned and very melancholy, but it was hard for me to recognise 'myself' on stage. Had I really lived through all this? Had this all really happened in just 18 months? Was I watching a play, or was it my own life? I had a different face, was dressed in different clothes, was speaking a different language.

The audience watched the play with sad expressions, shooting me glances and dabbing at their tearful eyes with handkerchiefs. I avoided looking at my son, who was sitting in the audience. The man on the stage was not the man I saw in the mirror, he acted and spoke independently of me, but he was telling my story. Watching the play, I didn't know whether to be proud or pity the man.

The man on the stage was accompanied by another figure, who transformed into different characters – charging me as public prosecutor, as a judge, turning into a policeman, then a guard who locked me in my cell, then my wife, then my son who took my arm. Had I given those who linked arms with me grounds for pride or simply hurt them? I was unable to judge.

A voice that slid out of my pen had broken a boulder from the top of the mountain that I was challenging, the boulder started an avalanche that swept me, my family, every-

one close to me, far, far away. As it swept me down the slope, on one side of the mountain people booed me, called me a traitor to my country, while on the other side they celebrated me as a hero.

Then there were the spectators, who simply observed, as silent and indifferent as the walls of my cell. I couldn't really see any of them, and I was swept onwards, shouting and screaming as loud as I could. Every scream turned into snow and fell on me, the load became heavier and heavier. But now.... on a distant island, in the contemplative city of a master poet, in a moment when I became calm, clear and quiet, on a stage a man stepped in front of me and said: 'Look, this is what you have lived through.'

Had he done the right thing, did his mistakes outweigh the things he did right, had he gone too far, had he done too little? I couldn't say. What rose up from my stomach and closed my throat was not only what had happened over the last year, but what had happened throughout my whole life. Now I was silent while the man on the stage spoke, telling the astonished audience what he had done, and why and how.

When the play ended, I couldn't get up, the burden of one-and-a-half years weighed heavily on my shoulders, too heavy to throw off in an hour and a half.

I felt like I was drowning. Ege gave me a hug, and I hugged him back. 'We have swallowed a lot of water', I stuttered, 'but we haven't allowed ourselves to be swallowed up by the water.' Was it worth it? Yes, it was worth it.

**Can Dündar** is the former Editor-in-Chief of the *Cumhuriyet* newspaper, which was awarded the Alternative Nobel Prize in 2016. He spent three months in solitary confinement in Turkey for his courageous reporting on arms shipments from the Turkish secret service to Syria, was sentenced to five-and-a-half years in prison and only just escaped an attempt on his life. If he hadn't been abroad during the attempted coup in Turkey in July 2016, he would most likely now be back in prison. But Dündar went into exile and continued his fight for freedom of the press in his country and against Erdoğan from Berlin. This article is based on his book *Verräter*, published by Hoffmann & Campe in 2017. In 2015 Dündar received the Reporters without Borders Human Rights Award and in 2016 he was awarded the Lighthouse Prize by Netzwerk Rercherche, the Hermann Kesten Prize by the PEN Centre Germany, the Golden Victoria for Press Freedom by the Association of German Magazine Publishers, the Prize for the Freedom and Future of the Media Foundation of Sparkasse Leipzig, and most recently the SPD's Gustav Heinemann Award. Dündar currently lives and works in Berlin.

# Chapter 2: Populism, nationalism and Euroscepticism in Europe – How can we overcome ‘European angst’?

**Anti-European sentiment has been on the rise in EU countries over recent years. So what is left of the European idea when the continent is growing ever more divided? A continent increasingly beset by an atmosphere of fear and anger? How should Europe deal with this and prevent the populists from fuelling ever more of this ‘European angst’?**

**The Erasmus generation under pressure** Populist extremism is not a natural event such as a volcanic eruption, but it is currently spreading around the world like wildfire. The author warns against simply waiting for the nationalists to be found out, and argues for a massive confrontation. Democratic, constitutional and social Europe is not only a task for politicians, but also for culture, trade unions, charities and churches. The Erasmus generation must take to the streets – and to the polls. *By Heribert Prantl*

The early 21st century: civility and enlightenment may be well developed, but it seems they are only prepared to defend themselves to a limited extent. They have been thrown off their guard and are wrestling with those who hate them. These haters spread their Word online, on Facebook and Twitter, so that it grows in size, and the 45th President of the United States acts as their barking spokesman. If it could have changed colour, the US Constitution would have gone red with shame when Donald Trump swore his oath upon it. His election campaign had already highlighted that it meant nothing to him. He scorned the rights of minorities and showed total disregard for religious freedom. He denigrated women and threatened his political rival.

Belief in the strength of the law has grown throughout the 'Western world' since 1945 and has held it together reasonably well. Now it is being attacked by the old, asocial belief in the survival of the fittest, which in turn is being fuelled by new feelings of national egoism and egomania. Universal human rights, written down in wonderful treaties and guarded by wonderful courts, are now losing the people who previously ensured they were binding. 'Right-wing populism' is too nice and general a term that waters down what is a dangerous issue, and as such it is the wrong term for a movement that deprives citizens of their rights.

## *Negative renaissance*

We are living in a time of negative renaissance, a time when old delusions and idiocies are being reborn. Let us contemplate the words written by Franz Grillparzer in 1849: 'From humanity via nationalism to bestiality.' And we suspect and know that humanity is once again threatened, more massively than it has been for decades. It is threatened by malicious words and evil deeds, by a delight in political crassness, flippancy and insolence, by the mockery of decency and diplomacy, it is threatened by an often very brutal disregard

for the respect and regard that is due to every human being, whether they are unemployed citizens, refugees or political opponents.

Aggressive, denigrating, stupid speeches are being made in many countries, including in Europe and the United States, and political parties that espouse such tones are attracting supporters. Why is this? Because for audiences, they are also a protest against their rampant grievances and a demonstration of an ability to make things happen, as trust in existing politics has dwindled and disappeared. The longing for a politics that gives hope – of a brighter future, of work, security, a sense of home in a globalised world, the dream of making one's own future 'great again'. This hope is not being adequately fulfilled by traditional politics. This lack of political vision for the future mean that many voters are turning to the 'populists' who are loudly promising to make America, Britain, France, Hungary, Poland and Austria 'great again'.

Promising to fulfil this desire is not necessarily bad in itself; there is nothing reprehensible about giving people a sense of meaning and prestige. Even the grubbiest of extremist demands contain more than just base instincts. These demands are responding to a need that should not be condemned, even if it is being voiced in a distorted, ugly way. It is a need that needs to be heard, seen and respected. This is precisely what extremist agitators are reacting to. Calling themselves 'concerned citizens', many of these agitators envy refugees because they supposedly get more attention, support and sympathy than they do.

Their claim that migrants are getting more and better social benefits is totally unfounded. But it is true that there has never been a similar degree of sympathy and willingness on the part of civil society to help the needs of social welfare recipients and low-income earners as there was for refugees in the summer and autumn of 2015. For many years, welfare recipients and low-income earners have been feeling that they do not receive the support and solidarity of the German public. Instead, everyone was keen to debate their apparent 'laziness'. Back in the 1990s, a powerful campaign began to change first language, and then the way people think. It began with the social safety net being called the 'social hammock' and instead of mass unemployment the talk was of a 'collective theme park'; then cutting employers' pension contributions was sold as a 'contribution to generational equity' and low wages as a contribution to the country's recovery.

Since then, welfare recipients and low-income earners have been responding with resentment and envy to the solidarity being shown to refugees as they arrive at train stations. In terms of dealing with populist extremism, this means that these aversions must not be deepened by driving immigrants and locals who have lost out due to globalisation towards competition and destructive conflict. When is the 'great again' promise a bad one? When is it dangerous? When it is linked to humiliating people, indeed often humiliating people who cheer on the humiliators – but those who are humiliated believe they can lift themselves above others and in turn be given carte blanche to humiliate others. Donald Trump, Marine Le Pen, Geert Wilders, Matteo Salvini, Harald Vilimsky, Björn Höcke and Alexander Gauland – they all do it.

The means of humiliation works because it is linked to a promise of grandiosity; it is the transfer of the trash TV principle to politics and society.

People who go on trash TV shows accept they will be humiliated, because this humiliation promises to make them grandiose. Grandiosity is a perversion of the legitimate desire for importance, meaning, attention, superiority. Those who make big promises, who work with humiliation, begin this work of humiliation by denigrating and deriding all previous politicians; they call it 'the system' – and give their supporters the feeling that they are working together in this destruction and hence, supposedly, in resolving their particular problems.

What is happening is not simply populism, it is populist extremism, a modernised version of the old right-wing extremism; it works with the means of exclusion, by increasingly breaking the rules and presenting itself with the gesture of a courageous taboo-breaker; this is particularly effective in the online world because the most crazy attacks, the most crazy posts find the most crazy circulation.

## *Pompeii, 79 A.D.*

The towns of Pompeii, Herculaneium, Stabiae and Oplontis on the Gulf of Naples were destroyed in 79 A.D. by the eruption of Vesuvius. Many descriptions of what is generally known as right-wing populism suggest we are facing a similar event on a global scale. Such descriptions of right-wing populism as a global eruption resemble descriptions of a volcanic eruption. It's as if not one Vesuvius but many Vesuvii have erupted, as if aggression is pouring into our society like lava, and as if hate is raining down like burning ash. These are phlegmatic descriptions, it is political fatalism.

So-called right-wing populism is not a natural event. It is not something we can simply protect ourselves from; it is something we can and must fight, properly and effectively. This article is therefore an attempt to counter phlegmatism and fatalism. It is a call for a democratic, constitutional and social offensive. It is a call for an analogue and digital uprising against the despisers of civility, a call for a storm of enlightenment. It is an appeal for supporters of democracy to find a new verve, because you can only inspire others if you yourself are inspired. It is a call to intensify democracy and make persuasive arguments. It shows how extremist populism works, how it is fuelled and with what, and how we can take away its fuel. And also how the defenders of democracy and the rule of law must face up to it in order to disarm it. These words are a call for a politics that is populist and democratic.

Populist and democratic? Aren't those contradictory adjectives, isn't it a contradiction in terms? No. It is not the word populism that is bad, not the word used by so-called right-wing populists to adorn themselves and that they like to use as a disguise; it is what is concealed under this disguise that is bad. It hides extremism – racist nationalism, xenophobia and contempt for the constitution.

It is not populism that destroys society, but populist extremism. Populism is just a way of promoting policies. All good politicians are populists because they have to be

able to present their ideas and policies in such a way that people understand and are inspired by them. A democratic populist is someone who appeals to both the head and the heart; a democratic populist is one who does not leave emotions to the populist extremists. A democratic populist defends constitutional rights and the rule of law against extremists who scorn them. Populist extremists do not appeal to the head and the heart, but to the baser instincts. That's the difference.

There are people who, despite all their dismay about their politics, claim that demagogues like Donald Trump have charisma. The charisma of Trump and co. is fake. What some observers regard as charisma is in reality the urge and ability to lie in such a way that their listeners are astonished and start to believe something big is happening. These people with pseudo-charisma are in fact ham actors, con artists.

Populist extremism has been helped by the fact that the term 'populism' is bandied about so freely. In Germany, Oskar Lafontaine (initially SPD then Die Linke) was regarded as a populist, and the same applied to Peter Gauweiler. Franz Josef Strauß was most definitely considered a populist, as was Roland Koch, former CDU Minister President of Hesse.

Those who make big promises, who work with humiliation, begin this work of humiliation by denigrating and deriding all previous politicians; they call it 'the system' – and give their supporters the feeling that they are working together in this destruction and hence, supposedly, in resolving their particular problems.

Secretary Generals of the CSU are pretty much born populists, while Gysi of Die Linke has had this label attached to him. Popular, dramatising and at the same time simplistic politics has always been referred to as populist politics. Even criticism that ruling politicians do not want to deal with has often been described as populist. Criticism of the euro bail-out policy was called populist. Criticism of the TTIP and CETA trade negotiations was called populist. Criticism of Germany's military involvement in Afghanistan was called populist.

The word populism has also been used to bring together what does not belong together, on right and left: people like Marine Le Pen in France, Beppe Grillo in Italy, Boris Johnson in the UK, Frauke Petry in Germany; the Greek Alexis Tsipras, the Bolivian Evo Morales and the Venezuelan Hugo Chávez. The word populism is now as overstretched and worn out by excessive use as an old rubber ring; it is itself populist. It is good for almost nothing; only for trivialising those who despise democracy. But contempt for democracy and the constitution is not populism, it is extremism.

People who turn politics into theatre are not just reprehensible populists. Theatre has always been part of politics. That's not good or bad; it's just how it is. It is not a case of warning politics or theatre that they should be more 'serious'. In both spheres things can be badly staged. Helmut Kohl's famous talks with Gorbachev while wearing a cardigan were staged. As was the time when Germany's Environment Minister, Klaus Töpfer, jumped into the Rhine in 1988. And in the midst of the Chernobyl disaster, when Bavaria's

Interior Minister Alfred Dick ate contaminated whey in front of the cameras, it had been staged to prove that the stuff was fit for children's consumption. That was not just a populist act, it was downright catastrophic. It was as reckless as it was unfruitful.

Adopting a provincial accent also does not make someone a populist. It would be a blessing if the cold, economic jargon disappeared from statements and debates. This is not a plea for German chauvinism in political speech, but for reviving wise advice from Luther in the wake of the anniversary of the Reformation: 'Rather we must ask the mother in the home, the children on the street, the common man in the marketplace. We must be guided by their language, by the way they speak, and do our translating accordingly. Then they will understand it and recognise that we are speaking German to them.' By this, the eminent reformer did not mean that we should pick up our vocabulary in the gutter or come up with scurrilous, populist expressions of power. It is rather a recommendation to speak a popular, understandable language that appeals to the mind and touches the heart. An unimaginative and visionless cost-benefit language is just as incapable of this as the schoolmasterly language of experts.

Meanwhile, the populist extremists are again enjoying the language that Victor Klemperer called LTI – Lingua Tertii Imperii. Klemperer showed how the persistent and stereotypical repetition of certain terms fills heads with fascist ideas. That's why the words 'Never again' are one of the lessons of Germany's dark times. Anyone who hears the hate-filled language of populist extremism which refers to public officials as 'traitors of the people' will find themselves thinking with concern: 'Not again'. Those who, as extremists do, bring this hostile declaration into democracy; those who oppose the 'anti-Volk' as the enemy; those who claim to have the monopoly on authentic representation; those who claim leadership for themselves alone and presume to be the sole voice of the people; those who claim a moral monopoly for themselves and thus seek to obliterate basic rights and values – it is they who are the enemies of democracy. We cannot and must not trivialise them by calling them populists.

## *The politics of brute force*

The more uncertain the future, and the more complex the political and social situations, the more pronounced is the desire for leaders who deconstruct complexity, who take on and conquer uncertainty – or at least pretend to. It is a longing for the politics of Alexander the Great, who in 333 BC simply sliced through the Gordian knot with his sword. A longing for politics and politicians who act in this way is a longing for a strong man or woman, a longing for the world to be less complex and knotty than it really is. Supporters of Alexander-style politics believe any compromise is a sign of weakness. They view compromise as betrayal by those they call 'traitors of the people'. This harks back to the first half of the 20th century. Until 1945, Germany was an uncompromising country; political compromise was regarded as betrayal – a betrayal of ideals, a product of fearful nodding, and the result of a lack of backbone.

In the German language, and sometimes even today in people's minds, the adjective 'lazy' goes together with the word compromise like the lid on a pot. So the most common political compromise is still the supposedly

'lazy' compromise. There is a German saying that has a similar meaning: '*Lass dich in keinen Kompromiss; du verlierst die Sach', das ist gewiss*.' [Don't compromise, you'll lose the deal, for sure.] This suggests that compromise will *per se* compromise you. That's not true. A parliamentary democracy cannot be built and maintained with such rigorism. In a parliamentary democracy, compromise is a sensible way of reconciling interests and managing dissent; it relies on respect for opposing positions, a sense of social change and an ability to open up to a different viewpoint. It is part of the essence of democracy.

Germany's rampant hostility towards compromise harbours the values of its autocratic past. Even more than in the past, democratic society has to learn how to change its attitude towards compromise – and also towards politicians who have to seek and make compromises. It will become increasingly difficult to form a coalition government with the usual two-party alliances (red-green or black-yellow). The primordial law of German democracy – 'If nothing else is possible, a grand coalition always works' – is no longer valid because the former major parties are no longer big enough in every area.

This all means that the grand coalition, which has been so familiar throughout the history of the Federal Republic, is now a thing of the past (even if it is currently being formed once again). Nowadays grand coalitions are tending to shrink. This is also due to the fact that the SPD and CDU's starting positions were already too close to each other, long before the negotiations on coalition compromises. They are no longer distinct from their opponents and voters no longer recognise that their respective policies offer alternatives. As a result, they look for an alternative elsewhere. The strength of the AfD is based on the 'Alternative' that it carries in its name. This means that compromise must not be internalised by the SPD and CDU to such an extent that voters no longer recognise the parties. The weakness of today's SPD is also due to the fact that it has made so many compromises in the past that it has lost its distinct shape.

The political magnetic fields will have to be re-arranged. The parties will again have to be more clearly distinguishable from each other, while at the same time overcoming the old forces of repulsion. German unity may only be complete if there is not only a red-red-green coalition, but also a coalition of the CDU and the Left. The new party, the AfD, will have to demonstrate that it has successfully rejected its brown elements and taken a democratic path before another party can approach them or they can approach another party.

A good politician is not a politician who demonises others, calls his opponent a liar and likes to go for the jugular. And a party is not skilled at problem-solving just because it offers the simplest solutions. Strong-man politics is not democratic politics. Russia's President Putin is a strong man, as is Turkey's President Erdoğan, and US President Trump pretends to be one.

Their strength is just swagger. It consists of trampling on the rights of others, in treating other viewpoints as hostile and persecuting them. Such politics disrupts society, disregards individuality, diversity and the interests of others. It elevates its own interests, ideas and

aspirations to an ideal that can be achieved at the stroke of a sword.

But the problems of today's society cannot be resolved with a single blow. In a democracy, strength has a different face. Democracy is not slicing through knots, but working together on what may be a laborious process of unravelling, a drawn-out, dogged plucking and pulling. This is hard work, but in the end the shoelaces are still whole – and useable.

## *'Here I stand; I cannot do otherwise'*

In Germany, uncompromising politics has long been on the crest of a wave. Luther's dictum: 'Here I stand; I cannot do otherwise' was turned into an everyday political slogan: One always stood, one could not do otherwise. This supposedly sacred stubbornness was echoed in Chancellor Angela Merkel's 'TINA' policy: 'There is no alternative!' There's no alternative? The founding of the AfD, Alternative for Germany, was a response to the Chancellor's policy on the euro that supposedly had no alternative. The alleged lack of alternatives was the successor to the old refusal to compromise. The old refusal to compromise: in the Germany of the Empire, the Weimar Republic (and not to mention the Nazi Reich) compromise was for the weak – weak people, powerless states, small countries. Compromise was 'un-German'. In contrast, 'German' was unconditional determination, absolute strength of principle, either-or, black-and-white thinking, acting in victory or defeat. Character was demonstrated by sticking to one's convictions; and this faithfulness was particularly German if it was unswerving, unbending and unprepared to accept any compromise, whatever the cost.

The solitary decision, the command of a strong man – this was more important than parliamentary debate. Carl Schmitt proclaimed this fact: 'The best thing in the world is a command.' When the National Socialists combined power and lack of compromise with brutality and bestiality, it cost the lives of many millions of people. Not only among the Nazis, there was a perceived heroism in uncompromising, harsh and assertive power. Such a view of politics is admired by autocrats, it despises discussion as mere talk and derides parliament as a chatterbox.

Compromise always means giving something away. There is a difference between demanding this from those who have education, money and influence and from those who have little or none of these. There is a difference between uncompromisingly defending your privileges and uncompromisingly defending your subsistence level. If you are required to give up something from a position of abundance, you can make compromises more easily than those who do it from a position of want.

Global inequality between rich and poor is assuming obscene proportions, and the socialists of Italy, Spain, France, Greece and Hungary have not changed that, not even Obama's Democrats, nor Britain's New Labour, not to mention Germany's social democracy; on the contrary: they were all active players or willing supporters of the policy of deregulation and dismantling the welfare state.

The fact that this was ignored is the odium that still to this day hangs over Chancellor Gerhard Schröder's Agenda 2010 and continues to dog the SPD.

Compromise is not ridiculous *per se*; it is not an indication of a state's moral turpitude; but equally it is not good *per se*. The merit of a policy is not reflected in the magnitude of its politicians' real or supposed ideals, but in the quality of their compromises. 'Ideals say something about how we want to be. Compromises, show who we are', writes Israeli philosopher Avishai Margalit. Who are 'we'? A diverse, pluralistic, lively, dynamic society that is in need of balance.

## *Balancing the budget*

What is a good compromise? Firstly, it is always the result of a certain amount of struggle, so it does not involve hasty submission, it is not the easy route. Secondly, compromise requires the decision to be transparent and the positions of those involved must be clear, otherwise it leaves the impression that 'they are all in cahoots'. Thirdly, there is an absolutely uncompromising core, which in democracies is set out in their fundamental rights. Fourthly, compromises that are to the detriment of the weakest in society are not good compromises. Fifthly, compromises must be compromises, not *diktats*. Compromise entails swallowing toads, but they shouldn't be poisonous toads. Kurt Tucholsky's satirical song from 1919 ends with the lines: 'And Germany has a deep rift. / There's no compromise for that!' Such a rift is the result of a policy that ignores the opinions of its opponents. Good compromise prevents such a rift.

But over recent years it has not been possible to prevent deep rifts in both Europe and the USA. Global inequality between rich and poor is assuming obscene proportions, and the socialists of Italy, Spain, France, Greece and Hungary have not changed that, not even Obama's Democrats, nor Britain's New Labour, not to mention Germany's social democracy; on the contrary: they were all active players or willing supporters of the policy of deregulation and dismantling the welfare state.

The French sociologist Didier Eribon used the example of his own family to describe how the working class have turned away from socialism and moved to the right. Many supporters of Orbán, Le Pen, Hofer and Petry used to vote for social democrats, and others had at some point stopped voting.

In the outrage at Trump's loud-mouthed promise that he would be the biggest job creator God ever created, many people have failed to be outraged at the fact that the austerity policies imposed by the European Commission, ECB and International Monetary Fund (IMF) were Europe's biggest job destroyers. These policies were not created by God, but were driven by German Finance Minister Wolfgang Schäuble, and they are still being pursued, despite the fact that even the IMF is now opposed to them.

Social democracy did not distinguish itself through protest, but simply stood by as southern Europe, and particularly Greece, was mistreated. Germany is still unfazed by international criticism of its export fixation, which upsets the balance of its European

neighbours; Germany does not allow itself to be distracted by the fact that balancing the budget is the most important goal of its financial policy.

The invocation of a balanced budget and the frugal Swabian housewife as a role model for the national economy is no less populist than the promise of investment that Trump trumpeted to his supporters. Investment in infrastructure, universities and schools, expanding care for the elderly and meeting children's basic needs – this is not populist, but sensible. If they are not combined with xenophobia, the denigration of women and contempt for education, then they are effective in combating poverty, frustration with democracy and extremism.

## *Human waste*

On the Left in particular, there is a popular explanation for populist extremism: it is a revolt on the part of the economically dependent who want to 'get their own back' on the elites. But this explanation only goes halfway. It makes out that 'the elite' is a hermetically sealed group that is now appalled by what it perceives as the ignorant masses. But many of the main representatives of populist right-wing extremism – from Trump to Gauland – come from the rich or educated upper class; they represent the interests of business and neo-liberalism.

It is true that Trump's supporters are mainly frustrated voters who feel inadequately represented in today's politics, especially older white men. But his supporters also come from other sectors of society. The unculture of contempt that these parties establish in society also serves the interests of many of those who have and who see that what they have is under threat.

Some years ago, the German sociologist Wilhelm Heitmeyer pointed out that a 'crude middle class' was spreading and that the better-off were in the process of initiating a 'class struggle from above'. The sociologist and philosopher Zygmunt Bauman theorises that late capitalist globalisation is making people superfluous in every society, calling them 'human waste'.

From experience, or when threatened with becoming this waste, people cease to believe in democracy and the rule of law. This is not only the case with the have-nots, but also with the haves, and it leads to them being drawn to populist extremism. The cynical part is that populist extremism is re-creating these apostates in its own image, with grimaces of hatred and as beings who cease to behave as subjects.

Populist extremism is a method of seducing people into self-esteem and depoliticisation. Even if they teach a lesson in the short term, they ultimately turn themselves into people who, it seems, have turned away from democratic politics once and for all. Here, too, one recognises the aforementioned characteristics of populist extremism: humiliation and denigration. They are not the spontaneous reactions and feelings of 'concerned citizens'.

They are not new, and they had already established themselves as socially acceptable behaviour before the financial and refugee crises. They have been propagated by ruling politicians for years and accepted as

an appropriate social arrangement for dealing with the poor and excluded. Consensus arises from the following attitude: if you find yourself left behind in society, it's your own fault. The poor are lazy. Reintegration is achieved through authoritarian discipline (the euphemism for this being *Fordern und Fördern*, 'challenge and support'. Germany's Hartz welfare reforms were and are the expression and accelerator of this change in the social consensus. In the meantime, this has become the dominant mindset at all levels of German society, and indeed – fuelled by the Greek crisis – throughout Europe.

### *Excessive attention creates excessive significance*

The view held by opponents of Trump and co. that populist extremism has taken hold mainly due to fake news is therefore populistically simplistic and leads to illusory solutions. This is self-delusion, because this attempt at an explanation deflects the gaze from one's own domestic social and democratic deficits and turns it towards external forces, which have supposedly helped Trump and his consorts. The uproar about fake news fuels people's general mistrust of everything.

Donald Trump's election campaign showed that the dance performed in the media and online around his breaking of taboos actually helped the taboo breaker. Large swathes of journalists were seduced by the salacious spirit of resentment and allowed themselves to be instrumentalised as an amplifier.

According to sociologist Max Weber, politics is a strong and slow boring of hard boards. Democratic populism is drumming on these boards; this drumming is not bad; it can prepare for drilling. But of course, in this drumming the democratic populist must be careful not to fall into a right-wing radical rhythm that mimics what right-wing extremism has drummed up – for example, against refugees. Populist extremism does not limit itself to drumming on hard boards. It throws the hard boards around, hurls them at minorities, nails them to the foreheads of 'angry citizens', uses them to smash fundamental rights and values, to thrash 'the system', democracy, the rule of law, the separation of powers and political opponents, whom it declares to be the enemy and threatens to arrest and imprison.

What can democratic populism do to stop this? It has to turn the boards into boomerangs that come back and strike the thrower. This is how democracy begins to fight back.

The quality media should not pretend that attacks on minorities are simply events to be reported like sports events and pop concerts. Donald Trump's election campaign showed that the dance performed in the media and online around his breaking of taboos actually helped the taboo breaker. Large swathes of journalists were seduced by the salacious spirit of resentment and allowed themselves to be instrumentalised as an amplifier.

In Germany, the AfD is always lamenting and complaining about something, but never about lack of attention. That's something it can't complain about, because it receives a spectacular amount of attention for all the fuss it makes. However, it is harmful to place them under the magnifying glass in such a way

that we only see the 'sense' part of nonsense. That is what happens when every dubious statement made by the Pegida movement or AfD is ennobled by making it the subject of serious debate. This is exactly what happens when provocations are interpreted with the same attention as draft legislation. The AfD's parliamentary work in the state parliaments contains little in the way of proposed legislation. But this goes unnoticed in all the bluster that surrounds the AfD.

## *The voice of humanity must be heard*

The media are therefore not only obliged to report on the AfD's hostility towards refugees, but also on the ongoing cooperation and efforts of civil society, and in this way do something to ensure that the voice of humanity is still heard in this country. This is a call to take a look at the figures: the AfD currently has 26,000 members. Pro Asyl, one of the largest of the many refugee advocacy organisations, has almost the same number – 23,000.

The state elections in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern in 2016 showed that the similarities between the German provinces and the French region of Provence do not end with the beauty of their countryside and tourist sites but also exist in the political landscape: Provence is the stronghold of the Front National. Mecklenburg-Vorpommern is the stronghold of Germany's extreme right parties; here they attract the support of a quarter of all voters. These voters have ensured that the region has grabbed the spotlight, become noticed, become a talking point.

In line with the saying that 'Bad publicity is better than no publicity', the majority of voters in provincial Austria are supporters of Hofer, while the majority of voters in rural areas of the USA voted for Trump. Suddenly one hears that *Little House on the Prairie* is no longer so idyllic, and reads that the children on *The Waltons* are sliding into drug addiction.

If it is to fight extremism, the world has to develop a stronger sense of home. So the manual for how to deal with populists should include respecting their desire for a home. The desire to have a home is not a right-wing desire but a normal human desire. Home is not about *Blut und Boden*. Home is a sense of basic trust – the basic trust that you are safe and secure, part of a community. Home is knowing that one has a particular place, a role, a history. Making the world a home begins in small provincial towns. It begins with having a post office, a bakery and a doctor, with a hospital not too far away. Small towns are dying, as are the centres of some major cities. Between the cities and along the highways, ugly commercial areas, malls and distribution centres have sprung up and made the landscape unrecognisable. This is taking the home out of homeland.

This is why mayors and local and regional councils play a key role in the fight against populist extremism. Well thought-out local policies not only attract investment, they strengthen basic services, social cohesion, the traditions of the people who live there, and their openness to newcomers. For example, creative political solutions must be found to ease the burden on the heavily indebted city councils of the Ruhr area, which are no longer able to extricate themselves from their fi-

nancial mess through their own efforts. It is precisely in these cities where large numbers of children and immigrants are living in precarious circumstances. They need to be provided for, but also encouraged. Today, many mayors and city councils must be respected for their commitment and indefatigability in the face of hostility; it is hoped that these mayors and city councils will not lose the courage to pursue a policy of integration and understanding at a time when some of them are being overrun with hate mails and threats.

The word demographic change, which is responsible for the majority of problems in rural areas, has become a common term. The population of Germany is shrinking. Today's high levels of immigration will only have a limited effect on long-term population trends. By 2060 the population will have shrunk significantly to 67.6 million if there are low levels of immigration, or to 73.1 million if immigration remains high. That's the equivalent of losing the populations of Hamburg, Berlin, Munich and Frankfurt. But these people will not disappear in Hamburg and Berlin. They will disappear from eastern Germany, the Saarland and the former border regions between East and West Germany. Saxony-Anhalt will lose 18.5 percent of its population. Upper Bavaria is predicted to grow by 8.3 percent, but this is a rare exception. Rural areas of Germany have been struggling for years, not helped by the German Armed Forces, which have closed down so many of its barracks. As soon as Deutsche Post, Deutsche Telekom and Deutsche Bahn were privatised, services declined drastically in rural areas. Schools have been thinned out, merged with others, or closed down. There has also been a wave of closures among Sparkasse savings banks; savings have to be made – and sometimes saving money means cutting off the branch on which you are sitting.

There are catchy slogans that the savings banks do not like; one of the most memorable being: '*Ein Alter ohne Schalter*' (The elderly without a counter). The centres of many towns and villages are dying. The villages, the small and even medium-sized towns look like a doughnut with a hole in the middle. There are hundreds or even thousands of these doughnut towns in Germany. Either they are full of old, broken-down buildings; or they have been refurbished like doll's houses, but still without life, because shop rents have become unaffordable there, and because of the high cost of refurbishing old shops, so trashy shops and chains have moved in and replaced the shops that supplied people with their everyday needs. This is how the hole appears in so many villages, towns and cities. But around the edges, with mortgages from the savings banks, the housing estates continue to grow.

At this point I should mention how Viktor Orbán has tapped into the desire of many Hungarians to build their own houses and have a sense of home in order to strengthen his extreme right-wing policies. When cheap

Provence is the stronghold of the Front National. Mecklenburg-Vorpommern is the stronghold of Germany's extreme right parties; here they attract the support of a quarter of all voters. These voters have ensured that the region has grabbed the spotlight, become noticed, become a talking point.

foreign currency loans collapsed and the house builders were no longer able to make their interest payments, Orbán presented himself as their saviour and rescued people from foreclosure on their homes and economic ruin. He achieved this through a kind of compulsory exchange law for international creditors. The Hungarians whose small homes he saved had little interest in issues such as the international loss of confidence and the nationalistic ingredients of his aggressively populist politics.

## *Rural frustration*

*Landlust* is one of Germany's most popular magazines. But this love of country living is mainly confined to the newsagent's and in demand for recipes for grandma's apple cake and country cooking. Otherwise it is not so much *Landlust* as *Landfrust* – a sense of rural frustration. Many mayors are waging bizarre battles for fast internet, which, in an advanced industrial society, should have been a given long ago. *Landfrust*: in the deserted village centres, the remaining small retailers use events agencies to help them fight for customers on the occasional Sundays when they are allowed to trade. *Landfrust*: people feel it is already too late. For thirty years the scent of the future has been in the air – but there has been a failure to prepare adequately for the new era.

Some parts of Germany are suffering from a kind of rural depression. But it's not necessary to give in to it. Yes, the declining population and changing demographics have an impact on infrastructure; however, the reduction in population must not be the primary objective, but rather redevelopment. There needs to be good public transport connections, and schools need to become the focus of new ways of learning with and from each other. Medical and other care services must be rethought and expanded. The fight against populist far-right extremism is also a fight against rural depression.

The centres of villages and small and medium-sized towns have to be revitalised. People need to have access to local services. Regional development is not an abstract concept, it is very concrete. It is not so much about signs for hiking paths or repaving the marketplace every ten years, it is about encouraging young people to stay, or, better still, encouraging them to return.

Rural depopulation is not a law of nature. It is a consequence of the fact that work and life here are incompatible or not compatible enough. The future of rural areas could also include the establishment of social cooperatives, assisted living communities for the elderly, residential communities for dementia sufferers, or shared living projects where young and old live together.

If the old intergenerational social network is no longer sustainable because more and more young people are moving to the big cities, then it is necessary to come up with new forms of caring for the elderly and, at the same time, work and development opportunities for young people. Community housing schemes for the elderly should be supported. And there can be no objection to the idyll of village life being revived through new forms of communal living for city dwellers who want to escape the city. That sounds provincial, it is provincial; but this is also a way of working against provincial populist right-wing extremism. The author Oskar Maria Graf once wrote that the world must become

provincial, then it will become human. He meant that it would have a sense of home.

## *The xenophobic 20 percent*

One would think that a party that succeeds in the provinces needs a popular face, the face of an Orbán or a Trump, who will act as a saviour. So it is noteworthy that the AfD have been successful in Germany without a real figurehead. Why is this? We have always known that around 20 percent of Germany's population harbours xenophobic attitudes, as is also the case in other EU countries, where far-right-wing parties have been well established for many years. But in Germany it has always been thought that this 'dregs' could only be activated by a charismatic leader. However, in Germany a leader such as Le Pen in France or Orbán in Hungary has been replaced by the 'refugee', who has been declared an unperson.

It seems that the AfD now wants to supplement the enemy image of refugees with an enemy image of Islam in view of the sharp decline in the number of refugees. The Christian churches have sharply opposed the denouncement of the Islamic religion as an anti-constitutional political ideology.

Cologne cardinal Rainer Maria Woelki noted: 'If you say yes to church towers, you also have to say yes to minarets.' He accused the AfD of denouncing 'one of the world's great religions with malicious intent.' The ecumenical and interreligious networks of the churches are older and stronger than the threads between the populist, patriotic, extremist movements that seek to defend the West.

Ecumenism and encounters between representatives of different religions have become more than just beaten paths through the jungle. They may be hard-going, but they are well-developed, trusted paths; the religions are keeping the conversation going. The churches should put this asset to work and remain places of open encounter. At a time when many people with a religious background are migrating into increasingly secular European societies, it is church congregations that need to use their power for integration. There is little space for Islamophobia in Christian communities.

Populist extremists maintain that problems are being systematically concealed and swept under the carpet in the migrant debate. But we can look at this the other way round: people who talk about integration in Germany rarely talk about its successes, only about its shortcomings. The debate on this gives the impression that they welcome the failures of integration much more than its successes. However, the actual state of integration is grounds for a certain amount of pride about integration, language courses, a new elite and a broad-based middle class with a migrant background. But of course it is noticeable that in Germany, unlike in the UK or Sweden, the skills of second-generation young people have deteriorated compared to young people without a migrant background.

## *More money for schools*

One explanation for the lower success rate of migrant children at school is the structure of the German education system. It requires

parents to be actively involved and committed to helping their children do well at school. That's where we need to start. Integration is positive discrimination, positive discrimination means support. Children in Berlin's problematic Neukölln-Nord district need much more support than those who live in the prosperous village of Zehlendorf.

Integration means school, school and more school. Preventing violence also means school. Outside of the family, where else is it possible to perceive that a young person is starting to become radicalised? That they have changed their appearance, clothes or habits, that they are taking an interest in Salafism and hatching plans for atrocities? The boys and girls who end up being used by IS were not born monsters. At some point they began to feel they were being insulted and unfairly treated, so they seek the self-esteem that they are lacking in the warriors of IS, in the strength of the group, in fantasising about or – in the worst case – perpetrating acts of violence.

Political debate in Germany coarsened with the advent of the Pegida demonstrations in Dresden. These demonstrations increasingly showed a coarseness that would have been considered almost impossible in 2014, when Pegida began to haunt Dresden. The words became meaner, the slogans more aggressive, agitation against refugees raised its ugly head. Protesters displayed a gallows, saying it was reserved for Chancellor Angela Merkel and Vice-Chancellor Sigmar Gabriel. That was and is the language of the gutter, it is the primitivisation of the West. Visitors to the Semperoper in Dresden watched in embarrassment as Pegida supporters paraded past the windows spewing foul language. The police also simply stood and watched; even the gallows failed to bother them to the point where they would intervene.

The relevant paragraphs under criminal law cover the following: libel, slander, defamation of the state, hate speech. It is not good when the police simply assume that 'it won't lead to anything'. This is another reason why this kind of insolence has become commonplace, and why the internet is turning into a sewer. When hate speech becomes a national sport, the state cannot simply look the other way. There is too little resistance against this new aggressivity. Nowadays the inciters are spreading through the public sphere, including online, and calling themselves 'the people'. Pegida supporters and right-wing extremists have stolen the slogan of the GDR revolution and are playing fast and loose with it.

But the hatred of a small minority can't be allowed to make Germany a nasty country. What can we do? Of course we shouldn't excuse the people who are so aggressive, but should we try to understand them? Perhaps 'understand' is not the right word. But we can and should examine the social and societal causes of their aggression. Populist extremism is successful in a world that aggressively uproots people and robs them of their ties. What needs to be done cannot be done at national level alone. Even though it appears to be nationalist, and even though populism has different characteristics, it does not have domestic origins. Populists are united in their belief that the European Union is the root of all evil, and in their desire to leave it. There is no doubt that Europe's policies during the economic and financial crises have had a harsh impact on many people's lives over recent years, and their confidence in the law

and democracy has been shaken. People need to feel and experience how Europe makes their lives easier, not harder. They need to feel and experience how Europe is more than just an economic union but also a social project. If Europe can succeed in combating mass unemployment and youth unemployment, Europe's re-popularisation will begin. Its citizens do not want more Europe, or less Europe, they want a better Europe.

They want to hear and see politicians who stand up for such a Europe with passion and conviction. The greatest danger to Europe is not an attack from outside, nor the Islamic threat, nor IS terrorism. Its greatest danger is the insanity from within, which wants to turn the new Europe back into the old one, to dismember it once again and guard the pieces.

Populist extremism is not a natural event such as a volcanic eruption, but it is currently spreading around the world like wildfire. Forest fires can generally be fairly easily controlled as long as they have not spread to the treetops. But this is precisely what has happened with Donald Trump's election to US President. We can try to pretend there is no danger. We can say that the blazing treetops are simply a spectacle, a kind of firework that has been ignited by a US government that will somehow makes it bearable.

We have to redouble our efforts to oppose the strategies of exclusion and hostility used by populist extremists; we have to promote respect for others in ways that touch the emotions more strongly; we have to replace technocratic political speech with words and deeds that create warmth.

*Blazing treetops*

European societies need to come up with better ways of stopping the aggressive right-wing populism that is spreading through them, now also fuelled by the USA. Populism has to be denied the oxygen it needs and its opponents need to begin the work of back burning. We cannot allow the lies and hate to continue to burn; we must try to extinguish them.

This is as important on the internet as in a burning forest. In the forest, this can be done with water and sand, sometimes by cutting fire breaks; the flames are smothered, and they are denied the oxygen they need. The internet still needs to find the right method to do this. Perhaps the defenders of democracy and the rule of law can smother the hate-filled posts with mountains of posts protesting against this hatred.

Good politics strives to reduce people's fears, while extremism makes fear welcome, pouring oil on the flames. The antidote is to find solutions to the problems that make people fear the future. Just one of these problems is how to accommodate the refugees and help them in such a way that everything goes along peacefully. Another priority is how to provide for an aging population, along with how to regulate the financial system and close tax havens, how to prevent catastrophic climate change, and how to stabilise relations with Russia.

Some AfD voters have low expectations of the party. First and foremost, they want to teach the traditional parties and politicians a lesson. Petulance can quickly lose its attraction once the punitive action is over and it is

time for serious politics rather than propaganda. This presents an opportunity for the other parties, who are scorned by populist extremists as being part of the 'system'.

It is also true that middle-class supporters of populist extremist parties value law and order. These voters are likely to react with consternation if the Trump administration simply brushes law and order aside. The populist extremist Trump in the USA is a strong argument against populist extremism in Europe. The world is going through an adventure of revelation. But one cannot rely on self-revelation alone. That is too convenient and too dangerous. The Enlightenment, democracy and the rule of law do not simply fall into the lap of a liberal society as the fruits of the self-revelation of its enemies.

We have to redouble our efforts to oppose the strategies of exclusion and hostility used by populist extremists; we have to promote respect for others in ways that touch the emotions more strongly; we have to replace technocratic political speech with words and deeds that create warmth.

Then it will be possible to break open the populist extremist front – the front against liberalism and open borders, and that once again seeks salvation in the place where Europe's disaster once began. Europe must not be pushed back into an uneasy past, into a conglomerate of small states.

Democracy, the rule of law and the welfare state no longer thrive in national owner-occupied houses. Everyone needs everyone else, and everyone needs places of community. The European house is a big house with a great many doors, many different cultures and types of people. This house preserves Europe's diversity and the wealth that arises from this diversity. This house is the home and the future of Europe. The house rules that apply in this European house constitute a manual for combating populist extremism.

A Europe based on democracy, the rule of law and the welfare state is not a task that should be left to politicians alone. Therefore, the trade unions need to reinvent themselves in a transnational way. Charities need to work together across borders. And the churches also need to remember that they are global players. And to drive this all forward, the Erasmus generation needs to take to the streets, the internet, offices and polling stations to spread the word about Europe and its values.

The Erasmus generation is the generation that has grown up in a united Europe, who have learnt and studied in a united Europe. This young generation has benefited from the European educational exchange programme. It will suffer if Europe is dismembered again; it will suffer if Europe falls back into its nationalist past.

The young generation of Europe is already fragmented. There are those who a few years ago were called the 'lost generation', the young, well-educated people who leave their home countries because they cannot be paid for their work there, even though they are urgently needed. There are those who, before and during their studies, enjoy trying out their freedom, gaining international experience and ties at an early age and who are proficient in many languages. They are afraid that this freedom

The parties will again have to be more clearly distinguishable from each other, while at the same time overcoming the old forces of repulsion.

will soon be a thing of the past. Both groups are united by their anger at the fact that, with the collapse of Europe, their dreams of the future will disintegrate. This anger is good, but it becomes unpleasant when it paralyses interest in politics and turns young people into rats competing for a shrinking piece of bacon.

It is also unfortunate that some young people are blaming older people for robbing them of their future, as was the case after the Brexit vote. It was older people who voted to leave – but it was young people who did not vote.

Some people suggest that it is a problem of demographics, but in fact the conflict is not between the generations. It is between a future and no future. Some elderly people leave their fortunes and prospects for the future to their children, while others leave them their debts and their *tristesse*.

The struggle for the fair distribution of social wealth, freedom and social security is a joint struggle for young and old, otherwise it is worthless. There is no fixed future, it is created in every moment of the present so it can be changed at any moment. The future has not been shaped, it is being shaped. The populist extremists understand this. Where they are in power, they are trying to shape the future using a crowbar and steam hammer. They are firing judges and trampling on human rights. But are not only using brute force, they are also sharpening their pens. Their writers are creating a modern, philosophical disguise for the old nationalist and racist ideology. They are shaping a future called war, division and brutality, a future in which the first to be duped will be those who voted for the extremist parties.

Many have lost faith, many do not feel that democracy has a use. So it is a case of making the practical usefulness of constitutional democracy and its values perceptible to those who increasingly feel useless. This is how democracy will fight populist extremism.

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**Not just wizened old people** Those who propagate the idea of 'America first' and 'La France d'abord' are evidence that the nation state's reserves of sovereignty have long since been exhausted. Culture can create arenas for interaction in European society that go beyond the market and state and produce a binding understanding of the public sphere, but we need works that move, fascinate and may inspire people to change their lives, not the usual incantation of a heaven of values in Sunday sermons. *By Claus Leggewie*

A question that is often directed at the European community is what does a Lithuanian farmer have to do with an Andalusian farm worker or a social welfare recipient in Manchester, and what do they have to do with a Frankfurt banker or a start-up entrepreneur in Belgrade? They have no common language, are a religious-secular patchwork, have no 'common culture'. Such reservations tend to be subsumed by a national or local belief in commonality. In a belief that liberal hedonists can get along with evangelical fundamentalists, Bavarians with Hanseatics, East Germans with West Germans – no problem! Small communities have become no different to large nations as examples of difference in action when it comes to income and circumstances, matters of faith and beliefs, languages and dialects, customs, places of origin and social mobility. Class situation, social and moral milieus and social structures in general often serve to distance members of a society from each other, a fact that can be hidden under a national narrative, more rarely with a generational narrative ('68ers') or gender solidarity (#Metoo). Internationalism or the supranational idea are seen as utopias. And yet it is national (and capitalist) realism that brings about the disasters. The mass exodus of workers from the proletarian international into opposing armies at the beginning of the First World War is a classic example, while a more recent example can be seen in the last European war in Yugoslavia, where ultra-national ethnic cleansing fantasies all but destroyed self-governing socialism, the Serbo-Croatian linguistic community and even family ties.

Nationalist rhetoric cannot disguise the loss of control that has occurred in the nation-state; its power is an expression of this. Those who propagate the idea of 'America first', 'La France d' abord' and now 'Austria first!', those who erect a wall against immigrants in Budapest, Prague or Warsaw, or want to erect a wall against Latinos, are evidence that the nation state's reserves of sovereignty have long since been exhausted. The clumsy attempts to remove the United Kingdom from its European interdependencies have resulted in a real-life experiment that is going to be costly

for all concerned. World trade, mass migration and telecommunications have broken open the national container; the former holy trinity of state territory, people and power has been dissolved. Consumer capitalism, social media and popular mass culture have done the rest to alienate traditional feelings of homeland.

Jean-Claude Juncker's recent exhortations to bring European policy up to the same level as these interdependencies and disentanglements – at least to a certain degree, i.e. to not shrink the eurozone and Schengen areas but actually extend them to cover all relevant actors, demonstrate the kind of thinking that is needed in order to raise European policy to the same level that European society reached a long time ago. This also applies in principle to the European periphery, but the partnerships in the Mediterranean region are starting to flounder. These partnerships should, of course, at some point include Turkey again – once it has been freed from Erdoğan – and aim to reconcile Jews and Arabs, which could be quite tricky. It is a tragedy that such hopes are currently not even being expressed at all.

*Partnerships in the Mediterranean region are starting to flounder*

It is worth thinking about a European society that has emerged from its rusty containers, frayed at the edges, and starting to become increasingly similar on the inside. Whether this is sufficient for 'society' or inspires the 'We in Europe' identity construct is currently the subject of debate and disagreement among sociologists. Professional seminars tend to offer up a meagre diet of national fare, occasionally spiced up for advanced students with a country-by-country comparison. The cosmopolitan branch of sociology has adopted the principle of 'methodological nationalism' (such as that espoused by German sociologist Ulrich Beck) and is discussing the idea of a world society, which these days also serves as a post-colonial crutch to avoid eurocentric prejudices.

Europe – too small, too big? Outside in the wider world, the Chinese, Americans and Africans are convinced they know exactly what they mean by Europe. Are they not looking closely enough, or are we in Europe too blinkered? Reference is often made here to the passepartout 'culture'. What would be more useful is a concept of society, or rather of 'socialisation' (Georg Simmel, German philosopher and sociologist, founder of 'formal sociology') that goes beyond the concepts of nation and nationality. Contemporary historians and ethnologists have made reference to this Europeanisation of Europe. Wolfgang Reinhardt, a modern historian from Freiburg, has identified different ways of life in Europe, and his Berlin colleague Hartmut Kaelble referred at an early stage to the euro-typical characteristics of family structures, forms of employment and enterprise, patterns of urbanity and the welfare state, while stressing their increasing convergence.

This is not to be confused with standardisation or homogenisation and naturally includes – as is common in every society – inequality, and since 1945 a day-to-day process of pop-cultural 'Americanisation', together with a globalisation brought about by deregulated financial markets and virtual communication media. The big question is whether European corporate culture and the general public still have something to counterbalance this with. Of course this would be desirable and be the European cultural objective.

In contrast to what might be suggested by the particular nature of the European Union as a 'sovereignty association with its

own character' (according to Rainer M. Lepsius, the German industrial sociologist), so without a state with inadequate democratic underpinnings, and the lack of a real 'sense of unity', European cultural practices that routinely transcend national borders can be identified under the ethnoscope of day-to-day micro-relationships. Harvard political scientist Karl W. Deutsch, originally from Prague, defined national units in classical terms by the density and proximity of transactions. These include, for example, as later suggested by macro-sociologist Steffen Mau, 'travel activities, stays abroad, ties of friendship, partnership or family, exchange of messages, close communication across borders.'

Transactions such as these, which are not limited to trading, create resilient relationships and loyalties that in turn facilitate civic activation. Virtual networks that reach far beyond Europe, but which are particularly dense there, also make a contribution to this, along with physical mobility, of course, which has always provided Europe with a distinctive migrant background.

The reaction of authoritarian nationalism, which an (ex-) chairwoman of the right-wing German party AFD did not hesitate to (appropriately) call *völkisch*, and which is being openly promoted by her successors, now suggests, however, that the supranational habitus is above all felt, lived and valued in higher status groups and urban milieus, while the removal of borders in the hinterland is perceived as both a burden and a threat. There, linguistic and cultural translation services are seen as an imposition, and even hipsters in Berlin or Belgrade speaking broken English are a source of some irritation. Social rifts and cultural differences, which can serve to undermine a sense of national unity, can be glaringly obvious in Europe and are therefore also perceived as a scandal because, at this level, they are completely inadequately counterbalanced by political equality (one person, one vote).

The creation of a European society from below does not prevent this. This has become clear in recent times with the extra-parliamentary and non-party mobilisation that has been seen on streets and squares and by people who have sufficient imagination to understand the consequences of various exit strategies or who can feel Europe's soul or pulse. Those who find *Pulse of Europe* too romantic, might read Marius Ivaškevičius' inflammatory speech against eurosceptics (*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 16.2.2017) and generally take on a Maidan perspective. This is what I call a point of view that tries out a rural or urban East-Central European perspective and then looks at the 'West' with the eyes of a foreigner. And it is in this way, beyond any culinary, musical and tourist convergence, that European citizenship is starting to take shape.

The vision of Jean-Claude Juncker and Angela Merkel, which once again focuses on the systematic integration of markets and security regimes, would also need to include a more emotional dimension to social integration of the type President Emmanuel Macron hinted at during his election campaign and which he fleshed out during his search for coalition partners. The most important thing to determine is whether a sustainable basis for European solidarity can develop from this, not only between nation-states who

Culture can also achieve 'everything', providing that European society creates arenas for interaction beyond the market and state and produces a binding understanding of the public sphere.

complain about having to support anti-terror activities or accepting refugees, but also between Lithuanian and Greek farmers, German and Spanish nurses or young French and Bulgarian entrepreneurs who want to participate in European conviviality beyond social and geographical boundaries.

Whenever one asks what culture might contribute to the European project, the answer is not much – or everything. It is always a good idea to intensify cultural exchange, so long as it doesn't simply turn out to be a self-referential network based around festival and event culture; for it is only those longer periods of residence, such as you find in the Erasmus programme (whose target groups should be significantly expanded) and in European university projects (which must not be simply limited to a few elite institutions and research institutes) that make a real, original contribution to cultural policy. On the other hand, culture can also achieve 'everything', providing that European society creates arenas for interaction beyond the market and state and produces a binding understanding of the public sphere. On this basis, many different types of cultural efforts might achieve the desired aims.

Here, the term 'efforts' refers to the process, the practice of the various arts, their discursive frameworks, their works (in the classical sense) that move, fascinate and may inspire people to change their lives. This does not mean the usual incantation of a heaven of values in Sunday sermons, which everyone can agree to and which are then denounced and betrayed on a whim for the sake of day-to-day political interests. After many happy decades that were preceded by years of cruel barbarism, Europe as a culture, as a society and as a political alliance is once again facing a difficult test. It is surrounded by autocrats and threatened internally by authoritarian nationalism. All this takes place against the backdrop of cultural budgets that are full to overflowing, an endless series of festivals, biennials, cultural events of all kinds, publicly funded or privately sponsored, always striving for the highest standards and claiming to be in touch with the people. In his *Memories of a European*, Stefan Zweig, in Brazilian exile, described pre-1914 Europe, the last time this flower was fabulous, seductive and dazzling as it is today, as 'the world of yesterday'. The next cultural upswing after the mass slaughter of the First World War was already overshadowed by the grip of totalitarian ideologies and dictatorships that almost brought Europe to its final demise in the 1940s.

'What could disrupt this ascent, what could impede this impetus that constantly drew new strength from its own momentum? Never before has Europe been stronger, richer, more beautiful, never before had it believed so earnestly in an even better future, no one other than a few wizened old people complained like before about the "good old days"', wrote Stefan Zweig before taking his own life. He is critical of his own credulity and that of his contemporaries: 'We thought we were doing enough if we thought in European terms'. These days, it isn't just 'wizened old people' who want to take an axe to Europe, it is virile potentates who can count on angry, even very young followers, who are actually in a position to bring them to power in a democratic way. Faced with this threat, it has long been possible to sum up the modus of European culture in one word: resistance!

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**What does Europe want?** Right-wing populism is on the rise in Europe. And indeed, the political left has proved unable to find a response to neo-liberalism and globalisation in recent years. But do we want to live in a world where the only choice is between American civilisation and the emerging Chinese authoritarian-capitalist alternative? If the answer is no, Europe is the only alternative, says philosopher and cultural critic Slavoj Žižek. *By Slavoj Žižek*

On 1 May 2004, eight Eastern European countries were welcomed into the European Union – but what 'Europe' would they find there? In the months before Slovenia's entry to the European Union, whenever a foreign journalist asked me what new dimension Slovenia would contribute to Europe, my answer was instant and unambiguous: nothing. Slovene culture is obsessed with the notion that, although a small nation, we are a cultural superpower: we possess some agalma, a hidden intimate treasure of cultural masterpieces that wait to be acknowledged by the wider world. Maybe, this treasure is too fragile to survive intact the exposure to the fresh air of international competition, like the old Roman frescoes in that wonderful scene from Fellini's Roma which start to disappear the moment the daylight reaches them.

Such narcissism is not a Slovene speciality. There are versions of it all around Eastern Europe: we value democracy more because we had to fight for it recently, not being allowed to take it for granted; we still know what true culture is, not being corrupted by the cheap Americanised mass culture. Rejecting such a fixation on the hidden national treasure in no way implies ethnic self-hatred. The point is a simple and cruel one: all Slovene artists who made a relevant contribution had to 'betray' their ethnic roots at some point, either by isolating themselves from the cultural mainstream in Slovenia or by simply leaving the country for some time, living in Vienna or Paris.

It is the same as with Ireland: not only did James Joyce leave home in order to write *Ulysses*, his masterpiece about Dublin; Yeats himself, the poet of Irish national revival, spent years in London. The greatest threats to national tradition are its local guardians who warn about the danger of foreign influences. Furthermore, the Slovene attitude of cultural superiority finds its counterpart in the patronising Western cliché which characterises the

East European post-Communist countries as a kind of retarded poor cousins who will be admitted back into the family if they can behave properly. Recall the reaction of the press to the last elections in Serbia where the nationalists gained big—it was read as a sign that Serbia is not yet ready for Europe.

A similar process is going on now in Slovenia: the fact that nationalists collected enough signatures to enforce a referendum about the building of a mosque in Ljubljana is sad enough; the fact that the majority of the population thinks that one should not allow the mosque is even sadder; and the arguments evoked (should we allow our beautiful countryside to be spoiled by a minaret that stands for fundamentalist barbarism? etc.) make one ashamed of being a Slovene.

In such cases, the occasional threats from Brussels can only appear welcome: show multiculturalist tolerance...or else! However, this simplified picture is not the entire truth. The first complication: the very ex-Communist countries which are the most ardent supporters of the US 'war on terror' deeply worry that their cultural identity, their very survival as nations, is threatened by the onslaught of cultural 'Americanisation' as the price for their immersion into global capitalism. We thus witness the paradox of a particular kind of anti-Americanism.

Such narcissism is not a Slovene speciality. There are versions of it all around Eastern Europe: We value democracy more because we had to fight for it recently, not being allowed to take it for granted; we still know what true culture is, not being corrupted by the cheap Americanised mass culture.

In Slovenia, the Rightist nationalists complain that the ruling Centre-Left coalition, though it is publicly for joining NATO and supporting the U.S. anti-terrorist campaign, is secretly sabotaging it, participating in it for opportunist reasons and not from conviction. At the same time, however, it reproaches the ruling coalition for undermining Slovene national identity by advocating full Slovene integration into the Westernised global capitalism and thus drowning Slovenes in contemporary Americanised pop culture. The idea is that the ruling coalition sustains pop culture, stupid TV amusement and mindless consumption in order to turn Slovenes into an easily manipulated crowd, incapable of serious reflection and firm ethical stances. In short, the underlying motif is that the ruling coalition stands for the 'liberal-Communist plot': Ruthless, unconstrained immersion in global capitalism is perceived as the latest dark plot of the ex-Communists, enabling them to retain their secret hold on power.

### *An ambiguous message*

Ironically, the nationalist conservatives' lament about the newly emerging socio-ideological order reads like the old New Left's description of the 'repressive tolerance' of capitalist freedom as the mode of unfreedom's appearance.

This ambiguity of the Eastern European attitude finds its perfect counterpart in the ambiguous message of the West to post-Communist countries. Recall the two-sided pressure the United States exerted on Serbia in the summer of 2003: U.S. represen-

tatives simultaneously demanded that Serbia deliver the suspected war criminals to the Hague court (in accordance with the logic of the global Empire which demands a trans-state global judicial institution) AND to sign the bilateral treaty with the United States obliging Serbia not to deliver to any international institution (i.e. the SAME Hague court) U.S. citizens suspected of war crimes or other crimes against humanity (in accordance with the nation-state logic). No wonder the Serb reaction was one of perplexed fury! And a similar thing is going on at economic level: while pressuring Poland to open its agriculture to market competition, Western Europe floods the Polish market with agricultural products heavily subsidised from Brussels.

## *A sea with conflicting winds*

How do post-Communist countries navigate this sea with conflicting winds? If there is an ethical hero of the recent time in ex-Yugoslavia, it is Ika Saric, a modest judge in Croatia who, in the face of threats to her life and without any visible public support, sentenced General Mirko Norac and his cohorts to 12 years in prison for the crimes committed in 1992 against the Serb civilian population. Even the Leftist government, afraid of the threat of the Rightist nationalist demonstrations, refused to stand firmly behind the trial against Norac.

However, just as the nationalist Right was intimating that large public disorders would topple the government, when the sentence was proclaimed, nothing happened. The demonstrations were much smaller than expected and Croatia 'rediscovered' itself as a state of the rule of law. It was especially important that Norac was not delivered to the Hague, but condemned in Croatia itself—Croatia thus proved that it does not need international tutelage. The dimension of the act proper consisted in the shift from the impossible to the possible: before the sentence, the nationalist Right with its veteran organisations was perceived as a powerful force not to be provoked, and the direct, harsh sentence was perceived by the liberal Left as something that 'we all want, but, unfortunately, cannot afford in this difficult moment, since chaos would ensue'. However, after the sentence was proclaimed and nothing happened, the impossible turned into the routine.

## *A comedy of denials*

If there is any dimension to be redeemed of the signifier 'Europe', then this act was 'European' in the most exemplary sense of the term. And if there is an event that embodies the cowardice, it is the behaviour of the Slovene government after the outbreak of the Iraq-U.S. war. Slovene politicians desperately tried to steer a middle course between U.S. pressure and the unpopularity of the war with the majority of the Slovene population. First, Slovenia signed the infamous Vilnius declaration, for which it was praised by Rumsfeld and others as part of the 'new Europe' of the 'coalition of the willing' in the war against Iraq.

However, after the foreign minister signed the document, there ensued a true comedy of denials: the minister claimed that, before signing the document, he consulted the president of the republic and other dignitaries, who promptly denied that they knew anything

about it; then all concerned claimed that the document in no way supported the unilateral US attack on Iraq, but called for the key role of the United Nations. The specification was that Slovenia supported the disarmament of Iraq, but not the war on Iraq.

However, a couple of days later, there was a nasty surprise from the United States: Slovenia was not only explicitly named among the countries participating in the 'coalition of the willing', but was even designated as the recipient of financial aid from the United States to its war partners.

What ensued was pure comedy: Slovenia proudly declared that it did not participate in the war against Iraq and demanded to be stricken from the list. After a couple of days, a new embarrassing document was received: the United States officially thanked Slovenia for it support and help. Slovenia again protested that it did not qualify for any thanks and refused to recognise itself as the proper addressee of the letter, in a kind of mocking version of 'please, I do not really deserve your thanks!', as if sending its thanks was the worst thing the United States could do to us. Usually, states protest when they are unjustly criticised; Slovenia protests when it receives signs of gratitude. In short, Slovenia behaved as if it were not the proper recipient of the letters of praise that went on and on—and what we all knew was that, in this case also, the letter DID arrive at its proper destination. The ambiguity of Eastern Europeans therefore merely mirrors the inconsistencies of Western Europe itself.

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## *Which Europe?*

Late in his life, Freud asked the famous question '*Was will das Weib?*' ('What does Woman want?'), admitting his perplexity when faced with the enigma of feminine sexuality. And a similar perplexity arises today, when post-Communist countries are entering the European Union: which Europe will they be entering? For long years, I have been pleading for a renewed 'Leftist Eurocentrism'. To put it bluntly, do we want to live in a world in which the only choice is between the American civilisation and the emerging Chinese authoritarian-capitalist one? If the answer is no, then the only alternative is Europe. The Third World cannot generate a strong enough resistance to the ideology of the American Dream; in the present constellation, it is only Europe that can do it.

The true opposition today is not the one between the First World and the Third World, but the one between the whole of the First and Third World (the American global Empire and its colonies) and the remaining Second World (Europe). Apropos Freud, Theodor Adorno claimed that what we are getting in our contemporary 'administered

world' and its 'repressive desublimation' is no longer the old logic of repression of the Id and its drives, but a perverse direct pact between the punitive superego and the Id's illicit aggressive drives at the expense of the Ego's rational agency.

## *Jihad and McWorld*

Is not something structurally similar going on today at the political level, the weird pact between the postmodern global capitalism and the premodern societies at the expense of modernity proper? It is easy for the American multiculturalist global Empire to integrate premodern local traditions—the foreign body that it effectively cannot assimilate is European modernity. Jihad and McWorld are two sides of the same coin. Jihad is already McJihad. Although the ongoing 'war on terror' presents itself as the defence of the democratic legacy, it courts the danger clearly perceived a century ago by G.K. Chesterton who, in his orthodoxy, deployed the fundamental deadlock of the critics of religion: 'Men who begin to fight the Church for the sake of freedom and humanity end by flinging away freedom and humanity if only they may fight the Church...The secularists have not wrecked divine things; but the secularists have wrecked secular things, if that is any comfort to them.'

Does the same not hold today for the advocates of religion themselves? How many fanatical defenders of religion started by ferociously attacking the contemporary secular culture and ended up forsaking any meaningful religious experience? In a similar way, many liberal warriors are so eager to fight anti-democratic fundamentalism that they will end by flinging away freedom and democracy themselves if only they may fight terror. They have such a passion for proving that non-Christian fundamentalism is the main threat to freedom that they are ready to fall back on the position that we have to limit our own freedom here and now, in our allegedly Christian societies.

If the 'terrorists' are ready to wreck this world for love of another world, our warriors on terror are ready to wreck their own democratic world out of hatred for the Muslim other. Some of them love human dignity so much that they are ready to legalise torture—the ultimate degradation of human dignity—to defend it. And, along the same lines, we may lose 'Europe' through its very defence.

## *All-European border police force*

A year ago, an ominous decision of the European Union passed almost unnoticed: the plan to establish an all-European border police force to secure the isolation of the Union territory and thus to prevent the influx of immigrants. THIS is the truth of globalisation: the construction of NEW walls safeguarding the prosperous Europe from the immigrant flood. One is tempted to resuscitate here the old Marxist 'humanist; opposition of 'relations between things' and 'relations between persons': in the much celebrated free circulation opened up by global capitalism, it is 'things' (commodities) which freely circulate, while the circulation of 'persons' is more and more controlled.

This new racism of the developed is in a way much more brutal than the racism of

the past: its implicit legitimisation is neither naturalist (the 'natural' superiority of the developed West) nor any longer culturalist (we in the West also want to preserve our cultural identity), but unabashed economic egotism—the fundamental divide is between those included in the sphere of (relative) economic prosperity and those excluded from it. What we find reprehensible and dangerous in U.S. politics and civilisation is thus a part of Europe itself, one of the possible outcomes of the European project. There is no place for self-satisfied arrogance: the United States is a distorted mirror of Europe itself.

Back in the 1930s, Max Horkheimer wrote that those who do not want to speak (critically) about liberalism should also keep silent about fascism. *Mutatis mutandis*, one should say to those who decry the new U.S. imperialism: those who do not want to engage critically with Europe itself should also keep silent about the United States. this, then, is the only true question beneath the self-congratulatory celebrations that accompany the extension of the European Union: what Europe are we joining? And when confronted with this question, all of us, 'New' and 'Old' Europe, are in the same boat.

In one of the last interviews before his fall, Nicolae Ceausescu was asked by a Western journalist how he justified the fact that Romanian citizens could not travel freely abroad although freedom of movement was guaranteed by the constitution. His answer was in the best tradition of Stalinist sophistry: true, the constitution guarantees freedom of movement, but it also guarantees the right to a safe, prosperous home. So here we have a potential conflict of rights: if Romanian citizens were to be allowed to leave the country, the prosperity of their homeland would be threatened. In this conflict, one has to make a choice, and the right to a prosperous, safe homeland enjoys clear priority.

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## *A global tendency towards the limitation of democracy*

It seems that this same spirit is alive and well in today's Slovenia, where, on 19 December 2012, the constitutional court found that a referendum on legislation to set up a 'bad bank' and a sovereign holding would be unconstitutional – in effect banning a popular vote on the matter. The referendum was proposed by trade unions challenging the government's neo-liberal economic politics, and the proposal got enough signatures to make it obligatory.

The idea of a 'bad bank' was of a place to transfer credit from main banks, which would then be salvaged by state money (i.e. at taxpayers' expense), so preventing any serious inquiry into who was responsible for this bad credit in the first place.

Slovenia may be a small country, but this decision by the constitutional court is a symptom of a global tendency towards the limitation of democracy. The idea is that, in a complex economic situation like today's, the majority of the people are not qualified to decide – they are unaware of the catastrophic

consequences that would ensue if their demands were to be met.

This line of argument is not new. In a TV interview a couple of years ago, the sociologist Ralf Dahrendorf linked the growing distrust for democracy to the fact that, after every revolutionary change, the road to new prosperity leads through a 'valley of tears'. After the breakdown of socialism, one cannot directly pass to the abundance of a successful market economy: limited, but real, socialist welfare and security have to be dismantled, and these first steps are necessarily painful. The same goes for Western Europe, where the passage from the post-Second World War welfare state to a new global economy involves painful renunciations, less security, less guaranteed social care.

For Dahrendorf, the problem is encapsulated by the simple fact that this painful passage through the 'valley of tears' lasts longer than the average period between elections, so that the temptation is to postpone the difficult changes for the short-term electoral gains. For him, the paradigm here is the disappointment of the large strata of post-communist nations with the economic results of the new democratic order: in the glorious days of 1989, they equated democracy with the abundance of Western consumerist societies; and 20 years later, with the abundance still missing, they now blame democracy itself. Unfortunately, Dahrendorf focuses much less on the opposite temptation: if the majority resist the necessary structural changes in the economy, would one of the logical conclusions not be that, for a decade or so, an enlightened elite should take power, even by non-democratic means, to enforce the necessary measures and thus lay the foundations for truly stable democracy?

## *Limitations of democracy*

Along these lines, influential US journalist Fareed Zakaria pointed out how democracy can only 'catch on' in economically developed countries. If developing countries are 'prematurely democratised' the result is a populism that ends in economic catastrophe and political despotism – no wonder that today's economically most successful third world countries (Taiwan, South Korea, Chile) embraced full democracy only after a period of authoritarian rule. And, furthermore, does this line of thinking not provide the best argument for the authoritarian regime in China?

What is new today is that, with the financial crisis that began in 2008, this same distrust of democracy – once constrained to the third world or post-communist developing countries – is gaining ground in the developed West itself: what was a decade or two ago patronising advice to others now concerns ourselves. But what if this mistrust is justified?

The least one can say is that this crisis offers proof that it is not the people but experts themselves who do not know what they are doing. In Western Europe we are effectively witnessing a growing inability of the ruling elite – they know less and less how to rule. Look at how Europe dealt with the Greek crisis: putting pressure on Greece to repay debts, but at the same time ruining its economy through imposed austerity measures and thereby ensuring that Greek debts will never be repaid. At the end of December 2012 the IMF itself released research showing that the economic damage from aggressive austerity measures may be as much as three times larger than previously assumed, thereby nullifying

its own advice on austerity in the eurozone crisis. Now the IMF admits that forcing Greece and other debt-burdened countries to reduce their deficits too quickly would be counterproductive, but only after hundreds of thousands of jobs have been lost because of such 'miscalculations'.

And therein lies the true message of the 'irrational' popular protests all around Europe: the protesters know very well what they don't know; they don't pretend to have fast and easy answers; but what their instinct is telling them is nonetheless true – that those who are in power also don't know. In today's Europe, the blind are leading the blind.

Imagine a scene from a dystopian movie that depicts our society in the near future. Uniformed guards patrol half-empty downtown streets at night, on the prowl for immigrants, criminals and vagrants. Those they find are brutalised. What seems like a fanciful Hollywood image is a reality in today's Greece. At night, black-shirted vigilantes from the Holocaust-denying neo-Fascist Golden Dawn movement – which won 7 percent of the vote in the last round of elections, and had the support, it's said, of 50 percent of the Athenian police – have been patrolling the street and beating up all the immigrants they can find: Afghans, Pakistanis, Algerians. So this is how Europe is defended nowadays.

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## *Flinging away freedom*

The trouble with defending European civilisation against the immigrant threat is that the ferocity of the defence is more of a threat to 'civilisation' than any number of Muslims. With friendly defenders like this, Europe needs no enemies. As mentioned earlier, a hundred years ago G. K. Chesterton described the fatal situation in which critics of religion find themselves, where men who fight the Church for the sake of freedom and humanity end by flinging away freedom and humanity.

Many liberal warriors are so eager to fight anti-democratic fundamentalism that they will end by flinging away freedom and democracy themselves if only they may fight terror. If the 'terrorists' are ready to wreck this world for love of another world, our warriors on terror are ready to wreck their own democratic world out of hatred for the Muslim other. Some of them love human dignity so much that they are ready to legalise torture—the ultimate degradation of human dignity—to defend it. It's an inversion of the process by which fanatical defenders of religion start out by attacking contemporary secular culture and end up sacrificing their own religious credentials in their eagerness to eradicate the aspects of secularism they hate.

But Greece's anti-immigrant defenders aren't the principal danger: they are just a by-product of the true threat, the politics of austerity that have caused Greece's

predicament. Before the leftist government was elected in Greece, the European establishment warned that these elections were crucial: not only the fate of Greece but maybe the fate of the whole of Europe was at stake. The result – the right one, they argue – would allow the painful but necessary of process of improvement through austerity to continue. The alternative – if the 'extreme leftist' Syriza party wins – would be a vote for chaos, the end of the (European) world as we know it.

## *Cycle of mutual complicity*

The prophets of doom are right, but not in the way they intend. Syriza proved to be a real alternative. And, as is usually the case when a real choice is on offer, the establishment is in a panic: chaos, poverty and violence will follow, they say, if the wrong choice is made. The mere possibility of a Syriza victory is said to have sent ripples of fear through global markets. Ideological prosopopoeia has its day: markets talk as if they were persons, expressing their 'worry' at what will happen if the elections fail to produce a government with a mandate to persist with the EU-IMF programme of fiscal austerity and structural reform. The citizens of Greece have no time to worry about these prospects: they have enough to worry about in their everyday lives, which are becoming miserable to a degree unseen in Europe for decades.

Such predictions are self-fulfilling, causing panic and thus bringing about the very eventualities they warn against. It is a case of breaking the vicious cycle of mutual complicity between Brussels' technocracy and anti-immigrant populism. This is why Alexis Tsipras, Syriza's leader and Prime Minister made it clear in an interview that he wanted to counteract panic: 'People will conquer fear. They will not succumb, they will not be blackmailed (...).'

## *A Europe with Asian values*

In his *Notes towards the Definition of Culture*, T.S. Eliott remarked that there are moments when the only choice is between heresy and non-belief – i.e. when the only way to keep a religion alive is to perform a sectarian split. This is the position in Europe today. Only a new 'heresy' – represented at the moment by Syriza – can save what is worth saving of the European legacy: democracy, trust in people, egalitarian solidarity, etc. The Europe we will end up with if Syriza is outmanoeuvred is a 'Europe with Asian values' – which, of course, has nothing to do with Asia, but everything to do with the tendency of contemporary capitalism to suspend democracy.

Here is the paradox that sustains the 'free vote' in democratic societies: one is free to choose on condition that one makes the right choice. That is why, when the wrong choice is made, (e.g. when Ireland rejected the European Constitution) the choice is treated as a mistake and the establishment immediately demands that the 'democratic' process be repeated in order to correct the mistake. A few years ago, when George Papandreou proposed a referendum on the eurozone bail-out deal, the referendum itself was rejected as a false choice.

There are two main stories about the Greek crisis in the media: the German-

European story (the Greeks are irresponsible, lazy, free-spending, tax-dodging, etc, and have to be brought under control and taught financial discipline), and the Greek story (our national sovereignty is threatened by the neoliberal technocracy imposed by Brussels). When it became impossible to ignore the plight of the Greek people, a third story emerged: the Greeks are now presented as humanitarian victims in need of aid, as if their country had been afflicted by war or a natural catastrophe. All three of these stories are false, but the third is without doubt the most repugnant. The Greeks are not passive victims: they find themselves at war with the European economic establishment, and what they needs is solidarity in their fight, because it is also our fight.

Greece is not an exception. It is an important testing ground for a new socio-economic model with potentially unlimited applications: a depoliticised technocracy that allows banks and other experts to destroy democracy. By saving the Greeks from their so-called saviours, we are saving Europe itself.

Repetition, according to Hegel, plays a crucial role in history: when something happens just once, it may be dismissed as an accident, something that might have been avoided if the situation had been handled differently; but when the same event repeats itself, it is a sign that a deeper historical process is unfolding. When Napoleon lost at Leipzig in 1813, it looked like bad luck; when he lost again at Waterloo it was clear that his time was over. The same holds for the continuing financial crisis. In September 2008, it was presented by some as an anomaly that could be corrected through better regulations etc; now that signs of a repeated financial meltdown are gathering it is clear that we are dealing with a structural phenomenon.

The trouble with defending European civilisation against the immigrant threat is that the ferocity of the defence is more of a threat to 'civilisation' than any number of Muslims.

## *The poor get poorer, the rich get richer*

We are told again and again that we are living through a debt crisis, and that we all have to share the burden and tighten our belts. All, that is, except the (very) rich. The idea of taxing them more is taboo. If we did, the argument runs, the rich would have no incentive to invest, fewer new jobs would be created, and we would all suffer as a result. The only way to save ourselves from hard times is for the poor to get poorer and the rich to get richer. What should the poor do? What can they do?

Although the riots in the UK in 2011 were triggered by the suspicious shooting of Mark Duggan, everyone agrees that they express a deeper unease – but what kind? As with the car burnings in the Paris banlieues in 2005, the rioters in the UK had no message to deliver. (There is a clear contrast with the massive student demonstrations in November 2010, which also turned to violence. The students were making clear that they rejected the proposed reforms to higher education.) This is why it is difficult to conceive of the UK rioters in Marxist terms, as an instance of the emergence of the revolutionary subject; they fit much better with the Hegelian notion of the 'rabble', those who are outside organised social space, who can express their

discontent only through 'irrational' outbursts of destructive violence – what Hegel called 'abstract negativity'.

There is an old story about a worker suspected of stealing: every evening, as he leaves the factory, the wheelbarrow he pushes in front of him is carefully inspected. The guards find nothing; it is always empty. Finally, the penny drops: what the worker is stealing are the wheelbarrows themselves. The guards were missing the obvious truth, just as the commentators on the riots have done.

We are told that the disintegration of the Communist regimes in the early 1990s signalled the end of ideology: the time of large-scale ideological projects culminating in totalitarian catastrophe was over; we had entered a new era of rational, pragmatic politics. If the commonplace that we live in a post-ideological era is true in any sense, it can be seen in this recent outburst of violence. This was zero-degree protest, a violent action demanding nothing. In their desperate attempt to find meaning in the riots, the sociologists and editorial-writers obfuscated the enigma the riots presented.

The protesters, though underprivileged and *de facto* socially excluded, weren't living on the edge of starvation. People in much worse material straits, let alone conditions of physical and ideological oppression, have been able to organise themselves into political forces with clear agendas. The fact that the rioters have no programme is therefore itself a fact to be interpreted: it tells us a great deal about our ideological-political predicament and about the kind of society we inhabit, a society which celebrates choice but in which the only available alternative to enforced democratic consensus is a blind acting out. Opposition to the system can no longer articulate itself in the form of a realistic alternative, or even as a utopian project, but can only take the shape of a meaningless outburst. What is the point of our celebrated freedom of choice when the only choice is between playing by the rules and (self-)destructive violence?

### *An increasingly 'worldless' environment*

French philosopher Alain Badiou has argued that we live in a social space which is increasingly experienced as 'worldless': in such a space, the only form protest can take is meaningless violence. Perhaps this is one of the main dangers of capitalism: although by virtue of being global it encompasses the whole world, it sustains a 'worldless' ideological constellation in which people are deprived of their ways of locating meaning. The fundamental lesson of globalisation is that capitalism can accommodate itself to all civilisations, from Christian to Hindu or Buddhist, from West to East: there is no global 'capitalist worldview', no 'capitalist civilisation' proper.

Meanwhile leftist liberals, no less predictably, stuck to their mantra about social programmes and integration initiatives, the neglect of which has deprived second and third-generation immigrants of their economic and social prospects: violent outbursts are the only means they have to articulate their dissatisfaction.

The global dimension of capitalism represents truth without meaning.

The first conclusion to be drawn from the riots, therefore, is that both conservative and liberal reactions to the unrest are inadequate. The conservative reaction was predictable: there is no justification for such vandalism; one should use all necessary means to restore order; to prevent further explosions of this kind we need not more tolerance and social help but more discipline, hard work and a sense of responsibility.

### *Back to Basics*

What's wrong with this account is not only that it ignores the desperate social situation pushing young people towards violent outbursts but, perhaps more important, that it ignores the way these outbursts echo the hidden premises of conservative ideology itself. When, in the 1990s, the Conservatives launched their 'Back to Basics' campaign, its obscene complement was revealed by British Conservative politician Norman Tebbitt: 'Man is not just a social but also a territorial animal; it must be part of our agenda to satisfy those basic instincts of tribalism and territoriality.' This is what 'back to basics' was really about: the unleashing of the barbarian who lurked beneath our apparently civilised, bourgeois society, through the satisfying of the barbarian's basic instincts.

In the 1960s, Herbert Marcuse introduced the concept of 'repressive desublimation' to explain the 'sexual revolution': human drives could be desublimated; allowed free rein, and still be subject to capitalist control – viz, the porn industry. On British streets during the unrest, what we saw was not men reduced to 'beasts', but the stripped-down form of the 'beast' produced by capitalist ideology.

Meanwhile leftist liberals, no less predictably, stuck to their mantra about social programmes and integration initiatives, the neglect of which has deprived second and third-generation immigrants of their economic and social prospects: violent outbursts are the only means they have to articulate their dissatisfaction.

Instead of indulging ourselves in revenge fantasies, we should make the effort to understand the deeper causes of the outbursts. Can we even imagine what it means to be a young man in a poor, racially mixed area, a priori suspected and harassed by the police, not only unemployed but often unemployable, with no hope of a future? The implication is that the conditions these people find themselves in make it inevitable that they will take to the streets. The problem with this account, though, is that it lists only the objective conditions for the riots. To riot is to make a subjective statement, implicitly to declare how one relates to one's objective conditions.

We live in cynical times, and it's easy to imagine a protester who, caught looting and burning a store and pressed for his reasons, would answer in the language used by social workers and sociologists, citing diminished social mobility, rising insecurity, the disintegration of paternal authority, the lack of maternal love in his early childhood. He knows what he is doing, then, but is doing it nonetheless.

It is meaningless to ponder which of these two reactions – conservative or liberal – is the worse. As Stalin would have put it, they are both worse, and that includes the warning

given by both sides that the real danger of these outbursts resides in the predictable racist reaction of the 'silent majority'. One of the forms this reaction took was the 'tribal' activity of the local (Turkish, Caribbean, Sikh) communities, which quickly organised their own vigilante units to protect their property. Are the shopkeepers a small bourgeoisie defending their property against a genuine, if violent, protest against the system; or are they representatives of the working class, fighting the forces of social disintegration? Here too one should reject the demand to take sides.

The truth is that the conflict was between two poles of the underprivileged: those who have succeeded in functioning within the system versus those who are too frustrated to go on trying. The rioters' violence was almost exclusively directed against their own. The cars burned and the shops looted were not in rich neighbourhoods, but in the rioters' own. The conflict is not between different parts of society; it is, at its most radical, the conflict between society and society, between those who have nothing to lose.

## *'Defective and disqualified consumers'*

The Polish/British sociologist Zygmunt Baumann characterised the riots as acts of 'defective and disqualified consumers': more than anything else, they were a manifestation of a consumerist desire violently enacted when unable to realise itself in a 'proper' way – by shopping. As such, they also contain a moment of genuine protest, in the form of an ironic response to consumerist ideology: 'You call on us to consume while simultaneously depriving us of the means to do it properly – so here we are doing it the only way we can!' The riots are a demonstration of the material force of ideology – so much, perhaps, for the 'post-ideological society'. From a revolutionary point of view, the problem with the riots is not the violence as such, but the fact that the violence is not truly self-assertive. It is impotent rage and despair masked as a display of force; it is envy masked as triumphant carnival.

The riots should be situated in relation to another type of violence that the liberal majority today perceives as a threat to our way of life: terrorist attacks and suicide bombings. In both instances, violence and counter-violence are caught up in a vicious circle, each generating the forces it tries to combat. In both cases, we are dealing with blind *passages à l'acte*, in which violence is an implicit admission of impotence. The difference is that, in contrast to the riots in the UK or in Paris, terrorist attacks are carried out in service of the absolute Meaning provided by religion.

## *The end of revolution*

But weren't the Arab uprisings a collective act of resistance that avoided the false alternative of destructive violence and religious fundamentalism? Unfortunately the Egyptian summer of 2011 will be remembered as marking the end of revolution, a time when its emancipatory potential was suffocated. Its gravediggers were the army and the Islamists. The contours of the pact between the army (which is Mubarak's army) and the Islamists (who were marginalised in the early months of the upheaval but are now gaining ground) are increasingly clear: the Islamists will tolerate

the army's material privileges and in exchange will secure ideological hegemony. The losers will be the pro-Western liberals, too weak – in spite of the CIA funding they are getting – to 'promote democracy', as well as the true agents of the spring events, the emerging secular left that has been trying to set up a network of civil society organisations, from trade unions to feminists.

The predominant reaction of Western public opinion: we are told that, as the case of (non-Arab) Iran made clear, popular upheavals in Arab countries always end in militant Islamism. Better to stick with the devil you know than to play around with emancipation. Against such cynicism, one should remain unconditionally faithful to the radical-emancipatory core of the Egypt uprising.

But one should also avoid the temptation of the narcissism of the lost cause: it's too easy to admire the sublime beauty of uprisings doomed to fail. Today's left faces the problem of 'determinate negation': what new order should replace the old one after the uprising, when the sublime enthusiasm of the first moment is over?

In this respect, the manifesto of the Spanish indignados is revealing. The first thing that meets the eye is the pointedly apolitical tone: 'Some of us consider ourselves progressive, others conservative. Some of us are believers, some not. Some of us have clearly defined ideologies, others are apolitical, but we are all concerned and angry about the political, economic and social outlook that we see around us: corruption among politicians, businessmen, bankers, leaving us helpless, without a voice.' They made their protest on behalf of the 'inalienable truths that we should abide by in our society: the right to housing, work, culture, health, education, political participation, free personal development and consumer rights for a healthy and happy life.'

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## *Authentic rage*

Rejecting violence, they call for an 'ethical revolution. Instead of placing money above human beings, we shall put it back to our service. We are people, not products. I am not a product of what I buy, why I buy and who I buy from.' The indignados dismiss the entire political class, right and left, as corrupt and controlled by a lust for power, yet the manifesto nevertheless consists of a series of demands addressed at – whom? Not the people themselves: the indignados do not (yet) claim that no one else will do it for them, that they themselves have to be the change they want to see. And this is the fatal weakness of recent protests (until the founding of the Podemos alt-left party): they express an authentic rage which is not able to transform itself into a positive programme of sociopolitical change. They express a spirit of revolt without revolution.

The recent expulsion of Roma from France drew protests from all around Europe – from the liberal media but also from top politicians, and not only from those on the left. But the expulsions went ahead, and they are

just the tip of a much larger iceberg of European politics.

Incidents like these have to be seen against the background of a long-term rearrangement of the political space in western and eastern Europe. Until recently, most European countries were dominated by two main parties that addressed the majority of the electorate: a right-of-centre party (Christian Democrat, liberal-conservative, people's) and a left-of-centre party (socialist, social-democratic), with smaller parties (ecologists, communists) addressing a narrower electorate.

## *A new polarity*

Recent electoral results in the West as well as in the East signal the gradual emergence of a different polarity. There is now one predominant centrist party that stands for global capitalism, usually with a liberal cultural agenda (for example, tolerance towards abortion, gay rights, religious and ethnic minorities). Opposing this party is an increasingly strong anti-immigrant populist party which, on its fringes, is accompanied by overtly racist neofascist groups. The best example of this is Poland where, after the disappearance of the ex-communists, the main parties are the 'anti-ideological' centrist liberal party and the conservative Christian Law and Justice party. Similar tendencies are discernible in the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and Hungary. How did we get here? After decades of hope held out by the welfare state, when financial cuts were sold as temporary, and sustained by a promise that things would soon return to normal, we are entering a new epoch in which crisis – or, rather, a kind of economic state of emergency, with its attendant need for all sorts of austerity measures (cutting benefits, diminishing health and education services, making jobs more temporary) is permanent. Crisis is becoming a way of life.

## *Manipulating a paranoid multitude*

After the disintegration of the communist regimes in 1990, we entered a new era in which the predominant form of the exercise of state power became a depoliticised expert administration and the co-ordination of interests. The only way to introduce passion into this kind of politics, the only way to actively mobilise people, is through fear: the fear of immigrants, the fear of crime, the fear of godless sexual depravity, the fear of the excessive state (with its burden of high taxation and control), the fear of ecological catastrophe, as well as the fear of harassment

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(political correctness is the exemplary liberal form of the politics of fear).

Such a politics always relies on the manipulation of a paranoid multitude – the frightening rallying of frightened men and women. This is why the big event of the first decade of the new millennium was when anti-immigration politics went mainstream and finally cut the umbilical cord that had connected it to far-right fringe parties. From France to Germany, from Austria to the Netherlands, in the new spirit of pride in one's cultural and historical identity, the main parties now find it acceptable to stress that immigrants are guests who have to accommodate themselves to the cultural values that define the host society – 'it is our country, love it or leave it' is the message.

## *The right not to be harassed*

Progressive liberals are, of course, horrified by such populist racism. However, a closer look reveals how their multicultural tolerance and respect of differences share something with those who oppose immigration: the need to keep others at a proper distance. 'The others are OK, I respect them', the liberals say, 'but they must not intrude too much on my own space. The moment they do, they harass me – I fully support affirmative action, but I am in no way ready to listen to loud rap music.' What is increasingly emerging as the central human right in late-capitalist societies is the right not to be harassed, which is the right to be kept at a safe distance from others. A terrorist whose deadly plans should be prevented belongs in Guantánamo, the empty zone exempted from the rule of law; a fundamentalist ideologist should be silenced because he spreads hatred. Such people are toxic subjects who disturb my peace.

On today's market, we find a whole series of products deprived of their malignant property: coffee without caffeine, cream without fat, beer without alcohol. And the list goes on: what about virtual sex as sex without sex? The Colin Powell doctrine of warfare with no casualties (on our side, of course) as warfare without warfare? The contemporary redefinition of politics as the art of expert administration, as politics without politics? This leads us to today's tolerant liberal multiculturalism as an experience of the Other deprived of its Otherness – the decaffeinated Other.

## *'Reasonable antisemitism'*

The mechanism of such neutralisation was best formulated back in 1938 by Robert Brasillach, the French fascist intellectual, who saw himself as a 'moderate' antisemite and invented the formula of reasonable antisemitism. 'We grant ourselves permission to applaud Charlie Chaplin, a half Jew, at the movies; to admire Proust, a half Jew; to applaud Yehudi Menuhin, a Jew; ... We don't want to kill anyone, we don't want to organise any pogrom. But we also think that the best way to hinder the always unpredictable actions of instinctual antisemitism is to organise a reasonable antisemitism.'

Is this same attitude not at work in the way our governments are dealing with the 'immigrant threat'? After righteously rejecting direct populist racism as 'unreasonable' and unacceptable for our democratic standards, they endorse 'reasonably' racist protective measures or, as today's Brasillachs, some of them even Social Democrats, tell us: 'We grant ourselves permission to applaud African and East European sportsmen, Asian doctors, Indian software programmers. We don't want

to kill anyone, we don't want to organise any pogrom. But we also think that the best way to hinder the always unpredictable violent anti-immigrant defensive measures is to organise a reasonable anti-immigrant protection.'

This vision of the detoxification of one's neighbour suggests a clear passage from direct barbarism to barbarism with a human face. It reveals the regression from the Christian love of one's neighbour back to the pagan privileging of our tribe versus the barbarian Other. Even if it is cloaked as a defence of Christian values, it is itself the greatest threat to Christian legacy.

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Restaurant

**How do we love Europe in the 21st century?** We seem to be regressing to the good old days, which were supposedly better. Right-wing populists are taking advantage of the prevailing mistrust of elites. If we want to defend Europe, we cannot make ourselves comfortable in self-satisfied populist abuse. Cosmopolitan elites must question their own policies. Yet there are still so many reasons to love Europe. It might be helpful to let our gaze wander beyond the Mediterranean and broaden our horizons. *By Jagoda Marinić*

Europe and migration are inextricably bound together. The issue of 'migration' is not a corner in which one can be placed, because 'migration' is the marketplace of Europe. The cities of Europe are the vital arteries of this continent. They are imbued with the diversity that characterises Europe as a whole. If every person in a German city had to list the places that have shaped their lives, we can be sure that most of Europe would be covered. Europe is in every one of them.

My view of Europe is coloured by the Mediterranean. This is to do with how the Mediterranean light creates unforgettable colours, and when I was a child this turquoise blue sea was constantly vying for my attention with the clear blue sky. It is this Mediterranean that has made people both rich and poor. In Barcelona, one of my favourite Mediterranean cities, the 60-metre-high Columbus statue was erected for the World Fair in 1888. Seafarers, fortresses like in Dubrovnik, pirates. Wealth, world conquest, and a ray of hope.

More than anything, Europe has been a ray of hope over recent years. But the Mediterranean has increasingly become a symbol of lost hopes, a life swallowed up the sea. In 2017 alone, 3,081 people drowned in the Mediterranean. Anyone who reads the history of the Mediterranean hardly dare ask how much blood this sea contains.

The history of the Mediterranean has often been bloody. And perhaps we simply have to accept that this is once again the case today, in the 21st century. Perhaps we should stop believing that peace is achievable. But then, what has the Europe of the last seventy years been if not a peace project? We have been living the European project for decades. Europeans believe in this peace, in being permitted

to enjoy the banality of everyday life. As Europeans, we go to sleep and wake up next to the people we want to share our lives with. In our everyday lives, most of us are thinking about how to have a good life, not about survival.

Without really having to worry about it, we expect to be able to go to work in the morning and return to our loved ones in the evening. Most of the time we are lucky enough for this to be the case. The door opens, the door closes. We might argue, love, grumble a little before we go to sleep. We can get annoyed about little things and every day pour tons of milk into our bodies in the form of latte macchiatos. We believe in this life as we live it, as if for some reason we lucky ones are more entitled to it than others. But that is precisely why this life should bring obligations. That is precisely why we cannot stand by as others die. That is precisely why we must not pretend that we can close ourselves off to suffering without harm.

Yes, people have always died in the Mediterranean, but Europe became a continent of progress for civilisation after it reached rock bottom. Europe has been described as the dark continent, but despite all the good reasons for criticising Europe, we must not forget that this dark continent has become a continent of light. But it is not isolated in the global structure and unaffected by other forces. It is also important for the continent to understand that a balanced world demands an alert Europe. Europe cannot be relegated to being a backdrop for fanciful thrillers and tourists; the children of southern Europe are not born to wash the bed sheets of northern Europeans, as a Croatian tourism minister once stated. Europe needs a vision that goes beyond what it is now.

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## *Europe's own history of migration*

Europe needs to think about its own history. Europe is also the capital of human rights violations in the history of modern civilisation. In order to fulfil Europe's responsibilities, Europeans must live locally but think globally. Most wealthy Europeans have not become wealthy because Europeans have always stayed home. Europe has its own history of migration: so it's a Europe with a migrant background, and this Europe was certainly not a migrant that was keen to assimilate. For some reason, Europe came and said she was somehow more at home and more mistress of that home than the locals themselves.

Europe was always very elegant and had to adorn herself. Everything that got in her way had to pay. When she arrived somewhere outside of Europe it never entered her head to learn the local language. Europe turned up and taught people her language. Perhaps she saw it as a global integration course. But that wasn't enough. Europe liked to forbid people from speaking their native language. I think I

know why she came up with this idea – maybe she thought it creates space in the head. Then again, perhaps she simply thought what was the point of their own language if they couldn't talk to Europe? Europe the migrant returned home unchanged, just a little richer.

From today's German point of view, we would certainly consider such an immigrant as being unwilling to integrate. I'm sure you know the saying 'Make yourself at home!' Europe made itself at home everywhere it went. And when people came to Europe, they wanted to make sure that Europe would not suddenly feel uncomfortable in her own house. Where would we be? Certainly not in Europe.

You see what I'm getting at. We live in a time when some people consider themselves to be more European than others. The French are questioning their generous citizenship policy because young Algerians have never become French – say the French, who never became Algerian. But Algerian soil became French in no time at all. If young Algerians in France had behaved like Europeans in Algeria, they would be integrated today because they would have taken over the country. But we wouldn't have peace. Europe's behaviour brought everything except peace.

Until the last seventy years. This peace came like a bolt from the blue. It came from the piecemeal renunciation of what was thought of as 'mine' and replaced by 'our'. Those of us who experienced this peace have to defend its legacy. The responsibility we bear is not for the best certificate of integration, but for social, European and – though it may frighten us Europeans – global peace.

We live in worrying times. It is downright worrying when Germany's new President takes office and talks about a possible new world order. The chaos that is currently opening up and overshadowing the unresolved chaos of recent years does not make the world any more manageable. Heads of state who talk about a new age may be right, but they also help to heighten our concern. If the world is incomprehensible and its problems cannot be solved, why not return to Balkanisation? Many people talk about a future that will be different, but this future is already the present.

The attacks on Europe's capitals show that, on the one hand, Europeans are afraid of organised terrorism, and on the other they fear the crazy individual, perhaps even their own neighbour. On the anniversary of the Brussels attack, the headlines of the British tabloids call it an attack on democracy. When Paris was attacked, it was an attack on freedom. Egalité, Liberté, Fraternitité. Equality, freedom and fraternity – three shared Western values. An attack on democracy is basically an attack on equality, while the attacks on the Bataclan and in Nice were attacks on freedom. They are all designed to destroy fraternity, cohesion and solidarity. If it is the case that the perpetrator is British-born and holds a British passport, then solidarity is called into question still further. When people were killed by an attack on the popular Rambla in Barcelona, the city's inhabitants stood together and proclaimed that their city

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would not be ruled by fear. In the wake of such attacks on freedom, this kind of cohesion is impressive – but it is important to address people's everyday problems in order to protect them from their fears.

## *A yearning for exit*

Many people believe exit strategies are the answer to their problems: Brexit, Grexit, Frexit. Right-wing parties are currently providing Europe's infrastructure with dozens of exit signs. The Austrians are even calling for an exit of the widely accepted smoking ban in public restaurants. The absurd signal is clear: we should go back to the good old days, when things were supposedly better. The world will become more controllable if I protect 'my nation'. Paradoxically, the European Right works together in a movement that is not only Fortress Europe, but Fortress Nation.

The fact that terrorists often come from Europe itself is swept under the carpet: evil exists beyond its borders and is mainly imported because of the *Willkommenskultur*, the 'welcome culture' that characterised the summer of 2015. The myth is that 'the Other' has migrated into the system. But it is also a question of participation and cohesion: when people live and grow up in a country, it is the task of every society to give them a place that strengthens rather than destroys that society. If they are known to the police, as was usually the case, it is up to the European authorities to protect citizens and ethnic minorities, who unfortunately are also affected by the perpetrators, from the perpetrators. We have all become used to giving a worried glance when a car deviates from its course. It was the same in the USA after 9/11 – whenever a helicopter flew over a crowd of people, hundreds of pairs of worried eyes looked up at the sky.

Tackling this fear is probably Europe's main task, as it becomes a placeholder, an excuse that makes people blind to real problems and solutions. Now you could say that a country that is internationally known for 'German angst' is a bad advisor in this respect. But I don't agree. A country that has had its fair share of angst has also learnt how to deal with it. You could even say that in many ways German politics is an exception to the rule. Not everyone, like the *New York Times*, has to declare the German Chancellor to be the defender of the Western world, but when politicians such as Angela Merkel and Frank-Walter Steinmeier govern in these times, and a candidate such as Martin Schulz entered the race in this country, initially as a serious opponent, then it is easier to understand why Barack Obama's last trip as President took him to Germany.

Germany still understands the idea of ruling with a velvet glove. Germany's serious politicians do not feel obliged to respond to every verbal attack with a counterattack. They are able to set limits without pandering to those who call for demonstrations of power. Angela Merkel's performance in the USA as she sat calmly next to Donald Trump, quite unperturbed by the refused handshake, was also much praised on social media. People commented that next to her, Trump looked like a schoolboy who hadn't tidied up his room or like an immature man who doesn't know how to deal with a strong woman.

Frank-Walter Steinmeier also gave a commanding speech upon his inauguration as German President. It demonstrated poise, and was free of bluster. If German politicians can do anything for this Europe of ours, it is to develop an attitude that is not characterised by fear, but without denying that fear. The entry of the right-wing party AfD into the German Bundestag was a disappointment for many. After all these decades, the only powerful country in Europe without right-wing parties in parliament ends up with a party that is more right-wing than the conservative CSU. Hopes that Germany could stay one step ahead of the others because of the way it has dealt with its past have been dashed. On the other hand, other people say that in view of the changes that Germany has undergone since 2015, the number of right-wing parties is actually manageable. Unfortunately, the new government has only just been formed and it remains unclear how everyday life in Germany will handle this new, harsh tone. If Germany succeeds in keeping the right wing in check, then it will certainly be as a result of the lessons learned from dealing with the country's history.

But above and beyond the fear of diffuse terrorism and the sense of being overwhelmed by migration that is felt by many, one thing is particularly acute in Europe: the fear of one's own demise. People who defend Europe by saying that it has brought peace and prosperity to the continent fail to address those who are excluded from this much-vaunted prosperity. We can learn a lot from the USA in this respect – Trump was put in the White House by the fears of the little man. It will not help to serve up the impoverished and frightened figures that state poverty in Europe is relative. It is also relative to its own history. The younger generation do not want to see themselves lagging behind their parents. Brexit has shown that the left, the liberals, and media commentators have all failed to understand the extent of people's anger.

In the wake of Brexit there has been a tendency to rail at the little man who so nonchalantly gambled away Europe. Or there have been attempts to understand him, explain him, and so on. But there is little point in turning the losers of neo-liberal globalisation into the perpetrators without looking at the failure of EU institutions. Since the 1980s, the citizens of Europe have increasingly seen a neo-liberal elite worrying about their own standard of living far more than about the well-being of the people. If even the former diplomat Ryszard Schnepf thinks that the benefits of Europe have not been adequately spelled out to the people, and then the restriction on roaming charges is used as an example of these benefits, we can only guess how far these elites are removed from ordinary people. Poorer Europeans would not phone or use Skype if they had free WiFi somewhere.

## *Populist wood-chopping*

At present the alienation between 'those up there' and 'the man in the street' could hardly be more pronounced. Trump, Farage, Wilders, Le Pen and Orban are chopping their populist wood in this gap, in which trust, confidence – and the credibility of

many politicians are lacking. The log that they are splitting is social cohesion, the feeling that democracy is the rule of the people as a whole. They think it is enough for a democracy to only care about its own nation. They suggest that we should look after people who are cut 'from our wood'. Everyone else is simply robbing us of our standard of living.

Another paradox of our time is the fact that it is not the underdogs who have come to power, the idealistic revolutionaries or reformist politicians, it is the most successful representatives of precisely that Establishment whose authority people no longer recognise. Donald Trump is one of the 1 percent who has always stood against the 99 percent. Nigel Farage is one of those mocked EU bureaucrats who supposedly have never lifted a finger, and Marine Le Pen is a member of the political elite by birth. They have achieved this because they have skilfully targeted the weaknesses of the current elites. The arrogance of today's neoliberal elites have led to people no longer seeing themselves as part of this democracy.

They think they are living in a post-democracy in which the elites are both circumventing and instrumentalising democracy in the interests of the powerful. The right-wing have used this democratic deficit to their advantage. They carry democracy before them because the Europe we have today offers these points of attack. The bitter part is that this movement that dresses itself up as democracy is a Trojan horse that conceals anti-democratic values. Trump's victory could in fact be good for Europe, as it has led many people to think 'we don't want someone like him here'. The Netherlands also benefited from this mood and delivered an election result that could strengthen Europe. At the same time Austria elected a right-wing government that could also bring a change to Europe.

Many people believe exit strategies are the answer to their problems: Brexit, Grexit, Frexit. The Austrians are even calling for an exit of the widely accepted smoking ban in public restaurants. The absurd signal is clear: we should go back to the good old days, when things were supposedly better.

A change that will not represent progress, however much it might claim the opposite. This makes it all the more important to find people in the public discourse who have the same passionate commitment to liberal values. There is a lot to do. London's Mayor, Sadiq Khan, confidently aired his opinions in public – and won. It is a confidence that stands up for his ethnic and social origins, but which also stands for the fact that democracy is the form of society in which every citizen, if he or she is suitable and elected, can potentially play a leading role in this country. 'I am Sadiq Khan, the son of a Pakistani bus driver and the mayor of London' – this was his first tweet. Social advancement, success, regardless of background, in a diverse urban society. It is these kinds of representatives who could bring ordinary citizens closer to their country's elites.

Because at the moment there could hardly be more distance between them. The *New York Times* suffered the biggest slap in the face since its inception when it had to announce that the next president would be the man

it had calculated had a less than 20 percent chance of making it into the White House. 'The day the polls died' was their headline, as if he had to be sacrificed to a discipline other than journalism. It is the job of journalists to look for the stories behind the numbers in order to portray people's moods. So why didn't they find them?

In the case of Brexit the polls once again failed to clearly predict the result that people woke up to the next morning. And this at a time when the media is – rightly – claiming that fact-based journalism is a pillar of democracy. But if polls can be so wrong, how credible are the facts that journalism is able to present? Is it only studies that are needed or does it require direct contact with people and their life stories? Do we need individual fates to make a country's situation more understandable?

Facts are only the abstraction of individual stories, they hide as much as they illustrate. It is only through the interweaving of forms of understanding and recognition that a picture emerges that may approach reality. Science, journalism, commentary and studies – they are all mistrusted because they are too simplistic, make too many claims, are too sure of themselves. The song of the continent of prosperity is sung on the one hand, while on the other prosperity is dying in the provinces, elderly people are losing their doctor round their corner, their local shops.

They are also losing the next generation, who have to move to the cities or even other countries to survive. Many people move to the outskirts of the cities, because the centres are no longer affordable for most – downtown, empty office towers are enthroned at night and occupy the dehumanised city. I once talked to a young British journalist whose highly engaged article appeared in the country's top newspapers. But now he also lives more than an hour outside the city. And while he fights for human rights in his articles, one night he said, in what was perhaps an anxious hour: 'I'm afraid of dying in poverty.' When even many young, highly educated, talented young people have to work without fixed contracts, without any security – what about less qualified people?

## *The young people of the South are left behind*

In some parts of Europe, the situation for young people is such that they would consider themselves fulfilled if they had their own home. A life in which they are not dependent on their parents. A continent that needs fraternity cannot accept the fact that, in some parts, half of all young people have no prospects. The talk is of only of a two-speed Europe. At a time when cohesion is needed, people are looking for ways to create division. This Europe already exists. You only have to look at the European Union's minimum wage table to see that it is a Europe of two values. In this country we are – justifiably – outraged about a gender gap of 21 percent. But when we look at the value of work in Europe, we have to ask whether it is fair: in Luxembourg the minimum wage is 11.75 euros. In the Netherlands it is 9.25. In Germany, 8.84, and in the UK, 8.79. Then there is a gap to Slovenia, at

4.65. In Spain it is 4.29 euros and in Greece, 3.35. In Croatia, people earn 2.5 euros an hour. In Victor Orban's Hungary, workers receive a minimum wage of 2.35 euros. In Bulgaria it is 1.42 euros.

On Orban's anti-refugee policy, some EU politicians say the EU is not a one-way street. You can't just ask for aid without doing something in return. The people who get into debt to be part of the capitalist dream and allow it to grow earn less than 20 euros a day. Under the Dublin Agreement, Greece is now being called upon to take back refugees who first came to Europe via Greece. Debt-ridden Greece with its minimum wage of less than 5 euros?

Germany abandoned Italy when the refugees landed on the beaches of Lampedusa. Germany was abandoned last year when the refugees came to us. It is time to put an end to the European Community being a string of stories of being abandoned. We need pan-European thinking, pan-European action. We cannot allow big Europe to fail because of small thinking. Europe is needed as a counterweight to Trump – who would ever have thought that Europe might one day guide its big brother who taught us democracy? If we are to do this, we need Europe. And not a Europe of small single states who will be called to the Oval Office and no longer be able to simply smile when Trump refuses to shake their hands.

Today's dictators see themselves as dictators of the Earth. They want to milk her, exploit her and when things become scarce, when people have been robbed of their homes, they want to stand on the borders and shout: America First!

The Western elites who now want to see this Europe defended, they cannot make themselves comfortable in self-satisfied populist abuse, they must – after criticising those who have broken away – look into the mirror and question their own policies over recent decades. This is the face that is meant by the angry man in the street.

Many British people have not forgiven their government for marching into Iraq without proof. They think the terror that is haunting them now is a result of such operations. And instead of countering this mistrust with greater transparency, the political elite meet in Munich and assume that security policy will be enough for Europeans to regain its confidence in Europe. It won't. Not as long as the lack of transparency over operations such as those in Iraq unsettles people and possibly helps to cause global crises. In 2011 NATO bombed Libya, only to leave a vacuum of power that led to the growth of Islamic State.

Global crises will not be resolved without a sensible, sustainable environmental policy. In Mr Trump, Mother Earth has gained a new opponent. He questions climate change, doesn't want to ratify treaties that already offer much less than the Earth needs. There is this old poster by Klaus Staeck showing the Earth from space and written underneath are the words: The rented item must be handled with care and returned in good condition. Today's dictators see themselves as dictators of the Earth. They want to milk her, exploit her and when things become scarce, when people have been robbed of their homes, they want to stand on the borders and shout: America First! Environmental policy is an existen-

tial policy for Europe, because it allows us to talk about unfair distribution, exploitation, the vulnerability of our continent and of the people who have to live on a polluted continent.

The current mistrust of elites, governments and institutions, which are also Europe, must be credibly combated. Europe cannot remain in people's minds as rescuers of banks while Greek pensioners queue up in front of empty ATMs. It is unacceptable that the poles of public debate are the poles between cosmopolitan financial capitalism and ethnocentric backwardness. If we continue along this path, we will be heading for a crisis of authority, establishing mistrust of those who can lead – but only with a mandate, with the vote of confidence that is offered by representative democracy. The revolt against the political classes strikes democracy the hardest, even though it describes itself as a democratic movement. We need the authority of the political elites to defend the values on which Europe is based. It is not acceptable for people to feel betrayed by them. The ordinary citizen must once again become the measure and centre of politics. We do not do this solely for the sake of the individual. We do it for the sake of our community.

Because at the moment what we have in common is being undermined. Populists are strengthening the margins and promoting extremes. Rarely has the average been as interesting as it is today, when it threatens to disappear. Moderation too. I was once visiting a mosque in Mostar when a man at the entrance told me the story of a muezzin. He regularly called the people of the small town of Mostar to prayer. His voice was so beautiful, so strong that it could be heard in every corner of the town. One day during the call to prayer he was hit by lightning and killed. The man asked me what I had learnt from this story. I said: 'That it's better if I don't go up there and call out.' He laughed: 'No, go up there, but be moderate.'

Nowadays we find it hard to be moderate. We should also leave room for other tonalities when defending things that we love. These days, everyone believes they have the right interpretation. You only have to take a look around on social media, which is now the main platform for the new, anti-democratic rights to organise themselves. In the beginning, wasn't the internet extolled to us as a huge, free gateway to the world? And what has it become? A gateway to small minds that have lost their inhibitions. To foul language and untamed rage. Now you don't want to come with lightning, but with the moderation of finding your way back into a dialogue that can leave the other behind.

While still fighting for your own values. Churchill spoke of a United States of Europe. Europe is the continent where in 1945 its cities looked like the streets of today's Aleppo. The people of Europe started with nothing. There was no longer any hope for art and philosophy, – nor even the slightest hope in people *per se* and that some kind of education could turn them into something slightly human. People learn in order to end up destroying themselves with what they have learned, that was the outcome of human learning after the Second World War. Adorno stood there proclaiming that the end

was nigh; Hannah Arendt did not see any human rights, even though everyone was talking about them.

Winston Churchill, a politician not a poet, gave a speech in Zurich on 19 September 1946 in which he saw a united Europe as the only way to create a future for this continent. He said that nations, the big, prominent nations, must take the lead. He spoke of a United States of Europe. One of the nations that were meant to take the lead has now left united Europe. Southern Europe is struggling. And in the North we make dual passports for a few hundred thousand young people a major election campaign issue. But voters seem more interested in the passports of these few young people than in the unity of a continent. Though it's not even the voters, it's the politicians who underestimate their voters because they suddenly start to believe that the hate speech on the internet is the voice of their people.

Austria, the Netherlands, a Macron who recently said in Berlin: 'I love Europe!', something that irritated the German media – a politician wants to talk about love? But all this also gives us hope that elections in Europe can't automatically be won with Trump-style electioneering. The Netherlands has also demonstrated that questions need to be asked about social problems. It is time for politicians, intellectuals, Europeans and citoyens to move forward again, identify key issues, reach out to people. It is not just a case of debunking populists and their speeches, but also of developing our own goals for Europe that can be set against them. We have to get out of defence mode and offer something to citizens. If we succeed, Europe is far from finished. From a historical perspective, Europe is just at the beginning. Everyone can be involved in this beginning. That's why, in closing, I'd like to add a few words about my love of Europe.

It is unacceptable that the poles of public debate are the poles between cosmopolitan financial capitalism and ethnocentric backwardness. If we continue along this path, we will be heading for a crisis of authority, establishing mistrust of those who can lead – but only with a mandate, with the vote of confidence that is offered by representative democracy.

I won't allow this free Europe to be taken from me. I will not simply stand by and watch as bad news and injuries, which can bring freedom with them, lay over this continent and over my life like ashen mildew. I will not allow Europe to be darkened by people who, with their narrow-minded nationalism, could take it back to the very darkness from which my Europe has grown towards freedom.

My Europe was born out of the worst weaknesses of humankind. I was born in an age when the worst had already happened. It has been present everywhere since then, it has become part of me, the knowledge of how much all the people who are involved in my life have been affected by the history of this continent. By horror. And by reconstruction. There are no Germans, Italians, French, Poles, Austrians or Greeks without European history.

Even the old people in the stone cottage in the hinterland of Europe's southernmost tip can recount Europe's history through

their families. Pain has given rise to knowledge, without which this new Europe, my Europe, would never have become what it is. My generation will not allow itself to be persuaded that everything we have learned from the mistakes of our ancestors is naivety. Sometimes I would like to promise the elders that their descendants will never be so stupid as to betray what they left behind, instead of cherishing and remembering it. And we can build a future that believes in what we have in common. In freedom. In solidarity. At the end of the day, it is the eternal fight for peace.

## *A wall between North and South*

Yes, a great deal has gone wrong in Europe since the fall of the Berlin Wall. Instead of growing closer together, it has erected a new wall between North and South. It has not closed the gap between Europe's citizens and their political representatives. There are few people who have trust in Europe's institutions. Even pro-Europeans are disappointed. No party that thinks in national categories would dare to run a campaign based on bureaucratic standards for light bulbs and bananas.

Unfortunately, European policymakers have become familiar with such programmes. Whatever happens, vote. The turnout in EU elections is declining. And when it comes to solidarity, every year Europe fails a little bit more. First Lampedusa, then Athens: we would be better armed now if the other European countries had helped Italy and Greece to handle the people who fled there.

This failure is now fuelling Europe's opponents. The disappointments, all the people's hesitant hopes, are now to be turned against Europe. When a terrorist manages to cross three borders without being arrested, Schengen and the open borders are immediately called into question. When terrorists choose European cities as their destination because they want to destroy their way of life, many people call Europe into question. It should encourage them to see that fanaticism is not the answer. It requires a bastion of values, not a fortress against people.

Europe is not only about failure. It was still able to stop a terrorist before he claimed more victims. And it should have worked together more, not less, to prevent what clearly showed us our vulnerability in Berlin. Terror does not arise because of, but despite Europe. The illusion that nation states are more able to defend themselves is a pious wish of the nationalists. On the contrary, this Europe of ours needs common answers at a time when each country is, in its own right, a pawn in the fabric of geopolitical power games. Europe can only be a bastion of values, not a fortress against people. Tackling terror is not achieved by abandoning one's own humanity. This strong, collaborative Europe is under fire. Not only from the Jihadists, whether they come from within Europe or from outside its borders. Europe will not become stronger to the outside world if becomes weaker internally. It is the love of one's own that counts now. In the Europe in which I grew up, this includes a love of foreigners.

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**Demos or populus?** If Europe wants to continue and reshape its existence it needs to start searching for the roots of its values: the emancipation of individuals in the cities, the foundation of universities, the early city communities and their councils that created civil society and representation – all this led to the fact that the rule of law, democracy and social and human rights were born in Europe.
*By Vladimíra Dvořáková*

There are many discussions, deliberations, negative and positive judgements about Europe. We are trying to measure European identities, the pros and cons of the processes of European integration, the quality of European governance. Nevertheless, we are missing the answer to the basic question: 'Does Europe exist?' And if the answer is yes, it gives rise to another set of questions. What is it about? How was it formed? What are its constitutive features? And what are its values?

In fact, Europe has very unclear contours, even geographical ones. When you look at the map, you instantly recognise Africa, America, Australia. But what is Europe? Where are the borders with Asia and why are they like this? Geographers probably know the answer but this is not common knowledge, even for most European citizens.

Well, geography is not the only criteria. What about history and culture? Is Europe an entity that shares a common history, culture, religious tradition? The place of birth is clear. The appellation of Europe was born in ancient times and there is a prevailing consensus that the common roots of European culture can be found there. Who were the parents? It is difficult to determine. The current 'nations' – ethnic groups who derived their culture from ancient times – mostly came to this territory much later. Some of them even participated in destroying ancient civilisations, some of them settled in Europe when all that was left were ruins. To be honest, if not for Islamic scholars, most of this ancient cultural heritage would have been lost.

Anyway, classical antiquity covered only a small part of the territory of Europe. The European parents, or maybe rather the grandparents, are to be found in the regions connected with the Mediterranean. The real moment of conception of current Europe happened with the formation of the 'nation' states, which was largely completed

between the 13th and 15th century. This is the moment when the foundations were laid for building Europe.

Nevertheless, this was not a one-way process and much of the territory of what is geographically supposed to be Europe went through the same development. During its history we can find periods in which important parts of Europe were detached from the 'mainstreams' of European development.

We can mention the expansion of the Mongols, which interrupted and delayed it for almost two centuries. For example, the formation of the nation-state in Russia from the 13th to 15th century and still ongoing today is the source of Russian uncertainty and its quandary about whether to identify with Europe, Asia or go against both of them and define its own mission.

The Balkan peninsula occupied by the Ottoman Empire went through neither renaissance, humanism nor reformation – processes that were instrumental for the emancipation of individuals and in this way made space for modernisation. And the latest stroke of fate for European integrity brought an iron curtain after WWII that excluded a great part of Central and Eastern Europe from the processes surrounding the formation of the welfare state and European economic and political integration, based on the principles of secularisation, denationalisation, liberalism, tolerance and multiculturalism. If we are to understand today's Europe, we have to know that all these different historical, cultural and religious developments left tracks that are still used, despite the fact that new highways have been built.

On the other hand, history plays an important role in most of the European national identities. The legitimacy of the nation states is built on a 'great' and 'long' national history that includes *grand siècles* (golden ages), periods of darkness, big battles (even those that were lost), great treasons, national heroes and national martyrs... Such narratives are based on a national identity that defines itself against the 'others', marks its enemies, and the symbols of such a history (important dates, national heroes) are still used as an important instrument in nationalist and populist appeal.

However, national narratives also include meeting and interacting with others and cultural development. This is also largely a source of national identity. A nation's attitude to its own history is important for the development of democracy. The less national history and identity that is positively embedded and accepted in society, the more space there is for negative populist appeal. Self-esteem based on national history (with all the positive and negative lessons that a nation has learned from it) and culture is natural and can accept 'otherness' as national enrichment; while feelings of inferiority and uncertain identification strengthen aggressiveness, animosity to others and fear. In such an environment, opportunities for populism are on the rise.

Can European identity be based on common historical interaction with the world outside European boundaries? Do Europeans share a historical identification against the others?

Can some kind of European historical narrative be written and generally accepted? Probably not. The history of Europe is mainly a history of wars between neighbours that created winners and losers. What is supposed to be victory for one nation can be interpreted as a tragedy for another. Can European identity be based on common historical interaction with the world outside European boundaries? Do Europeans share a historical identification against the others?

## *Preventing the repetition of 'bad' history*

And who were the others? It is not clear how to interpret the colonial period. Was it part of national and/or European history? Did Europeans discover and occupy new territories and/or was the European expansion in fact a meeting of different cultures, the beginning of a multicultural globe and/or was it in fact the imposition of European culture that destroyed native culture and traditional life?

It is fair to mention that European interaction with others – expansion, to put it less politely – strengthened the internal conflicts between European states that resulted in two world wars originating on the European continent? These are important today in the face of immigration from the regions and countries whose development was influenced by European 'civilisation'.

Clearly, European identity cannot be based on one narrative and a shared historical interpretation of some events. Various national, ethnic, religious, and gender groups can ask different questions and search for different historical contexts. The ability to accept the 'personal' history and memory of individuals or social groups reflects the plurality of society and promotes empathy and understanding of the way the events are seen from the other side. As a result of such an approach, the history of everyday life was developed and is very popular nowadays; it gives insights into how people really lived in the past. The history of the lives and fates of many ordinary Europeans who were the victims of wars and totalitarian regimes are often discovered and disseminated to a broader public, mainly the younger generation. The reconstruction of their fates, often based on letters, diaries, or small personal belongings, is very moving, and it helps to shape historical memory and to understand how nightmarish were the regimes born from our civilisation. The goal is quite clear, to prevent the repetition of this 'bad' history.

Is this an adequate prophylaxis? I am afraid not. We have forgotten to learn the lessons of history: Why did something happen? How did it happen? What were the signs of the crises? What were the crossroads, and what were the possible solutions? Why did society and politics fail? Of course experts have done this kind of research, but communication of the results to the public sphere, the media and politics is almost nonexistent. Who cares? The feeling of déjà vu

is rather strong among historians.

In fact, the historical context, deep analysis of how it happened and how to prevent any such a conflict in Europe in the future, was a basic impulse for European integration. Right from the start, it was not only based on economics but also on an understanding of the importance of the rule of law, democracy and social and human rights.

Nowadays, value-based European politics has been almost forgotten, Europe is now more concentrated on technocratic governance and social engineering. If Europe wants to continue and reshape its existence it needs to start searching for the roots of its values. In this sense, the narrative of European history has to be formulated.

It needs to focus on the basic values that underpin Europe and its development over centuries of conflict. It is important to commemorate the heroes who fought for freedom, tolerance and human dignity, and to sound the warnings about those who go against these values. Nevertheless, the most important is to understand the circumstances and opportunity structures that open such an agenda.

Why were the rule of law, democracy and social and human rights born in Europe?

With some degree of simplification, we can mention three basic phenomena that have been crucial since the early Middle Ages. The first was connected with the emancipation of individuals in the cities, creating free communities with autonomy over some levels of decision-making. The early city communities and their councils gave birth to civil society and representation, formed demos and polis, principles of responsibility and accountability, became the source of local identities that brought some certainties and at the same time was a place where 'the others' could be met and accepted.

The second phenomenon was the universities, which brought critical thinking, pluralism, and communication. Communication from the universities often went towards those outside academia, towards other academic communities, towards those who governed and also towards the public. The intellectual mobility of students and teachers in search of more freedom, new thoughts, and new approaches enabled the development of modern sciences. The societal role of universities was enormous.

And the third phenomenon that formed European history was culture in a very broad sense. Culture is mostly locally rooted, it grows up from some communities and in the same time culture crosses borders. Culture is pluralistic but not exclusive, reflects particularities and at the same time has potential for integration.

It is not surprising but it is significant that all these three phenomena are nowadays challenged by populism, by populist appeals. What is populism like? The term populism is derived from the word *populus* (the Latin for 'people'). How does it differ from democracy? The term democracy is derived from the word *demos* ('people' in Greek).

The populist leader serves as a mouthpiece of the people; he/she listens to the people and defends these natural virtues and high values against the others.

Linguistically there is no difference, but as these terms are defined by social sciences the difference is crucial. *Demos* in the liberal democratic tradition is a pluralistic entity, with different interests and ideas; the freedom of the individual can be limited only through a legal framework that is the same for everybody. Democracy follows and develops the tradition of the community that is open and inclusive. *Populus* is exclusive and can be characterised by typical features, depending on the historical and cultural context. There is a difference between 'we' (*populus*) and 'them'. It is evident who are 'we' and who are 'them'.

Exclusion can be based on race, ethnicity, or religion, but also often among 'them' are politicians (apart from populist political leaders, who are always 'we'), and intellectuals (who ask questions, cast doubt on simple solutions). Populus, 'the people' are unified, endowed with common sense, virtues and values. The populist leader serves as a mouthpiece of the people; he/she listens to the people and defends these natural virtues and high values against the others.

## *An emotional appeal*

The populist appeal and strategy is not rational, it works with emotions. Fear, envy, prejudices, but also patriotism are present in all the appeals, in the same way as how 'the people' are characterised. Usually, some conspiracy theory is present in such a discourse – the goal of the others is to destroy the nation and its heartland... The current situation is often characterised as a post-factual era and post-truth politics. The facts matter and post-truth politics means false politics.

Populist politicians use the atmosphere of fear in society and at the same time they create that fear. On the other hand, if there is fear in a society, it is an important signal and warning sign. Fear can be productive; it can provoke rational discussion and strengthen political and societal responsibility for dealing with the processes that provoke fear. Nowadays we are witnessing an extreme polarisation of society. This polarisation is artificially formed by populist appeal, and, unfortunately, liberal democrats have in some sense accepted the idea of 'we' and 'them'.

There is no need to have a dialogue with populist leaders, who in fact are mostly pragmatic and not seeking good solutions to the problems as this would diminish their support. There is a need to have a dialogue with the public, to create an atmosphere of open discussion where concerns can be expressed openly, while at the same time punishing hate. The responsibility is on the politicians who have failed to bring alternative rational proposals and ways of approaching the problems that provoke fear. Trust in politics and politicians is very low in many EU countries. Liberal principles and values are under pressure, including the rule of law, human and social rights, and even democracy is at stake.

What Europe needs is to protect and

further develop the structures that formed Europe. Communities, civil society, and a public sphere that are open for dialogue, culture, that are crossing the borders and bringing inspiration. And critical thinking, through the universities' responsibility to society. We do not need to be afraid of local, regional, ethnic, national, or religious identities if these are not trying to destroy others. Europeans do not have to be afraid of different national historical narratives if they are able to find consensus on basic European values and the structures and processes that enable their formation. And of course we have to understand why and how Europe has several times tragically failed to defend these values. These facts and the truth matter.

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**Europe in the year 2032** Many Europeans are more likely to associate the European Union with agricultural subsidies than with the Enlightenment. The general public's attitude towards the European project has always ranged from neutral to hostile. But isn't it wonderful that the continent that produced Auschwitz is now busy arguing over agricultural subsidies? Long may that continue. Let's turn our swords into agricultural subsidies.

*By Navid Kermani*

Creating a sense of optimism about Europe's future requires us to look to the past. Thirty years ago, Schengen was a small town in Luxembourg and the euro was not even a foreign word. Fifty years ago, there were areas in Europe where it was unsafe for Germans to be out and about on their own, and southern Europe had dictatorships whose culture was considered incompatible with European values. Seventy-five years ago, Germany itself was out of step with the rest of the West and steered Europe into a clash of civilisations that was to cost the lives of twenty-five million people.

A hundred years ago, people would have laughed at anyone who dreamed of a united Europe. Now, buoyed by history, we are dreaming of another direction. Europe in 2032, the 75th anniversary of the Treaties of Rome: France's first black foreign minister states that Sudan really does not belong to Europe. And the Maghreb states are told that they will need to satisfy the Kiev criteria before they are allowed to join the EU. German President Cem Özdemir, who was elected thanks to the votes of the former Jamaica Coalition, urges the new German government to support the promises made by the EU to Iran in the event that it fully embraces democracy. The EU summit in Tel Aviv threatens to collapse because Palestinian olive farmers are using barricades to protest against cuts to agricultural subsidies. Across the continent, right-wing populist parties are on the rise, spouting warnings about being overrun by foreigners and national interests being sold off. The translation service in Brussels is collapsing. Europe is in crisis. No change there then.

Okay, okay, maybe that's not realistic, at least not if you consider what is going on at the moment. The right-wing populist parties are already on the rise, and when people hear the word Jamaica in 2032 they are more

likely to think of a sinking island in the Caribbean than of a defunct coalition government in Germany. There are still areas where it is unsafe for foreigners to be out and about on their own, except that foreigners are no longer seen as coming from a neighbouring country, but from a neighbouring continent. The idea of European unification currently seems to have more to do with setting up a huge pan-European database to store fingerprints. People are more likely to associate the European Union with agricultural subsidies than with enlightenment.

The general public's attitude towards the European project has always ranged from neutral to hostile. However, past generations had writers such as Heinrich Heine or Thomas Mann, and politicians such as Arnold Ruge and Konrad Adenauer, who stood out from the crowd because, for them, Europe was about more than regulating lunchboxes. It was an existential necessity: a mode of coexistence that does not seek to abolish the differences between ethnic groups, languages, religions and nations but rather to defuse them politically and even recognise them as a form of wealth.

When we look for defenders of the European idea among Germany's intellectuals today, we think of, uh, Habermas.... and Habermas... and Habermas.

Germans have become so obviously European that they don't even realise it. The longer (Western) Europe lives in peace, the more it loses its awareness of just how amazing, how successful the unification project actually is. What was once seen as revolutionary and, quite literally, border-busting, now has the aura of being little more than the subject of fancy speeches or, even worse, the chatter of do-gooders. And it's true that agricultural subsidies don't sound sexy. But isn't it wonderful that the continent that produced Auschwitz is now busy arguing over agricultural subsidies? Long may that continue. Let's turn our swords into agricultural subsidies – in the Balkans, Eastern Europe and the Middle East too. Let's keep arguing about agricultural subsidies and wasting a fortune on translators.

Back to 2032. There are other potential scenarios. Like the idea of the aged Cem Özdemir as President of Germany. Granted it might not be everybody's idea of a perfect world. But then a black foreign minister doesn't necessarily guarantee better policies either, as we know from the example of the United States.

Europa is a mode of coexistence that doesn't seek to abolish the differences between ethnic groups, languages, religions and nations but rather to defuse them politically and even recognise them as a form of wealth.

### *A better version of America*

On the other hand, it wouldn't be the worst thing if Europe endeavoured to become a better version of America, just as the United States was a better version of Europe fifty or seventy-five years ago. The fact that it still seems unimaginable on this continent to address representatives of the state by name, if that name doesn't sound European, is a problem for people with foreign names, which in Germany means at least one fifth of the

population. But if it has still not become commonplace in Europe by 2032, it is a problem for Europe. It would mean that one hundred or two hundred million people, whose third, fourth or fifth-generation families live in Europe, will still not feel accepted. Set against the social conflicts that would probably grow out of such a situation, the beatings by youth gangs in Berlin-Neukölln or even the riots in the suburbs of Paris would look like a cakewalk. The blueprint for such a future would surely be that of America's past.

And how about Sudan? Don't worry, the author is not calling for half of Africa to be allowed to join the European Union. But the principle of universality is intrinsic to the European idea in the emphatic sense, the idea of a secular, transnational, multi-religious and multi-ethnic community, of the kind that grew out of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution.

It cannot be relativised and has no fixed geographical boundaries. It cannot simply end at Gibraltar or Ireland, or at the Polish or Bulgarian borders. There is a good reason why Immanuel Kant's perpetual peace involved a league of 'republican' nations. Of course this is a utopia and nobody knew that better than Kant, the most sober of all European philosophers. But the moment Europe stops envisioning such a utopia and stops trying to move towards that utopia, it ceases to exist as an idea. So Turkey does not yet satisfy the Copenhagen criteria, which have rightly been made a condition of membership of the European Union? Right. So Europe should do everything in its power to ensure that Turkey changes in line with these criteria – and should be proud if one day Turkey were to join the European Union.

The prospect of belonging to Europe was an important incentive for societies in the southern and eastern areas of the continent to rid themselves of dictatorships and impose radical reforms. It is true that each subsequent expansion to what is now 27 Member States had the effect of overstretching the European Union, but just imagine the alternative if Europeans had decided to simply make themselves comfortable within their own borders. Imagine if the EU decided to not just throttle back as an engine of reform, (which might make sense occasionally due to overheating), but to actually switch the engine off altogether – what would then happen in Eastern Europe and Turkey would not just be uncomfortable for the old Europeans. It would be dramatic.

Sudan will not be knocking on the door of the European Union in 2032 either. But if you consider the speed at which Europe has grown together in recent decades, it's hard to know how far to cast your net when trying to imagine Europe's future – perhaps not quite as far as Sudan, but maybe Tel Aviv and the protests of the Palestinian oil farmers. Let's not be more unrealistic than Immanuel Kant. However, perhaps we should leave the question of world peace for the next anniversary but one.

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# An answer to populism

How can the cultural sector respond to the factors that explain the rise of support for populist, Eurosceptic, radical parties in Europe? The author argues that such a reaction must consider the networked manner in which such inward-looking forces organise themselves, which is why cultural actors should also work in a coordinated manner.

*By Mafalda Dâmaso*

Europe is increasingly divided. Around the continent, one witnesses increasing political radicalisation: in some countries, voters have to choose between Eurosceptics and global free trade – as was the case in the 2017 French presidential election. In others, centre parties and politicians are losing public support in favour of more radical ideas. At the same time, populist rhetoric is thriving in the western world. Across the Atlantic, criticism of President Trump's policies is regularly derided either as fake news or as reflective of the supposedly privileged values of a global liberal elite – a trend that is crossing over to the European continent.

Although the cultural sector is independent from political discussions in a strict sense, a context in which narratives about the world are characterised by a dualistic simplification of reality (an ideological and rhetorical characteristic that Eurosceptic, radical and populist parties and groups share) is detrimental to the sector in several ways. By definition, artists need freedom to experiment not only formally but also symbolically, that is, to appropriate and recombine images and codes. Within illiberal democracies, the freedom to do so is strongly curtailed. On a broader scale, it is impossible to imagine a European Union in which several of these inward-looking formations take power; rather, the Union would likely disintegrate. This would have direct negative consequences for the increasingly transnational work of artists, which depends on the freedom of movement of persons, services, goods and capital. At the same time, the end of the Union would weaken the legal status of the fundamental values contained in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights (human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights), which protect the work of artists and cultural producers.

In short, a social and political context that is characterised by the circulation of narratives

that oppose, in a seemingly dualistic manner, a reductive understanding of 'us' (the people, the supposedly non-morally corrupt individuals, the French/English/German...) to 'them' (the elites, the supposedly morally corrupt groups, the foreigners) is an environment that is not prone to artistic creation. Populist, radical, and/or Eurosceptic forces put the freedoms enjoyed by the cultural sector at risk; as such, it is only fitting that the sector should attempt to respond to the factors that explain the success of such forces.

### *Prone to inward-looking formations*

In this direction, I have written a report for ifa's *Culture and Foreign Policy edition* that argues that such a response should be both evidence-based and networked. I make this argument after reviewing the scholarly evidence on the variables that explain the success of inward-looking parties and formations, which highlight the need to design a multidimensional, long-term response. By this I mean that the cultural sector should consider and address the reasons why individuals become more prone to inward-looking formations (the micro level); the strategies used by these movements to embed themselves locally and nationally (the mezzo level); and, finally, the rhetorical strategies employed by them, i.e. their ideologies (the macro level). I also argue that the networked ways in which those political formations collaborate and act, which make them highly responsive to social and cultural changes, should be replicated by the cultural sector.

In the report, I discuss the model of the ecology of culture, proposed by cultural writer John Holden in 2016, and explain its relevance in this context. In this piece, I will focus on three case studies that can be seen as models for such a multidimensional, structured approach. This will be followed by some suggestions on the type of relationships that should be fostered by the cultural sector to respond to the context identified above, and how the Union's institutions can support such work.

In *The Ecology of Culture* (2016) Holden proposes viewing the sector as a network composed of nomads, platforms, connections and guardians. In this model, cultural actors can operate in several roles simultaneously; however, one of them tends to be dominant. The strength of this model is often seen as residing in its identification of the actors that are key to maintaining an active network of cultural production, dissemination and consumption while also rejecting traditional distinctions such as public versus private. However, I believe that the nomenclature is also relevant in this context. This is because the identification of cultural actors based on their position within the production, circulation and filtering of cultural content can also be understood, albeit indirectly, as providing the guidelines for an integrated response by the cultural sector to the process of the circulation of 'us versus them' narratives, the institutionalisation of actors that advocate such discourses and, finally, the growth of individual support for those ideas.

The following case studies exemplify how this typology can contribute to the

development of targeted – and, I must stress, evidence-based – strategies to counter the increasing success of inward-looking formations around Europe.

The first element in this model is the nomad, that is to say the visitor who consumes culture, as well as producers, artists and technicians, i.e. those who make art and/or perform, enjoy it and/or collect it. Second, and what interests me in this context, platforms are organisations that host cultural content, such as galleries, pubs and community halls. They include spaces that are available for hire and that programme public events to showcase commissioned work or the work of others, as well as websites that allow users to upload their work.

An example of a platform is Les Laboratoires d'Aubervilliers, on the outskirts of Paris. Founded in 1993, it occupies a 900-square-metre, former metallurgy factory in a working-class community where it is estimated that 39 per cent of the population lives below the poverty line. Since 2013, its current directors (Alexandra Baudelot, Dora García and Mathilde Villeneuve) have used the space to nurture artistic experimentation and support artistic practices that foster active forms of citizenship and coexistence.

Indeed, rather than seeing art as an independent field, the programme of Les Laboratoires is structured around social and political questions. The space organises exhibitions, reading groups, workshops and public meetings that bring together artists, researchers and the local community. The result is a platform for not only cross-sectoral and collaborative work but also community and network-building, that is, for the development of long-term relationships with local groups and individuals, whom it brings together to work in partnership with the artists (and, occasionally, with cultural, social or scientific institutions) on specific projects and commissions.

The directors of Les Laboratoires describe its programme as a collective process of sharing, learning and experiencing in which art and the social context are equal partners. Additionally, Les Laboratoires are part of several European collectives and networks connected by the goal to develop at local scale new forms of knowledge production and distribution within and around art.

The networked ways in which those political formations collaborate and act, which make them highly responsive to social and cultural changes, should be replicated by the cultural sector.

## *Nomads and connectors*

As Les Laboratoires suggests, platforms may counter division in Europe by developing long-term collaborative work that responds to the specificities (and hence the anxieties) of specific communities and individuals. Platforms can understand individual frustrations and sense of unease; they can also provide a site for community organisation, hence validating those voices and aspirations. As such, they can provide a response to some of the factors that may explain support for such inward-looking movements (micro level). Additionally, the strong connection of platforms to their local context allows them to address the processes

of institutionalisation that are required for those actors to organise, become visible, and be further legitimised locally and regionally (mezzo level).

Third, connectors are actors and organisations that transform ideas into reality, and 'have an intimate knowledge of the micro-operations of their field' and 'put people and resources together, and move energy around the ecology' (Holden, 2016). Connectors include producers, arts administrators, critics, bloggers and curators as well as publicly funded centres that function as lively cultural platforms in cities and regions.

An example of a cultural connector is Hands Off Our Revolution [HOUR], a global coalition of artists, curators, theoreticians and cultural producers affirming the radical nature of art formed in 2017. Its mission statement proposes that 'art can help counter the rising rhetoric of right-wing populism, fascism and the increasingly stark expressions of xenophobia, racism, sexism, homophobia and unapologetic intolerance [...]. As artists [...] it is our role and our opportunity, using our own particular forms, private and public spaces, to engage people in thinking together and debating ideas, with clarity, openness and resilience' (HOUR website, 2017). In this context, HOUR organises workshops that establish links between actors in the cultural world, grassroots activists and other not-for-profit organisations so that such actors can identify the shape of cultural resistance to populism. HOUR also plans to organise art exhibitions and public actions that bring into public view debates and proposals regarding future models of social and community organisation.

HOUR exemplifies the potential of connectors to respond at the mezzo and macro levels. Indeed, by establishing links among specialists and disseminating knowledge among its network, HOUR provides what policymakers would describe as an informal forum of capacity-building (which could be formalised or accompanied by more formal programmes) on how cultural actors may break linkages among inward-looking actors and preempt their local institutionalisation (mezzo level). Additionally, HOUR's rejection of top-down hierarchies allows it to be organised while also remaining flexible enough to respond quickly to changes in the strategies that are used by inward-looking movements. Finally, its future exhibitions and art projects can be interpreted as places for experimentation on the most effective artistic responses to the circulation of such ideologies (macro level).

Fourth and finally, guardians are actors and/or organisations that are responsible for collecting, taking care of and displaying cultural assets – e.g. archives, museums, libraries and heritage bodies but also heritage scholars.

An example of a cultural guardian is Tate Modern – one of the most recognised art brands in the world. Its building hosts Tate Exchange, an annual programme that connects international artists, more than 50 organisations that work with and beyond the arts, developing a conversation around what art can do to society and to people's lives. It

does so by organising performances and workshops, which lead to short-term exhibitions. One of the projects organised in this context was Who Are We?, a 6-day event in March 2017 'designed to facilitate the co-creation, co-production, and exchange of knowledges among artists, academics, activists, and diverse publics around the multiple crises of identity and belonging in Europe and the UK'. The project explored the meaning of civic behaviour and, crucially, aimed at 'creating a space for encounters between people and communities often kept apart by binaries: artists versus audiences, academics versus artists, migrants versus "natives", and activists versus publics' (from the project's website).

Although Tate Exchange could be seen as a platform within a guardian, what is key is the way this case study reveals the potential of guardians to lend their brand's legitimacy to cultural conversations around identity, citizenship and belonging. Indeed, cultural workers know that guardians are often as innovative as smaller organisations; however, as Holden notes in his report, audiences tend to recognise such institutions or individuals as keepers of historical and disciplinary narratives, which such institutions filter. If a specific question is included in a museum's exhibition, non-specialist visitors will tend to deduce that such a question is a valid view among experts. An integrated response from the cultural sector to the success of inward-looking formations would borrow this perceived legitimacy, a key factor recognised by scholars as explaining the institutionalisation of far-right narratives (which are increasingly perceived by voters as legitimate due to their circulation in mass media TV channels, for example). Additionally, projects supported by guardian cultural institutions, whose brands are highly recognisable, could circulate around the institutions' countries, collecting stories that showcase citizenship and belonging as a complex process in collaboration with cultural grassroots organisations, and the result of such a process could be regularly shown in prime time on public TV channels. In this way, guardians would respond to the circulation of inward-looking ideologies (macro level).

### *At EU level*

Although these case studies provide examples of the shape of such an ecological response to division within the European continent, the answer provided by the cultural sector can only be successful if it is evidence-based, structured and at least broadly coordinated. This is why, first, it is crucial to recognise the multi-dimensional character of support for inward-looking movements. Second, it is crucial to change the focus to the long-term impact of culture rather than evaluating its projects based on audience numbers and the economic value of the sector. Over recent years, the cultural sector has often struggled for funding. This has often left it no time for the development of long-term projects that engage with local communities. Third, one should prioritise dedicating resources, support and capacity-building efforts to grassroots organisations who work in close relationship with their communities. Although some form of coordination is needed, this work shouldn't be organised in a top-down manner – as such, the possibility of co-management, uniting experts to cultural and grassroots organisations

with equal rights and resources, should be evaluated. Fourth, it is crucial that such a structured response incorporates continuing monitoring and knowledge sharing processes. By this I mean that quick sharing and responsive learning should be embedded within the network of cultural actors that develop work in response to social and political division. At the same time, it is important that there are clear definitions, that methods are harmonised, and that there are quality criteria and indicators of what constitutes effective action against division.

This would also have consequences at the level of EU cultural strategies and policies. Indeed, and fifth, I must highlight the EU's responsibility for supporting cultural work that reiterates its fundamental values (while, of course, respecting the principle of subsidiarity).

Sixth, policymakers must recognise that culture is a site of processes and relations, and privilege actors and projects that understand it as such. Although there is evidence that this view is increasingly prevalent among policymakers, it still remains rare overall. As such, what is required is a change in paradigm within European institutions to fully recognise the potential impact of culture on social cohesion and inclusiveness, not to mention on the enactment of the fundamental values of the Union. Seventh, cultural work should stress the fact that the European Union is characterised by a criss-crossing of identities, as is evident in the motto 'United in Diversity'. A common assumption of different inward-looking groups is the idea of identities as stables and zero sum; work that opposes them must place cultural diversity at its centre, i.e. celebrate it. At the same time, such work must acknowledge and respond to the fact that the individuals who are the most likely to support these inward-looking narratives and groups are often afraid of a world in transition. As such, it is crucial that such celebration of cultural diversity is conveyed as a form of individual empowerment. Eighth and finally, it is key that the EU supports interdisciplinary research and cross-sectoral work, as well as convergences and synergies between EU programmes, policy tools and instruments. It is only possible for such cultural work to effectively address some of the root causes of support for inward-looking movements (such as social disengagement and weak community links) in an integrated manner.

This said, while the cultural sector can indeed develop extremely important work in response to the micro, mezzo and macro levels of support for inward-looking formations (as the three case studies demonstrate), it cannot be expected, by itself, to resolve the context of widespread social division.

**Mafalda Dâmaso** is a researcher whose work focuses on the intersection of culture and international affairs. She is an expert in Culture and Foreign Policy for ifa, in whose context she organised a conference and wrote a research report on how the cultural sector can respond to political division in Europe. Mafalda earned her Ph.D. in visual culture from Goldsmiths, University of London, where she has lectured. She has also been a guest lecturer in Switzerland and has worked in the cultural sector and in the creative industries in several other European countries.

# Beyond 'Us versus Them'

*How can the arts and culture help to make society less polarised? A Brussels conference sought out some answers.*

While the terms 'Eurosceptic', 'far-right' and 'far-left' are clear, the notion of 'populism' is often misunderstood. Rather than referring to policies that are popular, populists tend to separate society into 'the people', which they define as morally unquestionable, and a number of 'elites', which they condemn as badly intentioned based on non-refutable claims.

Populism disregards pluralism, the rule of law and minorities. And this is precisely why the cultural sector should get involved. This was the case with the conference: *Beyond Us and Them – The Role of Culture in a Divided Europe*. These 'Us' and 'Them' can be understood as 'Us', the people, and 'Them', the elites of populism. But they also refer to the increase in nationalism and xenophobia around Europe – that is, to the incapacity to empathise with the other as an equal.

In this context, the cultural sector can play a crucial role. Artists and cultural organisations who choose to do work in response to these trends understand culture as a site of encounters, that is, as a platform in which those tensions and conflicts can be acknowledged, made manifest, and openly discussed. In sum, culture is a site in which populist oversimplifications of reality as well as the factors that explain the success of political forces are, directly or not, confronted.

The conference was organised around four closed labs that focused on different issues: how to provide an evidence-based cultural response to these inward-looking movements; whether it is possible to develop an anti-populist, extremist and Eurosceptic cultural policy; whether it is necessary to rethink EU cultural governance in this context and, finally, whether the cultural sector should be expanded to other fields, such as social policy. This was followed by a public event.

In the evening session, artist Adam Broomberg gave a keynote address about the *Hands Off Our Revolution* project, which he spearheads – a global coalition affirming the radical nature of art and its power to counter the rising rhetoric of right-wing populism. He was then joined by the rapporteurs of the four labs (respectively, Ulrike Liebert, Professor at University of Bremen; Jasna Jelisić, expert in cultural diplomacy; Andrew Murray, Director of EUNIC Global, and Charles Esche, Director, Van Abbemuseum) in a conversation chaired by Andrea Despot, Deputy Director, European Academy Berlin.

The panellists agreed that the potential of culture to respond to a context of social division throughout the continent can only be fulfilled by addressing the patterns of exclusion that characterise both the sector and the European project. This demands that cultural actors and institutions reject a top-down approach to their audiences and communities. Additionally, the sector must acknowledge that there is some truth to some of the arguments made by Eurosceptic parties – namely, the fact that the Union has allowed itself to be seen as an economic rather than as a values-driven project. Finally, fulfilling the potential of the cultural sector to enact the motto of the Union ('Unity in Diversity') demands acknowledging its own complicity, even if unwitting, with some of the recent trends that explain the success of political inward-looking forces, such as the sense of abandonment of non-urban citizens by decision-makers. Although these points may amount to a change in paradigm to some cultural actors, they reflect the work that is already being developed by many others throughout the continent – showing that a cultural response to the escalating divisions throughout the European continent is indeed possible.

*Mafalda Dâmaso*

**My Europe** Fear has crept in beneath the surface of a Europe that, in many places, still remains both peaceful and prosperous. We citizens with a migrant background have failed to talk to our neighbours, our work colleagues, the people in the queue at the baker's or at the employment exchange about their fears over the numbers of refugees. We live without a home – but we now need to make the first move, for the sake of this new state, Germany, and for the sake of this continent, Europe, where our children were born. *By Beqë Cufaj*

Searching for oneself is above all about dealing with memories. With the memory cards on which the borders of Europe are recorded, starting with the city of my birth in south-western Kosovo, the political unrest I lived with throughout all the years of my youth, the destructive war that raged across the whole of the former Yugoslavia, from which seven new states emerged.

And then comes the chapter full of memories and travel on the continent: of chaotic and bureaucratic Brussels and The Hague, which lies on the edge of the cold sea; Paris and the insane terrorists; Spain, which is as German on the island of Majorca as it is Catalan elsewhere; electrifying Vienna and Kafka's Prague,;Slovakia without the Roma, who have now become scattered all over the continent; Catholic Warsaw and melancholy Portugal,not to mention magnificent London. Maps and borders, which you somehow no longer want to see, but just remember. In pictures or in the form of letters, letters, letters.

Searching for oneself is about escaping from people and seeking out the vastness of the mountains in the area where I live: drifting through the fields past the Stuttgart Television Tower in Degerloch in the direction of the Daimler Center; or walking down the road to Waldau, down to the only state capital in Europe in which the Greens won both the state and local elections. To make this idyll even more perfect, it is also the state capital that produces more machines than any other in the world, the one in which one of the most modern railway stations in Europe is now being built, a capital city that with only 600,000 inhabitants can truly be described as an infinitely perfect world!

The main street in the district of Degerloch is called Epple Strasse. Along a 400-metre section of this road, which is over two kilometres long, there are five chemist's, eight baker's, nine other shops (mainly organic produce!), three kiosks, four inexpensive snack bars and four very expensive restaurants, two orthopaedic shoe shops, two shops for hearing aids, ten doctor's surgeries, four dentists, a book

shop and a town library, a very attractive community centre, an evangelical church, a Christian Orthodox church, an apostolic church, two primary schools, a secondary school, a grammar school, two weekly markets with fresh produce, two petrol stations and, and, and... people from all over the continent! On the upper side of Degerloch, along the edge of the forest, there are sports clubs with dozens of football pitches, tennis courts, athletics tracks and fitness and gymnastics facilities. The number of senior care homes bordering these facilities has increased so much over the last ten years that it's hard to calculate exactly how many there are now.

*Invisible refugees*

This is the perfect world that is Degerloch, a place I have lived in for more than ten years now, and around which I tend to roam on a daily basis, especially in the last three years, without ever leaving it, except for the occasional holidays in Italy, Austria or the Netherlands, or one or two trips within Germany. Almost every region in the south of Germany, but also in the north, west and east. is also a perfect world. After all, this country is well-known throughout the world for having similar living standards in all of its different regions.

The 16,351 inhabitants of the perfect world that is Degerloch have been joined by an additional 306 people in the last few months. These new inhabitants are virtually invisible, however, because they have been accommodated in the surrounding forests: the refugees. Some are welcome – others not so much.

Should the exact distribution of votes by the good people of Degerloch during the last federal elections be mentioned at this point? Or is it really necessary for the sympathy or lack thereof towards those who need help to be translated into fear at the baker's, the chemist's, or in the supermarkets, streets, schools and ballot boxes? Or is it rather politics with its manipulation, its war on terror and the crazy Islamists who force people and society back into the arms of the populists who only want a 'pure' race? Terrifying the partitioning on maps of districts into towns and villages, of states and continents, by races. Unbearable the fear. And inexcusable the confusion.

The boundaries of the villages must be broken down for the people who have now settled here. On the fringes of our residential areas, in containers, old buildings, abandoned areas. It won't be easy. But it's much easier to actually start on the work that is needed. Then you see something magical happen: they will start to feel a part of this society, like every

Chaotic and bureaucratic Brussels and The Hague, which lies on the edge of the cold sea; Paris and the insane terrorists; Spain, which is as German on the island of Majorca as it is Catalan elsewhere; electrifying Vienna and Kafka's Prague; Slovakia without the Roma, who have now become scattered all over the continent; Catholic Warsaw and melancholy Portugal; not to mention magnificent London. Maps and borders, which you somehow no longer want to see, but just remember.

one of us did when we came here after the Second World War, to help rebuild Germany, for the 'Made in Germany' miracle, during the fall of the Iron Curtain and to work on the process of reunification, at the time of the horrific wars in the former Yugoslavia. And now, during the appalling Syrian war, the consequences of which are now being felt by Degerloch, with its 306 new inhabitants.

And Stuttgart is not that far from places where terrorist attacks have been committed: Istanbul, Brussels, Istanbul again, Nice, Saint-Étienne-du-Rouvray, Würzburg, Ansbach, Munich, London, Berlin. These cities are normally associated with sightseeing, beach holidays, shopping trips or hiking tours. Or at least they would be during ordinary, peaceful times. But sadly not over recent months and years.

Unfortunately, therefore, letters alone are powerless against all the pain and insufficient in themselves to describe the tragedy that has befallen the unknown and unsuspecting victims in all of these cities. The despicable murders, the suffering brought about by this awful confrontation between religions and civilisations, cultures and languages, states and peoples. It is very difficult, if not impossible, to come up with a diagnosis for the disease that is currently infecting humanity.

Just as the internet knows no borders or languages, so the security and intelligence services will find it impossible to avert the dangers and cowardly attacks of the frustrated and the conned, who blow themselves and the people around them up in the name of a God that does not exist.

And it is the politicians who, more than ever before, have the task of providing their citizens with security when they go to work or on holiday. And it is the citizens who must use their votes to elect those politicians who will work hard and with all the necessary care, attention and vision to achieve peace in these fragile and uncertain times.

That's what needs to happen. Though nothing will happen, if nobody wants it to. This is why I think we are sliding inexorably into a time that will be even more frightening than the one we live in now.

After the Brexit vote and Trump's victory in 2016, and the elections in the Netherlands, France, Germany and Austria, we are all still standing around as if nothing has actually happened. The elections in those countries were referendums in their own right: for nation-states and discrimination against foreigners or for improvements to the legal framework surrounding migration policy and for European cooperation in the war on terror.

This disease, which mankind does not have under control, knows neither prophets nor doctors. No politician or secret service agency can protect the unaware against those who believe they can take revenge for their own misfortune by attacking people at the market with a truck or a bomb. There is no sociologist or philosopher, let alone a writer with sufficient knowledge or power, who can provide an adequate answer to our impotence in the face of such a violent storm, which can strike at any moment and at any place, whether it be in the department store, the football stadium, at a train station or in any other public place. And this makes people lose their last vestige of hope of ever finding something that can truly be described as 'human'.

Our European, Western concept of civilisation is being attacked by that of another world, represented by groomed or

manipulated individuals, either refugees or migrants of the second or third generation, some of whom are now regarded as a threat, who have grown up in Europe but yet want to strike a blow against it. Wherever and whenever. During the year we are leaving behind, or the one we are entering into.

So fear has become an inseparable part of our everyday lives. Former German President Joachim Gauck said in a speech that we should not be afraid: 'We feel fear – but we are not consumed by it. We feel powerlessness, but we are not consumed by it. We feel rage, but we are not consumed by it'.

What a relief!

And yet the fear remains. Because it's that fear that prevails in every speech, including those given by the highest representative of both country and continent.

And I don't mean just Europe. Two examples – one European and the other Asian. Dubravka Ugrešić and Arundhati Roy. The first is the author of the novel *The Ministry of Pain*, the second the author of the novel *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*. These two authors, whom I always read, refer to non-existent, fictitious ministries in the titles of their fictional works. And they recount the tragedies of their home countries. Ugrešić comes from the former Yugoslavia, a state that no longer exists, while Roy is from India, a country that is surviving. Striking stories, marked by centuries of individual and collective history.

Writers create and destroy. Homelands and empires. Real and fictional. So they are like prophets who know no government, no constitution, no laws or times. And they reserve the right to create their own ministries. Like the women in these novels.

Writers create and destroy. Homelands and empires. Real and fictional. So they are like prophets who know no government, no constitution, no laws or times.

Do you think there's a novel called Homeland Ministry too? Or Ministry of the Fatherland? The two designations for someone's region of origin don't just differ in terms of gender – '*die Heimat*' and '*das Vaterland*' in German. The term 'homeland' also sounds much more homely and was also clearly less abused in the past than the word 'fatherland'.

German politicians from the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) party insist that a homeland ministry should be set up in Germany along the lines of the Bavarian model, partly in response to the results of the recent elections, in which the right-wing AFD achieved double-digit results in some areas. I imagine that the AFD leadership under Mr Gauland et al would also be sympathetic to this idea. Except that they would probably want to go even further and call it the Ministry of the Fatherland! Ten years ago, I wrote a poem on this subject entitled *Das Vaterland*, which Michael Krüger published in the literary journal *Akzente*:

*'von dir Vaterland sagen viele du seist für sie/ Vater und Land. für dich werden viele tränen vergossen/von wissenden und unwissenden du hast die macht/alles dir eigen zu machen. deine erde ist alt, dein himmel/ unendlich, die menschen gehören niemand als Gott und dir/so auch vögel, die flüsse, die ebenen, die meere,/die schmerzen, die kinder, die träume... die eroberer/die poeten, die verliebten, die verratenen, die vergreisten.../ alle gehören dir... so auch das leben, der tod./*

*nur eins ist mir nicht klar/Vaterland/wem gehörst du?'*

['of you Fatherland many say you are for them/father and country. for you many tears are shed/by knowing and unknowing you have the power/to make it all your own. your earth is old, your heaven/infinite, the people belong to no one but God and you/so too birds, rivers, plains, oceans,/the pains, the children, the dreams... the conquerors, the poets, the lovers, the betrayed, the aged.... / all belong to you... so also life, death./only one thing is unclear to me/fatherland/who do you belong to?']

I believe that it is actually quite difficult to clarify the kind of political situations that nations both large and small sometimes go through – whether with novels in which ministries are created or with poems that demand something of the fatherland. Especially in the times we are now living in. Because the AfD is now a reality in Germany. Some might call it a normality that simply fits in with the rest of Europe, in which the extreme right has long since found its voters, and who they keep on trying to catch with the appropriate bait for all their resentments and fears, which clearly have a significant role to play.

## *Silent neighbours*

I would argue that it is we, the citizens of with a migrant background, who are to blame for this, as much as the parties in the centre, on the right or on the left. We have failed to talk to these millions of people, our neighbours, our work colleagues, the people waiting in the queue at the baker's or claming benefits at the employment exchange, about the fears they feel about the many refugees who are now in the country. The discussions amongst our fellow citizens, who 'migrated' to the political right, and their recriminations against millions of their fellow human beings, seem to be as tragic as they are terrifying. And the talk of a homeland ministry on the right and the notion of what constitutes homeland on the left are just as worrying.

Should we start talking about a ministry of migration as well, or should we perhaps be calling for a ministry of integration? No!

What we – the new Germans, the new Europeans, the millions of citizens of this country and this continent with a migrant background – need to do is very simple: start talking to our fellow countrymen about their fears. We need to break the taboo and ask them: 'Why are you afraid? What exactly are you afraid of?' We need to tell them that we are scared too. That we may even be more scared than they are. Scared of Gauland, but also of those new arrivals in this country who do not come to seek shelter, but to attack us in our inner cities, trains and airports.

We live without a home – but we now need to make the first move, for the sake of this new state, Germany, and for the sake of this continent, Europe, where our children were born.

I, for my part, have already started talking to my friends and acquaintances about their fears. And about my own!

**Beqë Cufaj** is a writer and journalist. He was born in Decan, in southwestern Kosovo in 1970 and studied literature in Pristina. He lives with his wife and two daughters in Stuttgart-Degerloch. He writes for a number of publications, including the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* and the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*. His novel *projekt@party* was recently published by Secession Verlag.

## Passports, wedding bells and wallabies

Northern Irish writer Glenn Patterson says that one of the great attractions of being in Europe is that you don't have to go through Dublin or London to make connections. His Europe is less the Europe of the great capitals as the Europe of provincial industrial cities like Essen, Poznan and Debrecen. His Europe is about the unfettered movement of ideas and people, and quite simply a wonderful feeling.

*By Glenn Patterson*

My first Irish passport arrived on the January day that Prime Minister May stood up in the House of Commons to announce the Bill that would trigger Article 50.

Pretty impressive timing, you might think, but if anything I was a bit behind the curve. Wait... a bit? I was so far behind that in the movie version I would be standing in the street trying to hail another curve and telling it not to lose sight of the one in front.

In the days immediately after the EU Referendum in June 2016 – days when I saw neighbours actually crying in the street – there was such a rush for Irish passports that Post Offices here in Northern Ireland were reported to have run out of application forms. Even Ian Paisley MP, a prominent member of the Leave campaigning Democratic Unionist Party, or DUP, was urging anyone who qualified to apply, as much as to say 'we didn't really expect you to buy that UK out stuff...' And of course this being Northern Ireland, an administrative region of the United Kingdom, whose citizens are recognised in the Republic of Ireland's constitution 'by entitlement and birthright' to be part of the Irish Nation, just about everyone qualified.

That wasn't a curve I was following, that was a tidal wave.

In actual fact my own Irish passport application had by that stage been sitting in a drawer in my desk for nearly three years – since back in the days when the Referendum was still a twinkle in one man's slightly crazed-looking eye. I'd picked it up, if I remember correctly, ahead of a planned trip to the USA. Visas are easier, I was always told, with an Irish passport, so I was surprised recently to hear someone state the exact opposite, that many people here whose first choice would be an Irish passport took out a UK one specifically for transatlantic trips.

Which for some reason reminds me of one of those recurrent arguments my brothers and I used to have in the back seat of the family car on long journeys about whether cows lying down in a field was a good sign or a bad sign.

I can't remember which of my exasperated parents settled that in the end by telling us that if the cows' legs were in the air it was definitely a bad sign.

The passport question has always been a vexed one here in Northern Ireland. Seamus Heaney's declaration in his 1983 poem *Open Letter*, 'Be advised, my passport is green', is often quoted – cast up would be more accurate – though less often mentioned is his rueful admission in numerous interviews that his passport in his younger years was an 'old blue style' British one – typical as he said of the 'bind and contradictions' of coming from here.

Since the later 1980s, of course, both passports have been the same shade of EU burgundy, which would have put the kibosh on Heaney's rhyme of green with Queen: these days only the crest on the front and the text beneath it differ. Still I have noticed, travelling with Northern Irish friends, that we all tactfully look away when it comes time to lay our passports on the check-in table, passports being one of those – very – rough guides here to a person's religion.

Northern Ireland has always been, to borrow the title of Dervla Murphy's 1978 book, *A Place Apart*. Even before Partition in 1921 – even before the Plantation 300 years earlier – Murphy writes, Northerners were 'an anomalous people', out of step with the rest of Europe – the rest of Ireland for that matter.

The passport question has always been a vexed one here in Northern Ireland.

Fast forward forty years and the five-and-a half-thousand square miles loosely corralled by the (for now) invisible border – the 'Fourth Green Field' of sentimental Irish balladry – is, rather unsentimentally, the only part of these islands where you cannot marry the person you love if that person happens to be of the same sex as you.

In September 2015 as part of Belfast's Culture Night I performed an open-air 'wedding ceremony' between two men who clearly loved each other very much.

While it was a performance – though, let's be honest, what wedding isn't? – I went to the trouble of having myself ordained in advance. Well, I say 'trouble': my online ordination took as long as it took the American company – sorry church – to verify my bank details: 'If this page does not refresh in thirty seconds… twenty-nine, twenty-eight…' Ping! – There it was, there I was, upon the recommendation of the church board, obviously hastily convened, licensed to conduct marriages in forty-three out of fifty states and – for one night only – on the front steps of Belfast's Merchant Hotel.

Actually those Americans would have been the ideal people to help clear last June's Irish passport backlog.

I haven't broken the news yet to my children, by the way, that because of how I am perceived they are Protestant too. I fear the effect, coming on top of Brexit, would be like a stretched elastic band suddenly snapping back. In common with many children here they could parse their identity almost before they could handle a knife and fork: first and foremost of course they were blessed with being from Bel-

fast, their mummy, though, was from Cork, so that made them Irish, their passports had a crown on them, so that made them British, and they walked under the blue sign with the pretty circle of golden stars at airports, so that made them European.

## *Simple as sticklebricks*

Sometime in the early 2000s – in advance of the Nice Treaty, as I recall, and how Season 1 that now sounds – I was asked by the British Council in Brussels to contribute to a book of essays on the subject of identity. Another writer friend who had been asked to contribute too said that for a Northern Irish person this was a bit like someone turning up on your doorstep with a fistful of banknotes asking if you had any old rope.

Oh, we were laughing then all right.

I met that same friend shortly after the Brexit result. He told me, grim-faced, that he was finished with this place. Northern Ireland had only ever been tolerable if it was part of something larger, a complex of interlocking relationships. If it was to be stuck now out in the Atlantic, with a border once more between it and the rest of the island, and – who knows? – maybe an independent Scotland to the east of it, it would be like a lost jigsaw piece, worse, it would be like a piece in want of a jigsaw to belong to.

A couple of months ago I was at the Lyric Theatre in Belfast for a double-bill of music-plays by Conor Mitchell, artistic director of a new music-theatre collective, the Belfast Ensemble. The plays – *The Habsburg Tragedies Parts 1 & 2*, a verse-cycle followed by a melodrama – focused, respectively, on Catherine of Aragon and her sister Joanna of Castile, aka Juana the Mad, and were, their writer says, explicitly conceived of as a way to talk about Europe.

Mitchell is as concerned as the rest of us about what the future holds. As he says, if we aren't able in future to send a Marks and Spencer's van from Belfast to Dublin without rigorous customs checks how on earth are we going to bring Danish State Opera here? Theatre in Northern Ireland, he says, has evolved like a marsupial, to which I am tempted to add, only theatre?

After the play I got talking to a couple of people who had driven up from Dublin for the show, and who had – they took them out and showed them to me – brought their passports, just in case they were stopped at the border.

The third member of their group raised a sceptical eyebrow. 'It hasn't come to that', she said then a little less certainly added, 'and with a bit of luck it never will.'

For my own part, I have been pinning my hopes on the example of the Northern Ireland Peace Process, by which, I hasten to add, I do not mean that I expect the Brexit negotiations will be a beacon to the rest of the world, lauded from pole to pole, but rather that they will drag on so long they will become a thing in themselves, a chapter in the history books of 2117 nearly as long as the one they were intended simply to close. Let them drag on long enough, indeed, and there is every chance the negotiators will all lose sight of where it was

they were coming from and where it was they were going to, or if not lose sight of them then reconfigure both so conclusively as to render them unrecognisable, as politicians here seem to have done many moons ago.

Brexit and how to respond to it has made its way on to the agenda of the latest round of crisis talks here, our two largest parties, and former coalition partners, Sinn Fein and the DUP, having campaigned on opposite sides in the Referendum, which for the record ended up with 56 per cent of those Northern Irish voters who turned out voting to remain.

And yet, as Dervla Murphy observed forty years ago, people here, whatever their religion or voting habits, have more in common with each other than they recognise or allow – much, much more than they have with their counterparts in either Dublin or London.

Between you and me I have always thought that London and Dublin were secretly in love. Oh, of course, they had their big tiff way back when, but each of them I think recognises something of themselves in the other – architecturally, temperamentally – and each of them looks north with a mixture of despair and distaste.

One of the great attractions of being in Europe for me was that you didn't have to go through either of those centres to make connections. The Europe I felt I belonged to was not so much the Europe of the great capitals – though I could live in any of them quite happily thank you – as the Europe of provincial industrial cities, Essen, Poznan, Debrecen, even some that didn't end in 'n'. It was the difference between being peripheral and being on some trans-Europe version of the Paris Périphérique: the constant traffic was what attracted me, the unfettered movement of ideas and people.

And then the brakes went on.

Another friend rang me just before I began work on this essay. A Remainer, and native Londoner, he has brought up his family in County Fermanagh, which has border – future obduracy as yet undetermined – on three sides.

'Have I done the right thing?' he asked, 'living here?'

I wanted to say something reassuring, except he was the very person I had been intending to phone for reassurance if all this uncertainty got too much to me, which at that moment and for a few days afterwards, I am bound to say, it very nearly did.

And then out of the blue, I received an invitation, to the wedding of two more friends – neither of them as it happens born in Northern Ireland either – an already happy couple who had decided to get married after the passing of the Article Fifty Bill announced the day my Irish passport arrived.

'I am the second Brexit bride I know', the woman told me (when I had finished telling her that if she wanted to get married in 43 of the 50 States I was licensed to oblige), and she named someone else of our acquaintance who had decided exactly the same thing at exactly the same time and – it seems no great stretch to deduce – for exactly the same reason, a

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sense that as one union is sundered in an atmosphere of simmering hostility another must be cemented with love.

I don't know if it is necessarily a commitment to this place as well as to one another – though I sincerely hope it is. But having said that I don't know either whether my getting round to taking the Irish passport application from my desk drawer at the beginning of this year was the simple piece of pre-spring cleaning I have been passing it off as, or something more ambiguous, the bipedal equivalent of a bovine stretch on the grass, or whether finally it is a sign that in my own subconscious I fear that post-Brexit this whole Fourth Green field might indeed be about to go seriously hooves up.

**Glenn Patterson** (born 1961) is a writer from Belfast, best known as a novelist. Patterson's recurring theme is the reassessment of the past. In *The International*, he recovers that moment in Belfast's history just before the outbreak of the Troubles, to show diverse strands of city life, essentially to make the point that the political propagandists who explain their positions through history overlook its inconvenient complexity and the possibility that things might have turned out differently. His latest novels are *The Third Party* (2007), *The Mill for Grinding Old People Young* (2012) and *Gull* (2016).

# The split skull of Europe

It turned out that not everyone wants to share everything – the British gathered up their toys and left the sandbox. The European Union, like Narcissus admiring himself, suddenly saw that there were large cracks in the mirror into which it was gazing so contentedly. The world is ungrateful, uncultured and at the same time wonderful and unique. It may be that the future lies in the East. After all there are etymological explanations for why Asia is the land of the rising sun and Europe that of the setting sun.

*By Sigitas Parulskis*

This was a terribly long time ago, perhaps three decades have come and gone since then. I was lying in bed with a woman ten years older than me. We were lying there and chatting about Erich Maria Remarque. To tell the truth, the woman was a whore, well, at least that's what she called herself because she took money for sex. She liked E M Remarque and smoked marijuana. I rarely had any money and so was constantly in debt to her. There we were, smoking grass, talking about *Three Comrades* and she suddenly asked me – what are you going to do with your life? I began stammering something but she wouldn't back off – did I have some sort of goal? I then blurted out that I wanted to be a European writer. Lithuania at the time was in the Soviet Union but people were waving the pre-war flag of Lithuania, singing the old national anthem and dreaming of independence. What does all that mean, asked Roza (in her opinion, Roza was a very good alias for a whore). I didn't know what to say to that. 'So that's your promise to yourself, is it?' asked Roza and began laughing. I also started laughing. We both were laughing so hard that there were tears in our eyes. Later, Lithuania became independent, Roza died of a heroin overdose, and I never paid back what I owed her.

Now, thirty years later, I've written about twenty books, my work has been translated into at least ten European languages but, in spite of that, I still don't know if I can at last call myself a European writer and what, in heaven's name, that even means. I live in a backwater of Europe, one could say, on the eternal periphery of an empire (bearing in mind that Europe ends with us), and even today the people living in the great states of Europe (the Italians, Germans, the French, the British, etc.) most often don't know where Lithuania is or whether it is even in Europe. Does that pain me? Not very much. Perhaps even the reverse is true.

On the one hand, I very much like the idea of Europe, I like the fact that I live in some sort of construction which is the product of many nations and the creation of very varied cultures. That construction has an incredibly interesting history, woven together from many histories, many creative acts which give

meaning to my short life on earth and at the same time help to tame the sexual energy or, to put it in other words, the basic instincts so beloved of Mr Sigmund Freud.

## *A longing for the ideal of Europe*

It was perhaps half a century ago that the British historian Hugh Seton-Watson set out the problems of the European Union, problems that are still relevant today and perhaps are even the most important ones: firstly, it's not enough to create European unity just on the basis of economics and the security provided by NATO. Something more is needed, which would be important on the ideological and idealistic level. If all that unites us is a desire for money and a feeling of fear – that would be too little and too weak a reason.

Now, remembering that young man, who was taught the secrets of life and death by that whore who was older than him, I think that he, as it happens, felt that longing for Europe, for the ideal of Europe, and not just a longing for financial and defensive unity. A longing for, as Seton-Watson put it, a certain mystique, a need for mystery and mysticism.

I think I understand what that Brit wanted to say. Perhaps it's more evident, more understandable to East Europeans because they experienced that very clearly. After Lithuania became independent, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, after we became members of NATO and the European Union, I had the opportunity to travel around Europe quite a bit, and, thanks to some wonderful people involved in the field of culture (regardless of where they themselves lived), to spend a good amount of time in Berlin, Vienna, Salzburg, and Wiesbaden. I remember living in Wannsee and for the first time having the opportunity to very clearly compare my experiences: in 1984-86 I served in the Soviet army, in Cottbus. To me, a young man from a small town on the edge of the Soviet Empire, Cottbus was also a part of Great Europe. To the local Germans in the GDR I was a Soviet occupant, while the Russians looked on me with distrust and thought of me as a fascist from the Baltic region. That was a hellishly different kind of Europe, full of suppression, humiliation and ideological weak-mindedness.

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But living in Wannsee in 2009 I was simply a human being, a European, and I will never forget the joy which would take hold of me when I walked around Berlin because I felt as if I had found myself in a book or a film. I remember once walking past the Berlin Opera and simply going in and buying a ticket to Aida. That was a wonderful feeling...

Perhaps at that moment I felt a huge difference between the two Germanys, between the two Europes, between my two experiences. And that was a very good feeling, that European feeling because it comes from freedom, from the possibility of making a conscious choice, from the possibility of experiencing all of Europe's history and culture in this way – freely walking along the streets of Berlin, Vienna or Amsterdam, skiing in the Swiss Alps, drinking beer in a pub in Prague or Ljubljana, or even walking my dog by the river Neris in Vilnius.

People who have had this feeling, this joy taken away from them understand this very

well. I want to say that Europe is not just a place where you can buy things, not just the hope that NATO will protect us from the wild Scythians, it is first and foremost a lived experience, the age of which, the memory of which goes back some 3,000 years and that has, let's admit it, value.

## *Friction between East and West*

The second problem formulated by Seton-Watson is Western Europe's desire to distance itself from Eastern Europe. It is true that he was writing at a time (in the 1980s) when the countries of Eastern Europe were not yet members of the EU, but this divide and the double standards still exist. It turns out that it is even said that Eastern Europe is just a rubbish and waste dump for the great countries of the West. A very good example of this is Germany: in socialising with Germans you'll sooner or later get to hear that that person is 'from the East' and that one is 'from the West'. This friction persists on a Europe-wide level and it probably won't disappear any time soon. That's human nature: it's easier to identify oneself with a smaller group than with the whole world.

To tell the truth, for me, as an East European, it doesn't hurt that in the West I'm looked upon as 'different'. I am in fact different. And that's good. And again, I'm talking about nationhood not nationalism. Witold Gombrowicz is a fantastic Polish writer who spent most of his life as an emigrant (in 1939 he sailed to Argentina and wasn't able to return to his homeland because of the Nazi and Soviet occupations). In his diaries he instructed his fellow Poles: do not try to catch up with Europe, you will never be able to do that; instead of trying to catch up with a foreign maturity, try to unmask the immaturity of Europe. In other words, an original relationship of an individual or nation with the world (existence) is of greater value than an attempt to mimic something, to become some sort of abstract European.

Since I've already mentioned nationalism, I should explain how I understand it. I like the definition of nationalism and nationhood by the famous Lithuanian scholar and semiotician Algirdas Julius Greimas, who lived in France after World War II. It's possible that in some languages the difference between these two concepts isn't very clear. Nationalism, according to Greimas, is a political ideology which absorbs the values belonging to a national community and uses it for political purposes, while nationhood is the totality of the cultural needs – moral, psychological, religious, mythological, artistic, etc. – of a particular nation. Therefore, nationalism belongs to a society's political superstructure, while nationhood is part of a society's cultural superstructure. (According to this definition it would appear that the biggest Nazis in Europe are the Muslim extremists who, like all extremists, think that their god is better, that their language is more beautiful, that their arse is cleaner. But that's not what I'm talking about here.)

People on the internet are fond of having fun by comparing Lenin with Lennon, as if they had something in common and not just the alliteration of their surnames. After listening to John Lennon's Imagine, you could agree with that: there's no heaven, no hell, no religion, no borders, no greed, no hunger, with everyone sharing everything, no one wanting to kill anyone. After all, isn't that the fulfilment of Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov Lenin's dream: the victory of the socialist revolution?

The European Union or at least its idea reminds one of the dreams of these two men. One language (it's not clear which one

– English, French or German), but nevertheless it would be better if there were only one (imagine how much we would save if thousands of interpreters weren't sitting in Luxembourg, Strasbourg and Brussels getting huge amounts of money!). No state borders and what is taken from those who have a lot is given to those who have less. Religion? The hell with religion. In Holland I even saw a brothel set up in a church. What else? Well, all that is very similar to a certain form of socialism or John Lennon's poetry.

### *Not everyone wants to share*

The European Union would have flourished wonderfully well if not for the Arabs, to be more exact, if not for the Muslim fundamentalists and extremists. They began to flood into a Europe that was pleased with itself and ruined all that socialism – it became clear that living without borders isn't such a good thing, that religion is still a powerful force – because, in the opinion of fundamentalist Muslims, religion is more important than politics. It turned out that not everyone wants to share everything – the British gathered up their toys and left the sandbox. The European Union, like Narcissus admiring himself, suddenly saw that there were large cracks in the mirror into which it was gazing so contentedly.

To the local Germans in the GDR I was a Soviet occupant, while the Russians looked on me with distrust and thought of me as a fascist from the Baltic region. That was a hellishly different kind of Europe, full of suppression, humiliation and ideological weak-mindedness.

Indeed, sometimes Brussels gets so worked up that some states can feel discriminated against, can begin to suspect that an attack is being made on their nationhood, their values, and that's why populists are immediately presented with the opportunity to politicise things – as I've already mentioned, to steal some national value and change it into a political tool.

The third thing Seton-Watson focuses on is the conviction that Europe is a Christian, that is to say, monolithic cultural phenomenon. According to him, it's a Hellenistic, Roman, Persian, Jewish and, finally, Muslim tradition. One can't deny that.

To tell the truth, when I think about European unity, the Christian tradition seems to be the most compelling argument. But might that not be an illusion?

Peter Sloterdijk in his book *Critique of Cynical Reason* tells a story from the Middle Ages: a young woman was being wooed by an admirer but, for fear of harming her soul and chastity, she rejected him again and again. A local priest supported the young woman's determination. There came a time when he had to travel to Venice and he made the woman promise not to give into temptation while he was away. The woman agreed but in return asked him to bring back a mirror for her. The woman kept her promise and when the priest returned she asked if he had brought her a mirror. The priest pulled out a skull from under his robe and thrust it in front of her, saying here is your true face, remember that you will die and that you are nothing before God. The woman was horrified and that same night surrendered herself to her suitor. Sloterdijk's conclusion is: 'As soon as Christians recognize themselves in the death skull as in a mirror, they can come to the point where

the fear of death receded before the fear of not having lived. They then understand that it is precisely the climbing into bed with the "whore world" that represents the chance of this irretrievable life.'

### *Religious fanaticism versus progress*

Perhaps Europe or Western civilisation has only recently begun to understand and is constantly increasing its understanding that it's necessary to use the chance of this irretrievable life to the full. In the West, churches stand like magnificent incrusted shells, but the pearl of faith has long since not been inside. Without a doubt, religion, in particular religious fanaticism, really has no connection with progress. I think that this form of an ethical system has really had its day. But if there is no religion, what system can explain to human beings that they must act morally? A criminal code? Or perhaps it's written down in the instructions that go with the latest iPhone or Samsung.

Today's political correctness is at times an ugly reminder of communism – it forces the individual to obey the collective: whatever the case, you always have to endorse the majority's opinion, and if you don't – you'll be condemned – on Facebook, at work, and in the European Union. It's some kind of communal oppression of the individual which existed even before Socrates. Individuality and originality are blessed with approval only with the consent of the majority, and that's absurd.

I've noticed that I more often like writers or thinkers who have escaped from their confined communities: emigrants, recluses. They are better able to see the big picture, they acquire a sense of distance.

Take, for example, Tim Parks, whose book *Europe* I bought this spring at the Dussmann bookshop in Berlin. According to Parks, Plato did not believe in ideal forms. His idealistic understanding, the essence of his ideas emerged from a desire that we all feel somewhere deep within us – a longing for perfection, for an ideal. We dream about the ultimate truth, about balance, about everything in the final analysis being stable – work, home, Europe, an end to conflicts, to poverty and the coming into being of solidarity in a world in which perfect technology will eliminate all human suffering... If we remember Lenin and Lennon we haven't advanced very far from Plato.

Unfortunately, neither Europe nor the rest of the world can achieve that perfection. It would be wonderful if people in this world could act purposefully, consciously and morally. I believe that they try to act that way, even if not very consciously, but all the same. And, of course I'd like it if, for example, the world rejoiced and celebrated on 9 February to mark the birthday of the brilliant contemporary writer J M Coetzee, but instead the world rejoices and celebrates when another shitty iPhone or Ferrari comes out.

The world is ungrateful, uncultured and at the same time wonderful and unique. It may be that the future lies in the East. After all there are etymological explanations for why Asia is the land of the rising sun and Europe that of the setting sun.

What can culture do? According to a philosopher, it is the ontological function or

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mission of beauty to build a bridge across the chasm between the ideal and reality. Culture has long come into conflict with this problem – but that is its main, most important task.

Culture lives in the details, in our everyday existence, in our actions. It is not only the huge projects and concerts, the exhibition halls and the noisy, colourful fairs. As the saying goes, the outward beauty of a person is probably only skin deep, his or her other beauty, as banal as it may sound, is hidden inside and in this case, if we're talking about Europe, the beauty (and horror) of a European lies hidden in the above-mentioned three-thousand-year-old tradition.

About half a year ago I got an email from the United Kingdom. The writer was a woman thanking me for a poem about the Manchester Central Library. In 2008 when I was there with some fellow writers I recited some poems of mine. I was sitting in an old reading room by an old fireplace, and in front of me I saw a long list of the librarians who had worked there. To tell the truth, perhaps more out of boredom than curiosity I wrote down several names but later something happened, something didn't allow me to forget those names and finally a poem grew out of that short list of librarians' names.

In 2010 a translation of that poem was published in Lithuania in the English-language journal *Vilnius Review*. In 2016 a woman who had written a book about Manchester's librarians came across my poem, according to her, on the very day her book came out. She was happy but sad that she hadn't known earlier about the poem since it would have been a perfect end to her book. She thanked me because several of the people she had written about were in my poem. I didn't even know what she was thanking me for. But I was also happy and thanked her. I also don't know for what. It's such a good, real feeling that both of us are in contact with the secret inner essence of culture and the spirit, even though it's only a few lines of verse that connect us, but the world begins to expand, deepen, becomes multifaceted, nuanced, because we are connected by ties that are a bit more important than money.

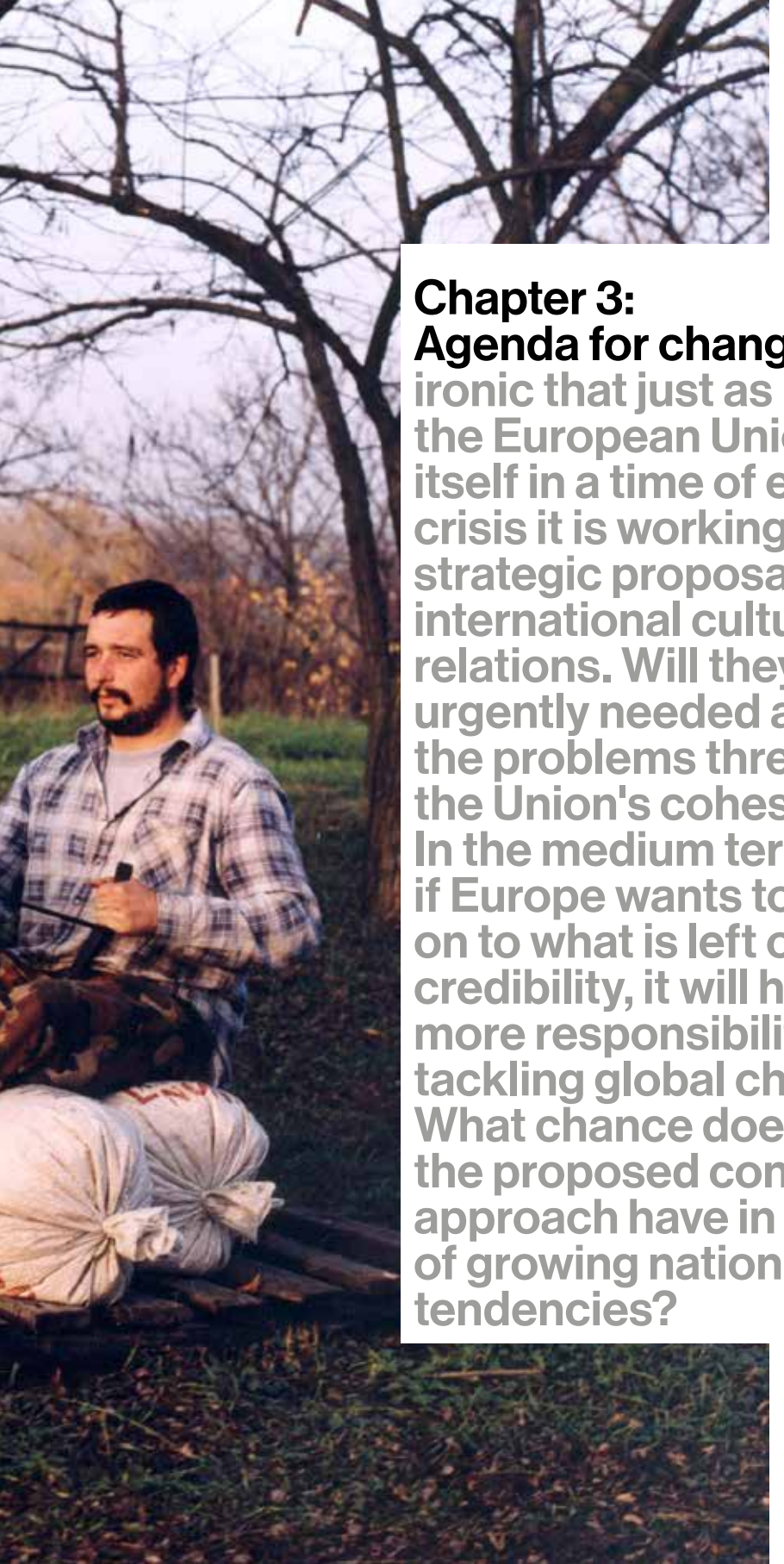
There is this thought in a book by the American writer Nicole Krauss: 'Then one day I was looking out the window. Maybe I was contemplating the sky. Put even a fool in front of the window and you'll get a Spinoza.'

I thought: a book is also the window that allows you to become a Spinoza. Well, even if you don't become a Spinoza, then at least it'll be harder to fool you.

If I were now to meet that whore Roza, I would tell her that I kept my promise. It's true that I still can't exactly put into words what it means to be a European writer, but I feel it. And that is a damned good feeling.

*Translated from the Lithuanian by Romas Kinka*

**Sigitas Parulskis**, born1965, is a Lithuanian poet, essayist, playwright and reviewer. Parulskis has published 16 works including essays and poetry collections, plays, one novel and two screenplays. His works have been translated into Russian, English, Latvian, Finnish, Polish, Czech, French, German, Greek, Swedish and other languages. He has received all the main Lithuanian literature prizes. In 2004 he became the Laureate of National Culture and Art and in 2016 was awarded the Baltic Assembly Prize for Literature, the Arts and Science.



## Chapter 3: Agenda for change

It is ironic that just as the European Union finds itself in a time of existential crisis it is working on new strategic proposals for international cultural relations. Will they provide urgently needed answers to the problems threatening the Union's cohesion? In the medium term, if Europe wants to hang on to what is left of its credibility, it will have to bear more responsibility for tackling global challenges. What chance does the proposed concerted approach have in the face of growing nationalist tendencies?

**It's culture, stupid!** It is high time to clarify what we mean by culture when we discuss it at European level. We must ask ourselves how European majority societies can permit room for difference and diversity and at the same time provide the context that offers its citizens a shared feeling of belonging. How can an international cultural relations strategy be effectively integrated into existing programmes and translated into specific actions?

*By Helga Trüpel and Jochen Eisenburger*

The continuously growing disenchantment with politics in Europe and the rise of right-wing populism in several EU Member States have put the political systems in Europe under pressure. Because socio-economic parameters have largely failed to explain recent changes in the political landscape of EU countries, new attention is being directed to the role of culture in our societies. The discussion is constructed around the fear of political regression, a roll-back of the rights of women and marginalised groups as well as the return of ethno-national ideologies.

In a way, this 'cultural turn' reflects a history of neglect of the cultural dimension in politics over recent decades. This neglect can be observed when budgetary priorities are defined, and it can be observed by looking at the allocation of political posts. Culture still comes under 'AOB'. Yet the fear of being left behind in a globalised world, the impression of losing one's cultural home, and a weakened sense of belonging have the potential to change the political direction of a country. Ask the British or Americans.

The 'cultural turn' is something to look forward to in politics, but it hasn't become reality yet. At the EU level, several projects are in the pipeline: after years of work, the House of European History opened its gates this year in Brussels. In 2018, we are entering the European Year of Cultural Heritage, plus the newly established European Solidarity Corps will start its work. President Juncker is currently calling for a 9-fold increase in the ERASMUS+ budget for the period after 2020, and the EU institutions are committing themselves to ensuring a stronger role for culture in the EU's external relations.

I suggest placing four key dimensions at the centre of the notion of culture at the European level that have to be reflected in all branches of European cultural policy, be it educational, media or cultural programmes, inside or outside the EU.

Post-colonial: European cultural policy must always take account of its colonial past. Otherwise it will be blind to the deep traces that European colonialism left in European societies and non-European countries in the whole world. This starts with the responsibility for self-critique and commemoration of colonial terror that has been brought to most parts of the world based on an idea of cultural supremacy, a misinterpreted mission of civilisation and economic exploitation. Therefore, EU cultural policy inside and outside the EU should always encompass remembrance policy and the responsibility for commemoration and respect towards the victims of our policies in the past.

This is not a unilateral exercise but starts with giving voice to 'the other'. It is essential for the EU's credibility and trustworthiness vis-à-vis its global partners and an important basis for the Union's efforts to promote peace and stability in the world.

Diverse: when we discuss European cultural policies, the emphasis lies on the diversity of European cultures in plural, and not on a single homogenous European culture. Furthermore, European cultures are not only the sum of 28 national cultures and its multiple regions. They are not closed boxes, but emerged in close exchange with and distinctly from each other. The simple fact that a large number of different cultures live on a relatively small territory is a central feature of our continent. This tradition of cultural diversity, interdependence and close interaction can be regarded as a European value. Additionally, at all times the continent has been in close exchange with other regions. This brought and still brings a significant number of minority groups into European societies.

EU cultural policy inside and outside the EU should always encompass remembrance policy and the responsibility for commemoration and respect towards the victims of our policies in the past.

This European cultural diversity raises questions that cultural policy must address. We must ask ourselves how European majority societies can permit room for difference and diversity and at the same time provide the context that offers its citizens a shared feeling of belonging. Cultural policy plays an essential role in protecting, valorising and managing cultural diversity in societies. It can contribute immensely to redefining the terms of belonging in European societies in such a way that cultural and religious traditions of all kinds can find their place in daily life. This is the *conditio sine qua non* for perceiving cultural diversity as an added-value by host societies and not a threat to traditional reference points in a community, such as marriage and family.

Democratic: the notion of culture in European cultural policy must essentially be a democratic notion. That means that culture is not used as a vehicle to transpose the idea of ethnic homogeneity, authority or even superiority. On the contrary, culture should provide room to embrace diversity and heterogeneity and be a platform for exchange on equal terms amongst different sections of society.

The operationalisation of such a participative and fluid model of culture is not necessarily an easy exercise for European cultural policy and cultural institutions. Over time, central national cultural institutions emerged

with a mission of representation and identity formation. Opening up these institutions, breaking up linear national narratives and thus allowing minority cultures to be represented, experimenting with new processes of creation and curating, and leaving room for new institutions in the cultural domain are great challenges for a sector that is severely hit by budgetary pressures. This is even more the case in a sector that is sometimes dominated by traditional flagship institutions, whose conservatism can create even stronger inertia when it comes to structural reform.

On a European scale, this also poses the problem of asynchrony between EU Member States. While some Member States are in the comfortable situation of investing more into the cultural sector, other national cultural scenes are suffering from austerity measures. The political debate on these challenges for European cultural diversity, their equality in representation inside and outside the EU, offline and online and with regard to the operationalisation of the UNESCO Declaration on Cultural Diversity in 2005 is only at the beginning.

Human-rights based: it must be avoided that, under the parachute of culture, people are deprived of their fundamental human rights. The fundamental human rights of each individual must be the starting point of all cultural freedom. To be very blunt: female genital mutilation cannot be regarded as a cultural tradition that should be protected and preserved under the auspices of cultural diversity.

In my view, these central features of the notion of culture must build the yardstick for all European cultural policies and programmes, both inside and outside the European Union.

The change in design and method in the EU's external cultural relations is not a radical revolution, but a transition process that has been ongoing for around 10 years. In the context of the European Agenda for Culture 2007, the EU institutions made a clear commitment to the importance of the cultural dimension in foreign and development policies. In 2011, the European Parliament followed up with its own resolution on the 'cultural dimension of the EU's external actions', listing initial proposals for a common strategic framework for external cultural strategy.

### *Focus on bottom-up strategies*

Two years later, on the initiative of the Green Group in the European Parliament, a Preparatory Action for Culture in EU External Relations was launched to map existing programmes and practices, thus providing a base for a comprehensive EU strategy for international cultural relations. Since then, the three central EU institutions have all positioned themselves and articulated their visions for the EU's external cultural relations strategy. The European Commission/EEAS communication *Towards an EU strategy for international cultural relations* dated June 2016 is by far the most clear and detailed vision. The Parliament reacted to the proposals in an own report and the Council adopted different conclusions on the matter.

The documents together stipulate a remarkable shift in the EU's external cultural policy: the EU puts bottom-up approaches

that allow a stronger participation of artists, cultural organisations and civil society at the centre of a future EU strategy. Such a change represents a fundamental shift in the EU's and Member States' cultural policy away from cultural diplomacy concepts, where the cultural dimension in external affairs takes the functions of a shop window for EU cultural productions. Instead, the idea is to strengthen people-to-people relations that allow the more active involvement of civil society and cultural actors. This could make cultural projects more democratic in their methods and more diverse in their content.

One of the elements of this axis will be the strengthening of the existing EU cultural programmes. Today, Creative Europe and Erasmus+ already provide fertile ground for intercultural understanding, innovation and strong bridges between European societies. This experience is to be further extended to third countries through a stronger external dimension.

The basis for an EU strategy for international cultural relations has been laid over the last decade. Now is the time for the operationalisation of this exercise. For this purpose, the Council has set up the Friends of the Presidency Group, which aims to 'draw up an integrated, comprehensive and step-by-step EU strategic approach to international cultural relations that explores synergies across all relevant policy areas'. This is good, because it is important to use the current momentum that has been created with the joint communication of the Commission and EEAS and not let the papers drown in the EU's institutional Bermuda triangle. Additionally, this debate is very timely with regard to the upcoming negotiation of the EU's next multiannual financial framework (MFF) post-2020 and the structural reforms to the EU's income and expenditure that Commissioner Oettinger is planning to present in May 2018.

The idea is to strengthen people-to-people relations that allow a more active involvement of civil society and cultural actors. This could make cultural projects more democratic in their methods and more diverse in their content.

At the same time, the structure of the Friends of the Presidency Group appears as an expression of structural conservatism and a preservation of the vested rights of the EU Member States. The working group is for now operating in the background without any transparency towards the public on the content and work plan. Furthermore, it lacks in its composition the participation of representatives of the European Parliament and civil society. I am convinced that such additions to the current structure of the Friends of the Presidency can provide the process with strong added value. It would be more consistent with the progressive nature of the reform undertaking, which aims to develop an international cultural strategy with a more participative, bottom-up approach at its centre and which carries a European notion of culture, in the sense of a democratic, postcolonial and diverse culture.

I have the strong hope that the Friends of the Presidency Group and the continuing process will provide answers to key questions, such as: How can an international cultural relations strategy be effectively integrated into existing programmes and translated into specific actions? How can we ensure effective

coordination, collaboration and co-creation amongst stakeholders in the EU and in the partner countries? How can we provide such activities with sustainable financing?

Integrating existing structures: the thematic spectrum for external cultural actions is wide. This is well reflected in the UN Sustainable Development Goals, in which culture is not one single goal, but rather conceptualised as a horizontal dimension that can serve as facilitator for social inclusion, economic development and innovation, democracy, education, conflict prevention and reconciliation. In the EU's external relations, this broad range of topics is covered by a large number of mostly independent programmes and, most recently, also by trust funds such as the European Neighbourhood Instrument, the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights, the European Development Fund, the Instrument for Stability and Peace, the European Sustainable Development Fund and so forth. Moreover, all EU internal programmes for culture, education, youth and research include an external dimension that opens possibilities for the participation of third countries.

In order to achieve greater effectiveness and increase visibility, the new strategy should aim to overcome the current fragmentation in the implementation structures. The gathering of the different Commission directorates with the responsible actors in the EEAS in a working group is useful at the policy level.

The cultural diplomacy platform is a first step towards tying up loose ends and providing a platform for exchange for implementing organisations and beneficiaries. Further pooling of information to provide an easy access for potential beneficiaries to the numerous cultural activities under the different programme headings is desirable. This should go hand-in-hand with clearly dedicated budget lines for cultural activities in the respective programmes.

Sustainable financing: the fragmentation in the programming of current EU international cultural relations is accompanied by fragmentation in the funding of cultural activities outside the EU. Even though it is unrealistic to expect an overall programme for external cultural relations to be created in the next MFF, it will be crucial for the success of a new EU international cultural relations strategy that it is explicitly mentioned in the relevant existing or new budget lines. This will help to guarantee a certain amount of investment, allow for long-term planning of activities and ensure visibility in the budget negotiations. An adequate budgetary basis is not only important for the usefulness of the projects that are to be realised in the context of the external cultural strategy, but also for meeting the expectations that are being raised amongst beneficiaries and partner countries.

Furthermore, we are facing different national budgetary situations in the EU and the expenditure for external cultural relations and national cultural institutes varies considerably. To a certain degree, EU international cultural relations can serve to create a more balanced representation of our continent's cultural diversity and encourage

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stronger involvement of a diversity of cultural actors and civil society in international cultural projects.

Last but not least, the debate about an EU international cultural relations strategy has thrown up a number of innovative ideas. A Cultural Visa Programme along the lines of the existing Scientific Visa Programme can be envisaged to eliminate obstacles to mobility in the cultural sector. This would be consistent with the articulated ambition to strengthen people-to-people contacts. This year, the European Parliament adopted a new preparatory action to test from 2018 onwards the concept of European Houses of Culture, especially in contexts where an EU added value is expected. It is worthwhile for the EU to match such new initiatives with new financing.

Flexible collaboration amongst actors: with regard to the implementation in the field, a controversial debate is taking place around the EU's involvement through so-called cultural focal points or cultural policy attachés in EU delegations. A first attaché has already been deployed in Beijing. While such institutions can strongly contribute to better coordination among EU and Member State activities within partner countries and facilitate the close involvement of cultural and civil society actors, the same function might be effectively delegated to existing structures, such as one national cultural institute as a lead organisation and as part of a EUNIC cluster. Such consideration and the need for EU involvement will be different in every partner country and partner region. This might depend on the historic relations with the country, the intensity of cooperation, and the existing structures and purpose of individual programmes and projects. EU cultural policy would be well advised to allow itself such flexibility in the implementing structure.

To present my vision for the EU's international cultural relations in a nutshell: (a) it should be designed on the basis of a democratic, post-colonial and human rights-based understanding of culture; (b) it should be open in its method of implementation to reflect different starting points for cultural relations between the whole of the EU and its international partners, and furthermore to allow room for co-design of the programmes; (c) it should always take on the role of coordination, cross-stimulation and complementarity in order to respect the specific set of competencies between the EU level and its Member States. Taking these principles seriously would already represent a paradigm shift in the EU's external cultural policy.

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# Strategic flexibility and willingness to engage

Culture promotes freedom of expression, empathy, and brings out the innately social nature of people across borders. If the EU has to use a strong narrative to fight propaganda and preserve the cultural domain then it must be prepared to do so. A view from across the pond.

*By Mai'a K. Davis Cross*

The rise of extremist populism, the slide away from democracy in several countries, and the backlash against globalisation all point to the need for a stronger commitment to cultural and intercultural dialogue. To be sure, the world has generally moved towards more democratisation over the past century. The ideal of democratic governance has clearly been accepted internationally, especially through the United Nations, and is regarded as the shared goal for all states. However, in recent years, there have been growing threats to the notion of a liberal world order.

In light of this, it is important to cultivate people-to-people understandings across borders. And arguably, it is necessary to have a stronger EU in the international system. Indeed, one of the EU's greatest accomplishments is its track record of spreading and consolidating democracy in line with international norms. The EU approaches culture in a broad sense: everything from arts and literature to tourism, education and research. And this is increasingly important in today's context because the core principles that underpin culture as expressed in the EU's 2016 Joint Communication – human rights, freedom of expression, diversity, and mutual understanding – naturally work to counter the negative trends away from democracy. Without the EU's role, norms that we all take for granted could be fundamentally destabilised, not just in rising powers, but in the West itself with alarming developments like the election of Trump and Brexit.

In the past couple of years, in particular, cyber and network propaganda have become a major concern. Trolls, bots, and foreign governments have purposefully tried to divide people and incite fear, and to some extent they have been successful. With the advent of individualised propaganda and companies

like Cambridge Analytica and AggregateIQ engaging in new 'psy ops' strategies, citizens can be gradually swayed towards anti-democratic tendencies. And to make matters worse, citizens are directly and easily reachable through platforms like Google and Facebook. Cultural diplomacy is one of the main ways in which countries can combat this form of hybrid warfare and protect against the ravages of insularity, bigotry, and fanaticism.

## *Soft and smart*

What role can cultural diplomacy play in surmounting these serious challenges? Long-term engagement provides a buffer for crises, and it means that people are less vulnerable to propaganda. A strong programme of cultural exchange can help to counteract extremism and an 'us versus them' mentality. I would argue that in these challenging times, it is necessary to think of cultural diplomacy as a source of soft power, and to a limited extent, smart power.

We like to think of cultural diplomacy as purely benign. Indeed, the EU's cultural diplomacy is not fundamentally about propaganda or imposing its own version of culture on outsiders. Rather, cultural diplomacy is about the EU communicating its values, its own internal cultural diversity, and the many forms of expression that come with this to the outside world. Many would prefer not to think of cultural diplomacy in power terms at all. But the EU already does relatively well in the soft power domain of cultural exchange. As an actor, it is not afraid to encourage cultural expression in an open-ended way, even if the results of cultural programmes end up being critical of the EU itself. Showing that the EU is able to accept criticism and debate is a strong source of soft power attraction in its own right.

Given that the EU's international impact is largely benign, and it generally strives to be a force for peace, development, and stability, I would argue that the EU should seek to influence, particularly in the name of democracy. And it should use a broad range of tools to do so. A stronger EU would be welcomed by the democracies of the world given current challenges.

The political crisis in the US following the election of Donald Trump is chief among these challenges for the EU. Trump's presidency has undeniably led to a transatlantic rift, at least at the leadership level, and this poses potentially serious problems for the EU on multiple levels, but especially when it comes to its goals of cultural diversity and democratic norms. Increasingly, much of what divides people across the globe is put in 'cultural' terms, and the relationship between the US and EU is no exception. American entrepreneur Andrew Breitbart, the founder of *Breitbart* (launched in 2012), said that he created this far-right website, 'to take back the

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culture', by which he meant to wage a 'cultural and political war' against mainstream understandings of politics and values.

When Steven Bannon took over Breitbart, he also opened a UK website in 2014, and now has plans to launch them in both France and Germany. Carrying on the legacy of the website's founder, Bannon explicitly talks about the spread of Breitbart as part of a cultural and political war. He speaks of 'weaponising' the narrative. Now that Bannon has left the White House, he can arguably do even more to influence the American public, thereby exacerbating tensions among a range of people.

This illustrates why the EU needs smart power to be a key actor in today's more turbulent times. Smart power is defined as the strategic combination of hard and soft power. While soft power is about attracting others to your point of view, hard power is about getting others to do what they would not otherwise do. Given this definition, it should be clear that hard power is not only about using military force or economic sanctions, as many tend to assume. Rather, it is also about standing up and insisting on one's principles on the world stage. When it comes to cultural diplomacy, a smart power strategy may include arguing, making bold statements in opposition to others, and denying how others wish to define culture.

Thus, a smart power approach to cultural diplomacy means that the EU needs to stand up against those who would try to weaponise culture or engage in cultural war. If the other side sees culture as a weapon in war, there's no choice but to see cultural diplomacy on some level as a form of resistance. Such efforts can also help to combat radicalisation and recruitment to terrorism. And in light of the current pervasiveness of psychological or cognitive warfare, smart power in the form of counter-propaganda, i.e. using language and narrative, is necessary. The EU can reclaim the meaning of culture even if this means taking a stronger stance to do so.

### *Maintaining strong perceptions of the EU*

The need to take a strong stance is no more urgent than during times of crisis. In my recent book, *The Politics of Crisis in Europe* (Cambridge University Press, 2017), I show that the EU is particularly vulnerable during times of crisis because of the damaging effect of the media in inciting a kind of societal panic surrounding the integration project. There is a kind of popularity in engaging in Europe-bashing, and an overarching meta-narrative that the EU is hard to understand. Time and time again these perceptions, amplified in the media, have taken on a self-fulfilling prophecy dynamic. What might have started out as a relatively routine policy challenge ends up growing into a crisis that seemingly threatens the very existence of the EU. It only takes a brief perusal of the covers of *The Economist* over the past sixty years to see that 'end of Europe' has been repeatedly and erroneously proclaimed.

In response to crises, the EU has engaged in short-term crisis public diplomacy. Crisis public diplomacy tries to correct

the narrative through media, societal and academic engagement. But public diplomacy should not only kick in when a crisis strikes. It requires a long-term foundation to be effective. Crucially, long-term public diplomacy is cultural. It is about developing a deeper understanding that can withstand unexpected crises. It creates a buffer for the media narrative and frenzy surrounding the possible demise of the EU. With the benefit of a strong basis of cultural exchange, people are more likely to stay with their long-term understandings than be swayed by short-term sensationalising. Thus, long-term cultural diplomacy creates both resilience and image resilience for the EU. While resilience is about bouncing back from crises, image resilience is about maintaining strong perceptions of the EU, so that foreign publics do not automatically buy the narrative that the EU is continually on the verge of falling apart.

On 8 June 2016, the EU launched the joint communication entitled *Towards an EU strategy for international cultural relations.* The EU has long had soft power through its culture and history, but this joint communication means that the EU is making a stronger effort than in the past to achieve image resilience. Through this new initiative, it is important to recognise that culture is not simply an end in itself, but it also has strong ties to economic competitiveness and sustainable development, both key foreign policy goals of the EU. In addition, there is an explicit strategic dimension to the joint communication as it calls for the mainstreaming of cultural relations into EU foreign policy, the European External Action Service, cultural institutes, and strategic partners. It advocates creating hubs for cultural relations to take advantage of existing structures. The principle of 'Promoting culture and inter-cultural dialogue for peaceful inter-community relations' involves new narratives to counter radicalisation and promote mutual understanding.

There is a kind of popularity in engaging in Europe-bashing, and an overarching meta-narrative that the EU is hard to understand. Time and time again these perceptions, amplified in the media, have taken on a self-fulfilling prophecy dynamic.

## *The need for strategic flexibility*

So far the joint communication's activities have been diverse and important, involving art, photography, music, film, world heritage, and dialogue. But there are still potential areas to strengthen, using a broader range of tools. Key questions to address include: how can this initiative go beyond hubs to impact broader society? And how can it be more strategic? I would advocate a kind of strategic flexibility that would allow the EU to capitalise on trends and developments as they occur in our fast-paced world. For instance, the Pulse of Europe movement that has spread to thousands of cities across Europe in open defiance of far-right populist parties could be a tremendous source of support for the EU integration project.

Another example where strategic flexibility would be helpful is in the relationship between culture and politics. How might such an initiative provide more awareness of the

dangers of propaganda during specific election campaigns? The joint communication is a strong platform to begin to think more strategically about going beyond hubs and creating broader resilience to negative political trends.

Cultural diplomacy is important for Europe because culture is so central and valuable to the human experience itself. It promotes freedom of expression, empathy, and brings out the innately social nature of people across borders. Although sharing culture can either unite or divide, humans tend to try to find commonality. We are fundamentally social beings and in many ways culture emphasises our shared humanity. Thus, engagement through culture is important, and when directed at external publics, it plays a dual role with both soft and smart power capabilities. Given that culture matters, there is a need to ensure that it is prevented from being weaponised. This requires more strategic thinking, and to some degree, a willingness to engage in a more argumentative approach in order to protect the domain of culture from propaganda. If the EU has to use a strong narrative to fight propaganda and preserve the cultural domain then it must be prepared to do so.

**Mai'a K. Davis Cross,** Edward W. Brooke Professor and Associate Professor of Political Science and International Affairs, Northeastern University, Senior Researcher, ARENA Center for European Studies, University of Oslo.

**The next steps for a vision of the future** The real test of any grand strategy is to check how it could be implemented. In the last few years four main institutional actors have been advancing the case for a substantive EU strategy for international cultural relations with varying intensity: the European Commission, the External Action Service, the European Parliament, and the Council of the European Union. So what should happen next? *By Anna Triandafyllidou*

A European strategy for international cultural relations has come to the forefront of the European policy agenda as of summer 2016. The relevant *Communication Towards an EU Strategy for International Cultural Relations*, adopted in June 2016 by the European Commission (EC) and the EU's High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, set out a three-pronged approach: supporting culture as an engine for sustainable social and economic development; promoting culture and intercultural dialogue for peaceful inter-community relations; and reinforcing cooperation on cultural heritage.

These objectives are to be achieved through socio-economic development policies that focus on the sector of culture (including heritage, cultural industries etc), promote cultural and creative industries in the partner countries, and support the role of local authorities and civil society actors in cultural heritage policies. The Communication addresses a gap in the external dimension of EU cultural policies that seek to coordinate the activities of different Member States, particularly those that have a tradition in international cultural relations and have very active national cultural institutes such as the British Council and the Institute Français, to name just two obvious examples. It thus foresees the setting up of cultural focal points in EU delegations, and creates tools for enhanced EU cooperation through existing policy instruments and funding mechanisms. It also launches a Cultural Diplomacy Platform, which aims at facilitating the networking of cultural stakeholders from the EU and third countries through training programmes and other workshops.

While the European Parliament has been

supportive of these developments, it has pointed out the importance of utilising this strategy as a tool for increasing the EU's soft power in international relations but also as a tool for growth and employment, including the development of new skills and the integration of different types of stakeholders such as creative and cultural agents and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

In particular, the Parliament identifies a number of shortcomings that need to be addressed in the programme for implementing an EU strategy for international cultural relations. First of all, a clear budget line must be created to finance such activities and programmes and to support international cultural relations in existing programmes and future calls, especially in the next generation of programmes on culture and education, so that these can develop their international action in a proper way. Secondly, the Parliament emphasises the importance of mobilising artists, cultural and creative professionals, and involving cultural institutions, private and public foundations, universities, cultural and creative businesses. Multi-annual work programmes that clearly identify thematic and geographic clusters on which to work would be an asset. Naturally, synergies between development and cultural policies in the EU's foreign relations need to be developed while the cultural dimension should be mainstreamed in negotiations and association agreements with third countries. Policy learning would be very beneficial: the EU has a long tradition and experience in exchange schemes such as Erasmus and others. Such best practices can be used to inform current and future action, particularly with regard to exchange and residency programmes for partners in countries of origin and destination.

While the suggestions of the European Parliament are particularly useful and to the point, what remains to be seen is how they can be implemented. This article offers some suggestions in this respect.

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### *Institutional change and budget line*

The real test of any grand strategy is to check how it could be implemented. In the last few years four main institutional actors have been advancing the case for a substantive EU strategy for international cultural relations with varying intensity: the European Commission, the European External Action Service, the European Parliament, and the Council of the European Union. All four actors have had their respective legal and political roles to play and their efforts have been complemented with an active stakeholder and civic community in the cultural field. Given the national sensitivities and the obvious limitations of EU competence, the interplay among them has been remarkably free of serious conflicts, even though this has progressed at a somewhat leisurely pace, partly

also due to the nature of the subject.

Within the European Commission, in addition to the Directorate-General (DG) for Education and Culture (EAC), so far the DG for International Cooperation and Development (DEVCO) and the DG for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (NEAR) have been the protagonists, the last two having the largest budgets at their disposal through their existing financial instruments. Recently the DGs have been cooperating closely with each other and the European External Action Service (EEAS) to plan ahead and to roll out concrete actions on the ground.

Some of these actions (e.g. EAC drafting new legislation) require no, or only limited budgets, but still have a significant indirect financial, economic and societal impact. Other programmes require greater funding, but in return have a positive direct impact on the lives of many people across the globe. This is the case, for example, with large-scale development programmes and partnerships run by DG DEVCO and DG NEAR with the active contribution of the EEAS and the local EU Delegations, with the most comprehensive new type of pilot scheme being developed in Tunisia.

### *A European Agency for International Cultural Relations*

As funding opportunities are currently scattered across numerous programmes and cooperation frameworks handled by different services of the EC and EEAS, currently no overall figure for culture-related expenditure has been set. The upcoming negotiations on the new Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) should give a response on how to finance the strategy from 2021 onwards.

So if the EU plans to implement a medium-to-long-term strategy for international cultural relations this is the time to create a European Agency for International Cultural Relations that would function as coordinator of the different programmes and actions and that liaise between the various EU institutions involved and the different policy priorities to be promoted through an EU strategy for international cultural relations.

Such an agency could act as an important coordinator and hub for the external cultural relations of Member States. It could maximise synergies and visibility and, in doing so, counteract or become a dialogue partner to the equivalent policy of China, which created 480 Confucius Institutes in 10 years (between 2004 and 2014) and aims to reach 1,000 such institutes by the year 2020. While these institutes have a different modus operandi compared to the national cultural institutes of European countries (insofar as they are all linked up with local universities in the different countries and their cultural diplomacy activities vary widely in intensity and scope), their potential and impact cannot be underestimated.

The budget and institutional infrastructure to be mobilised will have an obvious impact on how to move forward with EU cultural diplomatic activities, and in that

context should take into account the fact that culture-related funding has been on the rise among Europe's global competitors in the race for soft and smart power.

Past experience and recent policy analysis indicate that a number of challenges need to be addressed in order for the EU to become more efficient in furthering its international cultural relations and to ensure a more profound integration of culture into its foreign, security and development policies.

### *Key features of an effective implementation strategy*

First of all, coordination is key, both at central and local levels during the whole process and among all actors concerned. Beyond governmental institutions, such as ministries and national cultural institutes, the process should also involve non-state actors at local and regional levels, such as cities, cultural associations, artists and curators, as well as UNESCO and the Council of Europe. The involvement of such actors should help establish a proper overview and avoid overlaps and duplications of EU, Council of Europe and UNESCO actions.

Second, the involvement from the outset of all cultural stakeholders in the co-creation and co-curation of products and services, such as film festivals, art exhibitions, fairs and laboratories, creates a sense of co-ownership of projects and initiatives, which is a basic condition for success.

There is no one-size-fits-all model; each world region and country requires a different approach and pace. In some cases, for example, crucial demands in terms of livelihood security, education and basic infrastructure, need to be met before it is possible to engage in any cultural activity. In other cases, creative and cultural industries become the main sources of livelihoods for people who would otherwise remain unemployed and marginalised. In some regions of the world a city-level approach works best, in others the emphasis should be more on engaging with regional or national players.

Co-creation also presents important value challenges. The question that arises is whether the EU's cultural projects for development, mobility and exchange should have a common value basis or if, instead, they should have a common set of cultural creation goals and seek to build bridges and forge common values in the process of working together.

In addition, one should not forget that countries are internally heterogeneous, as they often embrace native and migrant minorities and may be composed of different regions. In this context the role of diasporas deserves special attention. Most important, in both Africa and Asia borders have been drawn by colonial powers that cut across or bring together different ethnic and linguis-

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tic communities. Taking into account such variety and complexity and building it into cultural projects is a must for an EU strategic approach for international cultural relations to be successful.

Active communication and promotion should accompany all actions. Selected audiences, beyond the participants, should be informed about concrete projects using targeted messages, directly as well as via social media and through audio-visuals, in order to increase their impact and create a virtuous feedback loop.

Monitoring and assessment: the duration of each project is likely to be particular to each individual context but there is a need for either relatively long projects or for projects repeated at regular intervals in order to measure their impact on community relations and development.

### *A vision for the future*

So far, the actions and programmes that bring a cultural dimension to the EU's external relations have been concentrated at Member State level, neglecting the important contribution of city-to-city schemes and/or the role of regional authorities in the process. The European strategy for international cultural relations needs to build on the richness of initiatives that already exist both within the EU and between EU and non-EU cities and regions. This would help avoid duplicate efforts and reinforce synergies and the transfer of know-how between cities and between particular projects.

At the same time it would of course be important and necessary to build on the strength of EU Member States in specific world regions and countries. While this may be easier in smaller, remote regions with only a few national embassies, where the EU Delegations are prone to play a key role as cultural diplomacy hubs, it would also be essential to forge synergies in large countries using the potential of big players (such as the Goethe Institute, Institut Français, or the British Council) for a common purpose.

Overall it would be advisable to continue and/or replicate good practices and projects that have proven to be successful and sustainable. Replicating these projects in different realities could enhance the sustainability of projects and promote lasting cultural relations with third countries.

Start-up projects based on digital technologies could provide for pilot actions specifically tailored to young artists, curators, and artisans, and help cut out intermediaries and costs while promoting creativity. There is also a need to develop inter-sectoral approaches, bringing together, for instance, cultural industries with education institutions to generate new learning and employment opportunities.

Engaging with the media in publicising international cultural projects and networks, diffusing information, and widening the im-

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pact of cultural projects can have a multiplier effect. In particular, electronic and social media make it possible to combat the elitist dimension that cultural activities can have, and further increase the impact of cultural projects and initiatives in terms of community cohesion and the overall well-being of the population. National cultural institutes are not equally developed nor equally resourced. Thus, the EU approach offers strategic opportunities for smaller Member States to actively engage in international cultural relations activities. It is essential to build consensus and encourage engagement among all Member States in this respect. Successful pilot projects and the EUNIC network have a pivotal role to play in turning theory into practice.

The time is ripe for a European Agency for International Cultural Relations to be created, but the challenges are many. In this short contribution, I have tried to identify and respond to some of these challenges, highlight the opportunities on offer and present a vision for the present and future.

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## Tools to rebuild the social fabric

After a long series of crises, Europe is moving forward with more optimism and, interestingly enough, culture is regaining a central stage. And looking back, we can see that culture is where the European project actually started and, most likely, represents a path forward. It could also play a key role in expanding the free movement of people to build trust and mutual understanding across a broader swathe of our society.

*By Pietro de Matteis*

On 25 March 2017 we celebrated the 60th anniversary of the treaties of Rome that established what is now the European Union. The Rome Declaration that was published after the summit clearly mentioned cultural heritage and cultural diversity as two elements that need to be preserved as part of the efforts to build a social Europe based on social cohesion and convergence. Social cohesion, – or let's call it 'solidarity' – has been at the heart of the European project since the early days: Jean Monnet, one of its architects, famously noted that the objective of European integration was to 'unite people, not creating coalitions of states' and the intention was to do so 'through concrete achievements which first create a de facto solidarity' as noted in the Schuman declaration of 9 May 1950.

Sixty years on, the concrete achievements are many: free movement of people, European citizenship, consumer protection, regional and agricultural development, the Erasmus programme and – above all – peace on our continent (just to name a few). These successes certainly made a convincing case for a united Europe. However, the difficulties in tackling the economic and migration crises and more recently Brexit have partially tarnished the picture.

The 'de facto solidarity' built through 'concrete achievements' since the 1950s is not yet sufficiently rooted in people's minds to face today's challenges and more efforts are needed in building interpersonal solidarity. A successful example of this is Erasmus, the most successful European programme. This year also marked the 30th anniversary of the Erasmus programme, which has reached a total of 9 million Erasmus students since the beginning of the programme in 1987 (to which we should add roughly one million Erasmus babies). Unfortunately, even these

promising numbers are not yet sufficiently high to extend the solidarity created among students to the rest of European society.

The question is how to also build solidarity and mutual understanding among citizens who do not directly take part in European programmes or related initiatives?

Culture and inter-cultural dialogue could play a key role in magnifying the contribution made by the free movement of people in building trust and mutual understanding across a broader swathe of our society. Doing so is fundamental, as there cannot be solidarity without empathy, and there cannot be empathy without mutual understanding.

Considering that the European Union is founded on diversity, and in light of the fact that the perception of diversity tends to reduce solidarity, we must pro-actively work to strengthen solidarity at European level to protect our common achievements and be able to advance further.

As noted in the EU Global Strategy the world has never been so connected, complex and contested. As individuals, we have never been so interconnected with like-minded individuals worldwide, often more than with our own neighbours: social media put us in comfortable 'silos' of like-minded individuals where we are increasingly exposed largely to what we would tend to 'like', hence undermining our possibility to build a shared understanding and vision as it would happen in an 'agora'. At the same time, the boundaries between what is external and internal are fading away as shown by global challenges such as migration and climate change. In all that, new narratives increasingly beefed up by fake news, propaganda or alternative facts are becoming the norm, aiming at weakening our societies' resilience, questioning the overarching universal principles on which our democracies operate and highlighting the divisions in our societies. The global arena is also rapidly changing with global powers such as the US slowly withdrawing from those multilateral fora that allowed global issues to be tackled (such as the UN climate conference COP21and UNESCO) and new rising powers taking the lead both economically and politically.

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At a time when such a diffuse sense of disorientation reigns, the temptation to close ourselves off and find reassuring narratives is strong. In the absence of positive narratives (or opportunities) on the horizon was once the case with the 'American dream', our quest for identity can easily fall into the trap of an idealised past, in the rejection of what is foreign and in identity or faith as a means to legitimate political action. Requests to 'take back control', calls for a 'national preference' or the idea of 'making a country great again' through isolationism and protectionism have become increasingly frequent worldwide. Is such a withdrawal into ourselves a viable solution? Certainly not.

Challenges are increasingly global and

interconnected and cannot be dealt with by individual countries because they are too large (e.g. climate change, migration) and because globalisation has weakened their ability to tackle them (e.g. corporate taxation, security). The need for global solutions is difficult to reconcile with the current identitarian closure, which fosters the creation of cohesive groups of individuals aware of their differences vis-à-vis other groups but unaware of their commonalities. This lack of common ground and the development of 'exclusive identities' are the biggest barrier to mutual understanding: they undermine the emerging of empathy across distinct groups within our societies and do not allow us to harness the full potential that highly diverse (and cohesive) societies can develop. It is here that the current nationalist tendencies clash most violently with what is necessary: governance structures at local, regional and global levels that are accepted as legitimate by the people.

Empathy is the key to legitimise governance that is not legitimated otherwise by other legal, national or economic ties, and the more diverse a society is, the more necessary it becomes. Awareness must grow in our societies of the fact that there cannot be peace and prosperity for us if our neighbours are not at peace, and if our neighbours' neighbours are not at peace.

In this context the role of culture in the broader sense, including also intercultural dialogue, cultural heritage and people-to-people contacts – in addition to traditional fine arts – is key in order to build empathy within our societies in Europe but also between our European societies and the rest of the world.

As EU's foreign affairs chief Federica Mogherini noted at the 2016 European Culture Forum: 'Europe inspired the world because it was itself inspired by the world'. Such openness has made Europe successful and also increased the complexity of our societies, which have become mirrors of the world, with its opportunities and challenges.

Living together in a society is not easy, and requires investing in it constantly. Like a field, it must be sowed regularly with good seeds if we wish to have a good harvest. To benefit from such diversity and avoid falling into the populists' traps of the clash of civilisations we need to give ourselves the tools to understand such complexity. Culture can play the role of a vaccine against simplifications, racism and populism.

Towards an EU strategy for international cultural relations, the recent joint communication by the European Commission and European External Action Service, attempts to do this by providing a coherent framework of action based on three strands: support culture as an engine for sustainable social and economic development, promote culture and inter-cultural dialogue for peaceful inter-community relations as was done in Kosovo and between Armenians and Turkish communities and, finally, reinforce cooperation on cultural heritage. Our shared cultural heritage, in fact, can reinforce our resilience to destructive narratives, which is arguably why

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Daesh so vehemently attacked it in Syria. It is also in this light that 2018 has been declared the European Year of Cultural Heritage, which aims to 'encourage more people to discover and explore Europe's cultural heritage, and to reinforce a sense of belonging to a common European family' while also creating spaces for intercultural dialogue and boosting equal cooperation in the field of cultural heritage with citizens in third countries.

## *Anthropological understanding*

Along these lines, within the broader field of cultural relations a wider understanding of cultural diplomacy is seeing the light with a focus on empowering local actors and facilitating the creation of spaces for inter-cultural dialogue in order to build trust and mutual understanding. Such culture is no longer considered as exclusively the ensemble of arts and creative sectors and a more anthropological understanding of culture is best placed to give us the tools to rebuild the social fabric of our societies as well as a sense of empathy as global citizens. A sense of belonging is increasingly crucial in order to gather the necessary support to tackle the global challenges that often unequally affect different sections of the global population (as it is the case with climate change). As such, intercultural dialogue can provide opportunities for a synthesis to emerge between global vision and local context and facilitate future cooperation across policy areas in addition to reinforcing the resilience of our societies to the risks represented by identitarian closure. Europe, as a land of emigration and immigration, could play the useful role of a hub connecting diasporas from across the globe. Cities in Europe and in the rest of the world could act as connectors between what is global and local. Cities are hubs where people meet, create, innovate and tackle increasingly interrelated global and local challenges, ranging from climate change and security to health, migration and economic growth. Cities are places where people strive to be happy living side-by-side and sharing common public spaces and where inclusive identities can flourish on the wealth of cultural heritage and traditions when appropriate efforts to facilitate this are made. Cities have also been laboratories for democracy and political evolution throughout history and at a time when the tension between globalisation and regionalism/localism are increasingly evident, they could also regain a more prominent role in foreign affairs based on the strength of their cultural heritage. At the end of the day, cities are among the most resilient political entities ever invented and, most importantly, they are the closest to the people.

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**No more paternalism** For the most part, the decolonisation of African nations dates back more than fifty years. The European Union has also made culture a strategic area of its development aid policy and international relations. However, cooperation and cultural exchange between Europe and Africa are still strongly marked by colonial representations. This has to change. *By Ayoko Mensah*

In June 2016, the European Commission published a Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council entitled: *Towards an EU strategy for international cultural relations*. Culture as an essential element of soft power in EU international relations is not a recent development. This strategic vision was prevalent throughout 2007, as demonstrated by the *European Agenda for Culture in a Globalised World* published by the European Commission in that year. Since then, the European Union's Member States, Parliament and representatives of civil society have continued to advocate a 'more coordinated EU approach to international cultural relations'

The 2017 text puts forward 'an EU strategy for international cultural relations' (some would say it's about time!). The Communication proposes the promotion of cultural cooperation with partner countries based on three key pillars: supporting culture as an engine for sustainable social and economic development; promoting culture and intercultural dialogue for peaceful inter-community relations; and reinforcing cooperation in the area of cultural heritage. Through this strategy and the achievement of its stated objectives, the EU's international cultural relations should 'contribute to making the EU a stronger global actor'.

The purpose of this article is not to review this whole strategy. However, it is interesting to highlight some of its guiding principles in order to consider the changes they involve with some of the current modalities of cultural cooperation between the EU and Africa.

The EU's new strategy recognises that 'Culture, and in particular inter-cultural dialogue, can contribute to addressing major global challenges – such as conflict prevention

and resolution, integrating refugees, countering violent extremism, and protecting cultural heritage.' It emphasises the bridging role that culture can play in international relations. But for this to happen it is necessary to 'aim at generating a new spirit of dialogue, mutual listening and learning, joint capacity-building and global solidarity.(...) Since people frequently engage across borders using digital tools, communication between peoples should be encouraged to take place under conditions of respect and equality and in a spirit of partnership. Reciprocity, mutual learning and co-creation should therefore underpin the EU's international cultural relations.'

### *Breaking away from paternalism*

Let us focus on these principles: mutual listening and learning, respect and equality, reciprocity, co-creation... and global solidarity. These democratic values, which Europe likes to assert as constitutive of its identity and its project, remain powerful vectors of attraction throughout the world. But we should not ignore the fact that African governments and civil societies are simultaneously experimenting with a completely different kind of relationship. Whether it is the migration policies of EU Member States, which increasingly exclude nationals from ACP (Africa, Caribbean and Pacific) countries, or the heated negotiations between the European Commission and the ACP Group of States linked to the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs), in the eyes of many Africans these European Union values appear increasingly unreliable.

Culture, and in particular intercultural dialogue, can contribute to addressing major global challenges – such as conflict prevention and resolution, integrating refugees, countering violent extremism, and protecting cultural heritage.

Thus, in a fast-changing global geopolitical and geoeconomic context where the balance of power is becoming increasingly complex, can Europe confine itself to proclaiming values, particularly in its international cultural relations, without ensuring that these nourish its cultural cooperation programmes, especially with its historic and strategic partner, Africa?

It would take too long to give a detailed description of the institutional and operational architecture of EU-ACP cultural cooperation. What must be kept in mind is that the EU is more involved in its development aid than in its international relations. That is why this cultural cooperation is largely financed via the European Development Funds (EDFs). This is not insignificant and has repercussions on programme design (the fight against poverty and contributing to the economic development of ACP countries are among their main objectives), eligibility criteria for beneficiaries, grant award procedures and project evaluations. In this strategy, the prevailing vision is that of 'underdeveloped cultures', which should be helped to develop in the way that other development cooperation programmes support infrastructure and health care systems in African nations.

Senegalese economist and writer Felwine Sarr, author of *Afrotopia*, a noted essay

published in 2016, sums up the paternalism conveyed by such a vision based on the concept of development: 'We talk of "underdeveloped countries". The whole reality is summed up in an expression that is based on economic criteria that completely negate all other dimensions of human and social life. It is a "reductionist" vision. Countries have become hung up on this underdevelopment. [...] Concepts are important because they have foundations, implicit meanings. We deny difference and place it in a hierarchical relationship. We tell it to become "like us", to "be the same". Becoming like us is the way to gain dignity. It is inscribing others into our narrative, our story.'

For Sarr, the very concept of development is to be questioned and, above all, reinvented according to African realities and aspirations: 'It is a proposal that seems generous, as it is supposed to help people in difficulty, in poverty. It is difficult to question it because "development" has pulled off the tour de force of positioning itself as a word that sums up the virtuous aspirations of individuals. That's not true. It is a 20th-century Western construct that responds to specific needs. We can draw inspiration from it, but it is not a goal applicable to everyone.'

Unfortunately, this eurocentric and hierarchical concept is still broadly at the heart of cultural cooperation programmes with Africa, whether they are programmes run by EU Member States (France, Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands, etc.) or those co-led by the European Commission and the ACP Group of States, such as the ACPCultures+ programme. Of course there are exceptions, more often in collaborations between private organisations in Europe and Africa than in programmes designed by national and international cultural cooperation agencies. It is not a question of denying certain positive aspects of these programmes (in particular in terms of capacity-building and support for the circulation of artists and the dissemination of works), but of stressing that they remain largely trapped in a hierarchical vision and a colonial imagination that prevents them from experiencing the kind of reciprocity that could be enriching for all parties.

### *European soft power and African responses*

Historically, the first challenge faced by international cultural policy has always been the pursuit of influence. Today, in an age of cultural globalisation, digital revolution and international competition for control over channels for disseminating cultural content, the pursuit of influence remains the prime motivation of those states and intergovernmental organisations that have an external cultural policy. Since the 1990s, we have talked of soft power in international relations to designate this quest for influence through culture and its powers of seduction.

A term coined by American professor Joseph Nye, soft power refers to a new form of power in international political life that relies not on coercion but on persuasion, i.e. the capacity of political actors to convince others to pursue goals that match their own. This

power of persuasion is based on intangible resources such as a nation's positive image or reputation, its prestige, its ability to communicate, the attractiveness of its culture and its values (religious, political, economic, philosophical, etc.). It is also based on the place of the political actor at the heart of international institutions. A dominant position allows it to control the agenda of debates (and thus decide what are legitimate subjects for discussion) and to build a power relationship within a favourable framework. Therefore, this concept defines the ability to universalise a particular world view so that it is accepted and considered legitimate by external communities. Cinema and the audiovisual services industry are an important source of soft power because of their ability to create models.

In today's highly competitive geopolitical and geo-economic context, soft power has become a strategic and diplomatic domain that makes culture a major political issue. The European Union fully accepts this dimension and recalls that the objectives set out in its strategy for international cultural relations should contribute to 'making the EU a stronger global actor'.

Cultural cooperation between the EU and the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP) is affected by these soft power issues. ACP cultural actors and experts understand that programmes serve as much (some would say more) to disseminate models of cultures, values and societies and to guide the production of artistic content as to 'help' African cultural actors to 'develop'. This is especially the case because these programmes are deployed in particular contexts marked by the weakness of African cultural policies and industries and a significant imbalance in global trade in cultural goods and services (Africa accounts for no more than 1% of this global trade).

The situation is indeed paradoxical: while culture is becoming an increasingly strategic international field and African artists and cultural expressions are excellent ambassadors for the continent, African states and institutions are lagging far behind on soft power policy issues and challenges. Apart from South Africa and Morocco, few African nations currently have a genuine cultural policy, though some of them are heading down this path (such as Rwanda, Mali, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde and Uganda). Similarly, the glaring weakness of the departments and human resources dedicated to culture within regional and continental institutions (AU, CEMAC, WAEMU, ACP, ECOWAS) is symptomatic of this delay.

Yet Africa is at the heart of some major strategic challenges. The BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) and the Arab states of the Gulf do not hesitate to deploy their soft power policy. Qatar and the United Arab Emirates in particular invest heavily in Africa and use religion to strengthen their soft power and international status. In Senegal, for example, the United Arab Emirates are building 'turnkey' mosques, which also involve bringing in an imam.

In this cultural globalisation, African responses, policies and strategies struggle to

Historically, the first challenge faced by international cultural policy has always been the pursuit of influence.

be legible and visible. Faced with the delay and slowness of states, and also of regional and continental authorities and institutions, today it is African artists, intellectuals and cultural operators who are organising themselves to promote the emergence of an independent and alternative African point of view and discourse.

## *Cultural exchanges, or simply European demands?*

Since 2016, the Senegalese economist and writer Felwine Sarr and the Cameroonian political theorist and writer Achille Mbembe have been organising an annual event in Dakar, the 'Ateliers de la pensée'. These meetings bring together a group of African and European thinkers who are committed to 'the revival of decolonised African thought'. The second edition took place from 1 to 4 November 2017 and its discussion programme included the following issues: 'the radical decolonisation of knowledge, a broader conception of the idea of the universal, the curative and restorative function of thought and writing, and the rehabilitation of the principle of heterogeneity and multiplicity that is so deeply embedded in our history'.

These 'Ateliers de la pensée' illustrate the current intellectual and artistic ferment on the African continent that aims to allow a new discourse to emerge that is not a mere reproduction of Western thought. This issue and this desire are nothing new. These were the aims of the fathers of African independence, such as Kwame Nkrumah and Julius Nyerere, and the theorists of post-colonialism. So why and how have cultural issues been placed on the back burner by African nations? The reasons are multiple – political, economic and social: the priority given to other sectors of activity, disastrous attempts to use national cultures or artists for political purposes, the consequences of structural adjustment policies, lack of freedom of expression – these are just some of the elements that have contributed to the marginalisation of cultural issues and policies in Africa.

Faced with a field that had been left vacant in many countries since the 1980s, actors from the North gradually began supporting different levels of the cultural value chain (from design to production and dissemination) through cooperation projects. The situations vary widely depending on the particular countries, geographical and linguistic areas and the external cultural policies of the former colonial powers. The face of these North-South cultural cooperations is not the same in Senegal, Nigeria, Cameroon, Ethiopia and Zimbabwe... each country has a specific, more or less developed and autonomous cultural sector with its own strengths and weaknesses. However, whatever the country, nowadays they all have cultural cooperation projects funded by Northern actors, notably the European Union.

When we consider the vast majority of these projects, three key characteristics emerge. Firstly, it is Northern donors who design programmes and/or select projects in a more or less transparent manner. Second-

ly, collaboration between the parties is rarely reported from different viewpoints. In most cases, the project or programme is documented and analysed by the organisation in the North rather than by the partner(s) or beneficiaries in the South. Finally, most of these projects or programmes are not subjected to truly independent evaluations. Either evaluators are recruited 'internally' or, when they are external, they are still remunerated by the sponsors of the programme.

Thus, the recent history of cultural cooperation between Europe and Africa seems to have been written by a sole author: by the one who gives, who brings skills and technologies, who is convinced their model is superior and helps Africans to access it.

How could exchanges or projects of cultural cooperation between Europe and Africa be equitable in such a configuration, marked by an imbalance that is both material (financial means come from the North) and symbolic (and also legitimisation criteria...)?

This question is regularly raised in professional conferences and meetings, by artists, operators and researchers, yet it has not become a priority for donors and influencers in the North. In Europe, this imbalance, this asymmetry, seems almost self-evident. It is still very rare to find a European institution or organisation that sponsors cultural cooperation projects with Africa and engages in genuine critical reflection about its work. And yet, can cultural expressions be reasonably regarded as a traditional sector of development assistance? What does it mean to want to 'help develop' something that is part of the very identity of individuals and peoples and is partly expressed in an intangible way? We feel these questions deserve to be asked because the dominance of European criteria is still so strong in cooperation projects and programmes that we sometimes wonder whether the cultural decolonisation of the Dark Continent has ever taken place.

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## *Shared responsibilities*

It is strange to note that many artistic projects between Europe and Africa reproduce the logic of extracting raw materials in other areas of cooperation. The elements likely to be useful in Europe, whether artists, companies, aesthetics or heritages, are identified, selected by Northern 'experts', extracted from their environment and exported to the old continent for different purposes. In these cases, the artistic requirement clearly takes precedence over the structural quality of the relationship between the partners of North and South. There is a confusion between exchange and demands. Consciously or unconsciously, a neo-colonial relationship seems to be replayed over and over again... and it would take much more than words and declarations of good intentions to break this pattern of relations that is rooted in centuries of domination.

Today, a scientific review of the state of

play of cultural cooperation between Europe and Africa, and particularly of cooperation programmes financed by the European Union, is still to be done. A review that is not limited to the official documents relating to these programmes, but that seeks to integrate the views of partners and beneficiaries in the South and formulate the complexity and ambivalence of these types of programmes. On the basis of such an approach a new paradigm can gradually develop, far removed from the imbalance and representations inherited from colonisation and respectful of all parties. This requires two major changes. First of all, for actors in the North, it is necessary to recognise that the structural quality of exchanges is now as important as the artistic requirement, which necessarily impacts the framework of interactions, both project engineering and programme governance. On the other hand, it is important to design, support and evaluate projects and programmes over a longer period of time. Achieving structural change can rarely be done in the space of three, four or five years. In order to be effective, cultural cooperation must be carried out in a concerted and coordinated manner over a relatively long and continuous period of time.

Year after year, there are a string of policy declarations on the importance of the role of culture in the development of ACP countries. In 2009, the European Commission organised a major colloquium in Brussels on this subject, at the end of which ACP professionals set out their main recommendations in the Brussels Declaration. A monitoring committee was to be set up to track the implementation of these recommendations. The hopes of ACP cultural actors were built up. But in the end, the European Commission did not pursue its commitment. The Brussels Declaration remained empty words and ACP professionals failed to mobilise.

The situation in the ACP States and Secretariat is not much better. The 4th Meeting of ACP Ministers of Culture was held in Brussels on 9 and 10 November 2017. Following Dakar in 2003, Santo Domingo in 2006 and Brussels in 2012, this year's meeting produced a fourth Declaration, the first article of which states that it is regrettable that no effective mechanism for following up on previous declarations has yet been put in place.

When will we emerge from this succession of declarations and dare to lay the groundwork for concrete and innovative actions, representing a true paradigm shift? There are competent African professional organisations that are capable of enlightening and accompanying institutions. The Arterial Network, a network of African cultural operators, celebrated its 10th anniversary this year and now covers almost the entire continent. More recently, the African Cultural Policy Network, created in 2017, aims to be the interlocutor of states, local and regional authorities and regional and international organisations in the field of policies related to culture and cultural cooperation. Other organisations also possess considerable experience and expertise. And let's not forget think tanks such as the 'Ateliers de la pensée'.

Political institutions can no longer ignore these partners in the South. Going beyond words and specific actions, will the EU manage to implement the structural prin-

ciples set out in its new strategy on international cultural relations: mutual listening and learning, respect and equality, reciprocity, co-creation? Responsibilities are shared between Europeans and Africans. As long as African decision-makers and political organisations fail to consider and invest more heavily in cultural issues and questions, Europeans will continue to act as they wish, as experts in soft power and cultural diplomacy. Yet a paradigm shift is urgently needed to deal with the rise of extremism and populism in Africa and Europe. Because culture is not good in itself. It is a matrix that can generate both the best and the worst.

The writer Sony Labou Tansi used to say: 'I am not to be developed. I am to be taken or left.' How can we live together on a global scale with cultural differences that are constantly taking on new forms? Tomorrow, experts predict that 'geocultural issues are called on to constitute an approach to global governance, on the same footing as geopolitical and geo-economic issues. One of the major strategic challenges is to invent ways of making cultural pluralism a political project that will enable the many ways of being in the world to shape their interactions and form the basis of a multi-centric, yet peaceful world.' Will EU-Africa cultural cooperation contribute effectively to this challenge?

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# An agenda for change

The European Union is developing a new strategy for international cultural relations. How should this be implemented? What role could EUNIC play? One thing we do know is that a European pathway to external cultural relations needs policies that can meet the global challenges of populism, wars, climate change and the rise of China. *By Gottfried Wagner*

Where do we stand? Years of research, discussion and advocacy have produced some remarkable results. A new paradigm of culture in European external relations has been adopted by the European Parliament, the Commission, the External Action Service, and, finally, by the Council of Ministers. The EU Member States have agreed to strengthen their cooperation and set out concrete steps for achieving progress, in particular by founding the EUNIC network and through its operations in its local clusters and central office in Brussels. To varying extents, some of the Member States have also agreed to support small, fast-acting agents of change such as MORE EUROPE and civic actors such as foundations – a process that is quite unprecedented.

Any judgement of the outcomes and practical, tangible output to date depends on the expectations of the observer. In light of the newness of such a European process, the complexity of different organisational cultures, and the limited responsibilities of the Commission regarding culture, a great deal has been achieved. Yet the output has been modest when measured against the needs and the potential to address them. Why is this?

The fact that Member States, and among them notably the big ones, solidly if not stubbornly cling to the concept and practice of national cultural diplomacy could be interpreted as proof of the importance attributed to it by Member States and their external cultural relations agencies.

Even those among the national cultural institutes who have declared a deep commitment to the European perspectives of external cultural work (in some cases expressed in the mission statements of their organisations) and those who are fiercely committed to the

autonomy of cultural work (at arm's length) and also want to see this autonomy at European cooperative level, seem to have halted this 'Europeanisation process' in front of an invisible glass wall. European cooperation, yes, based on the modern paradigm of equal footing, with an attitude of learning, listening, cooperation and co-creation rather than traditional cultural diplomacy and showcasing, but within quite narrow boundaries, with limited national budgets allocated and some scepticism vis-à-vis the 'institutional interests' in Brussels, while at the same time expecting financial incentives for cooperative endeavours, and low-risk behaviour when it comes to new tools and instruments that are more European than national.

### *A lame duck?*

EUNIC finds itself having to cope with substantial challenges and paradoxical attitudes on the part of its members, and as a result it has often been unfairly criticised as a 'lame duck'. Smaller Member States and their agencies have lower levels of representation – in some cases only marginal or not at all – on the global stage. They could expect exposure and a fair share within European projects, yet a balance has to be struck between larger and smaller players, and stringent action for maximum impact is required for the sake of efficiency.

Many Member States still view cultural policy as a core part of the discourse on national identity and cultural diplomacy as a national currency or product in a competitive market. It remains to be seen what is possible when we move beyond primarily national approaches, mere additive models of cooperation and classic European events such as film days and literature nights. To a certain extent, modern European cultural diplomacy remains merely a projection without any deep exploration of the need for and feasibility of shared content and without an experimental, creative approach to establishing bold and complex managerial structures. What can the EU achieve as a whole? Where and how? These questions are discussed by academics and others who have little clout at EU headquarters, so they remain visions that remain untested in concrete terms.

One logical conclusion would be to find relatively simple ways forward, namely EU institutions taking the lead and helping to elaborate and test shared practices via incentives. But this is unlikely to happen in Brussels because they are not yet equipped (or entitled) to take decisive steps, or they are under-funded, under-staffed and dispersed over various units.

There is no doubt that the map of global challenges – including its cultural chapters – is changing dramatically. Europe needs to become a decisive, strong actor in every respect, including through well-thought-out cultural policies.

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US President Trump and his take on policies and politics seems to represent a political 'culture' that is at the very least alien to most Europeans, if not downright dangerous, and that represents a threat to the European Union and many others on a multilateral and bilateral level. However, he has only amplified what has been on the agenda for many years: Europe needs to become a strong partner on the global stage, independent and cooperative, with a focus both on its own interests and the common good. This holds true for socio-economic and trade issues, climate politics, security challenges, migration, the balance of power – and cultural relations.

## *The 'culturalisation' of conflicts*

The 'culturalisation' of conflicts that have other root causes, or 'culturalisation as ideology' as a result of inadequate power gestures by hegemonic forces, have become a major problem today. On the other hand, there is plenty of evidence of how decisive culture and education can be in tackling conflicts and post-conflict situations. Culture as a pillar of development, a driver of a creative economy, as an arena for democratic development – the need for cultural action, cooperation and co-creation is undisputed.

This need and the various concrete demands can be tackled by individual actors, networks, and national agencies, yet there is space and an urgent requirement for concerted European action, for a multi-stakeholder, well-orchestrated programme of cooperation that is built on the strengths of unity and diversity.

Moreover, and even if it sounds odd to genuine 'cultural' people: stronger, sophisticated ties between European defence policies (hard power) and external European cultural relations (smart power) must be established in a way that takes into account Europe's democratic and humanistic self-understanding and its diversity. There is so much to do. But in view of the current situation, the process-based nature of the EU's external cultural relations, and the means and tools available, there is only one way that is feasible and realistic: development through pilot projects. Pilot projects are the only way to establish active and resilient cooperation among key European players in terms of both content and management.

Pilot projects should focus on three main areas of urgency. The first of these is geopolitical urgencies: strategic European pilot projects in special regions of urgency with cultural partners from these regions and the diaspora in 'neutral places' (e.g. Turkey, Middle East/Syria, MENA region, Iran, US, Colombia).

The second is managerial urgencies: strategic European pilot projects to test models of shared ownership and effective management, such as houses of European cultures for a limited test period of, say, 5 years; internet-based European art and media initiatives; multilateral pilot programmes (e.g. relating to mobility or returning cultural operators

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post-crisis; and selected programmes with European delegations in certain countries/regions).

The third focus should be on thematic urgencies: themed pilot projects, such as international collaborative models in the creative economy, culture as a pillar in development, cultural heritage as a source of societal and socioeconomic development. Most importantly, there should be pilot projects on European and global 'interests' and cultural cooperation.

Each pilot would be co-funded by Member States, government agencies in partner countries, European institutions, and last but not least by collaborative partners from the independent civic and private sectors.

A package/work plan would have to be adopted by the EU and EUNIC, and the overall management could be delegated to the 'platform for culture in external relations'. Membership of this consortium would require active collaboration in one of the pilots and financial commitment of a certain percentage of the annual budget.

### *Building leadership capacity*

There is no doubt that EU structures need to be tested and developed.

Leadership capacity needs to be built based on the widely understood and accepted concept of subsidiary support for Member States, their cultural sector, the safeguarding and development of European cultural diversity and strong collaborative ties. This includes the capacities of those who can help create a framework and coherence in such a vast field of different actors and cultures, the European institutions and their respective DGs and departments. There is a need to build and implement new ways of overseeing, managing, administering and evaluating new projects, and recommendations should be made to the European Parliament and the Council after, say, 5 to 7 years.

Three requirements seem to be most vital for success. Firstly, it is necessary to strengthen certain instruments, such as the 'platform for culture in external relations', for example, by entrusting it with the project management cycle of the pilot period, supported by EU delegations. The second requirement is to seek out and support project partnerships with NGOs and foundations, as well as private partners with a robust economic background and interest in a favourable international climate. And finally, it is important to create a strong, flexible, temporary EU work unit augmented by the departments involved in the cultural/creative industries and external relations, including the European External Action Service (EEAS), the Commission's Directorates for Education and Culture (EaC), International Cooperation and Development (DEVCO) and Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations (NEAR). The whole process, but particularly the implementation, needs to be critically monitored by the European Parliament.

This may sound rather utopian at the moment, but, faced with growing pressure in the field and growing demand for soft/smart

instruments, strong leadership by the institutional base that is most concerned (most obviously Ms Mogherini, the High Representative, Vice-President of the Commission and chief of EAS) could achieve a great deal in terms of general strategic analysis, push factors and framing the process, which would include other relevant DGs on an equal footing.

Clearly, experts in the field of external cultural relations and those working on European collaborative agendas have encountered a series of controversial and often paradoxical features that all need to be seriously addressed. These include methodological issues like arm's-length policies (in theory and in reality!) versus clear political 'interests', at both Member State and EU level. Then there are issues related to national 'ownership' and/or 'Europeanness', and whether this has an impact on the handling of respective interests; and questions about defining cultural diplomacy and, paradigmatically, new interpretations of cultural relations and cooperation, and what that really means for the discourse on instrumentalisation. And finally, a new debate has begun about what constitutes European interests, seen through a critical lens of global cultural inequalities.

In general, there could be more clarity and transparency when it comes to balancing interests and autonomy, defining interests, and in particular, when socio-economic, political and security interests are at stake in cultural-political debates. Even relatively less contagious demands vis-à-vis culture in external relations – such as 'enhancing visibility', 'helping to create a brand', 'improving the image' – are irritants for some cultural/arts' purists. There is still a widespread fear of being instrumentalised, or at least of being instrumentalised by the wrong politicians/business groups for the wrong causes.

### *Balance between interests and autonomy*

One also has to keep in mind the difference between 'crude' instrumentalisation (direct and forceful) on the one hand and more intrinsic and nuanced 'agreements' between the funder (public or private) and the implementing agency or artist on the other.

Apart from the fact that this eternal issue will never cease to be debated, it is probably accentuated in the area of external policy. One of the reasons for this is the fact that artists, cultural operators and their representative bodies and networks have never been sufficiently involved in the strategic planning and development of foreign policies and respective CD policies. They usually came onto a map that had already been drawn by diplomats and experts in global issues. They were invited to travel to X or Y, to work with A or B, and were often happy to be able to do so; after the project, they returned to their daily work at local or national level where – unlike in external cultural relations – negotiations about space, time, attention and funding are part of everyday life. Here, they often know the artists' political and administrative counterparts and the channels for reaching them, and communication has its own rhythm and rules.

The time has come to involve artists/operators and their networks, thinkers and leaders of relevant, globally active cultural institutions in Europe in the external policy arena and in developing the new policies. So far, cultural institutes, state agencies and semi-state bodies have monopolised the external cultural discourse with the MfAs and with Europe.

Involvement, ownership, and participation is not easy to set up in a productive and conclusive manner, but new ways of collaboration need to be tested, for example in accordance with the three groups of pilot projects.

However, it is not only about individual freedom and autonomy. There are much more valid arguments to be made for 'sharing': this new policy deals with major global challenges and opportunities, transformational risks and political, economic and ecological threats; we need strategies to turn them into productive strategic options, solutions that in the end do concern everyone. What is actually at stake is overall better governance – and, accordingly the 'culture of the future', the 'culture of globally living together', the 'culture of governance' in a very complex environment.

External relations and cultural relations are part and parcel of negotiating new terms of living together, of engaged trans-national sharing of ideas and practising alternatives to dangerous developments on a local, regional, and global scale. The fact that new cultural diplomacy is becoming more important is based precisely on that overall development, but it can only succeed as part of a broader societal and cultural dialogue. Dialogue helps to clarify interests – individual and collective, selfish and common interests – and the growing but often shifting perception of what helps the common good.

This new policy deals with major global challenges and opportunities, transformational risks and political, economic and ecological threats; we need strategies to turn them into productive strategic options, solutions that in the end do concern everyone.

This kind of dialogue on issues of urgency across the world logically transcends national boundaries, without reducing the importance of local affiliations and local spaces to create and live. It is the famous 'glocal' spirit and 'glocal' way of working that echoes our globalised world. Local and global dialogue, a collaborative search for ideas and collaborative productions on matters of survival help us to negotiate the terms of how we live together locally, nationally and globally. Enlightened policy-makers at Member State and EU level engage with the artists' concerns; they have more in common than what divides them; and if the roles are clear (decision-makers are not the creators of art, artists are not diplomats) and they embark on a holistic conversation on the nature of external relations projects in particular local, regional and trans-regional settings, then the sheer opposition of 'autonomy' on the one hand and 'interests' on the other tends to become much less threatening, or at least partially disappears.

Artists also defend their freedom by becoming active members of the community of people who are concerned with global crises and dangers. And politicians learn to

appreciate the power of culture and the arts in the process of improving global relations.

Today, dialogue on global matters of urgency does not only occur between actors in individual countries; it is very often impossible to envisage project work, and even more so, outcome and output, without substantial European involvement, or in many cases firm, joint leadership.

Here the same applies: artists learn to join in the European quest for 'a better world', or at least a less threatening world. They learn to share and shape interests, and their partners on the policy side learn to work with artists.

When conceiving content for closer cooperation among Europeans in external cultural relations, it is essential to hold genuine debate about interests with artists, intellectuals, cultural operators, educators, economists, political scientists, and politicians. What are our interests as Europeans in the world? What do we share? Where do we disagree? How does the artist's voice and imagination open perspectives not provided by others?

Another question is equally important, if not more urgent: What are our interests as global citizens? What do we share? Where do we disagree? How does the artist's voice and imagination open perspectives not provided by others?

The latter question is a tough one, because it seems to inevitably lead to self-reflection and critique in many respects, basically questioning our privileged, destructive, imperial way of living that externalises the costs of crisis. The German political scientists Ulrich Brand and Markus Wissen argue that the level of identification with the current system in the Global North (and more and more in some of the fast-developing, successful states) very much depends on the externalisation of cheap labour and destructive ecological consequences at the expense of a vast majority in the South. Our imperial way of living and the injustices and risks attached to it thus challenges the 'system', however, it also challenges our individual behaviour (see Brand, Wissen, *Imperiale Lebensweise, öekom 2017*).

Delving more deeply into this matter would demonstrate that it is actually all about the culture of living together, the culture of dialogue and conflict. In this way, external cultural relations turn into global cultural policy – searching for shared understanding and shared strategies for a better future for all. Of course this will not be comfortable; there will be conflicts; but aren't we already in the midst of this critical global conversation on interests – both shared and conflicting?

## *The tasks of EUNIC*

It can be argued that European external cultural relations should tackle this conundrum in a bold and pointed debate. Today, defining European interests means critically extending the debate to the common global interest, and negotiating – step by step, scientifically, politically and culturally. Openness on differences, transparency on diverging interpretations and conflict are more productive than hidden fault lines and 'just nice words'. Undertaking this inquiry together with people from the world of culture could make it radical in the best sense of the word.

This paper's perspective is one of commitment to more Europe in external cultural relations, and for more self-critical, joint debate

on shared global interests, with a willingness to question our European hegemonic views and practices.

It would also be positive if networks and organisations involved in European external relations, such as EUNIC, would place more emphasis on content that matters in a global perspective, and where Europe is seriously challenged but also has something serious to say.

Many precious activities remain valid: capacity building, culture in development, the cultural and creative economy, artistic mobility, frameworks for enhanced co-operation and co-creation, etc. However, there are issues at stake where a truly European approach matters more than in other areas of relations.

In addition, if Europe has a unique position in global cultural discourse it is thanks to its long history of self-reflection, enlightenment and critique. We hope this will continue with increasing numbers of partners.

I have suggested beginning with an interdisciplinary, global cultural-political discourse and an artistic trajectory on the topic of European and global interests, and have highlighted the need to start negotiating commonalities and differences transparently. Ideally, such a trajectory could then be put into practice in pilot projects and organisational tests of new forms of trans-national and effective cooperation.

I don't know whether there is space and time for such a paradigm within the agencies that are spearheading European external cultural relations. However I think there are good reasons for beginning a new era with content of global urgency, and that this would help to boost an institutional/organisational development that has perhaps become somewhat ambivalent, oscillating between modesty and half-hearted 'investment'.

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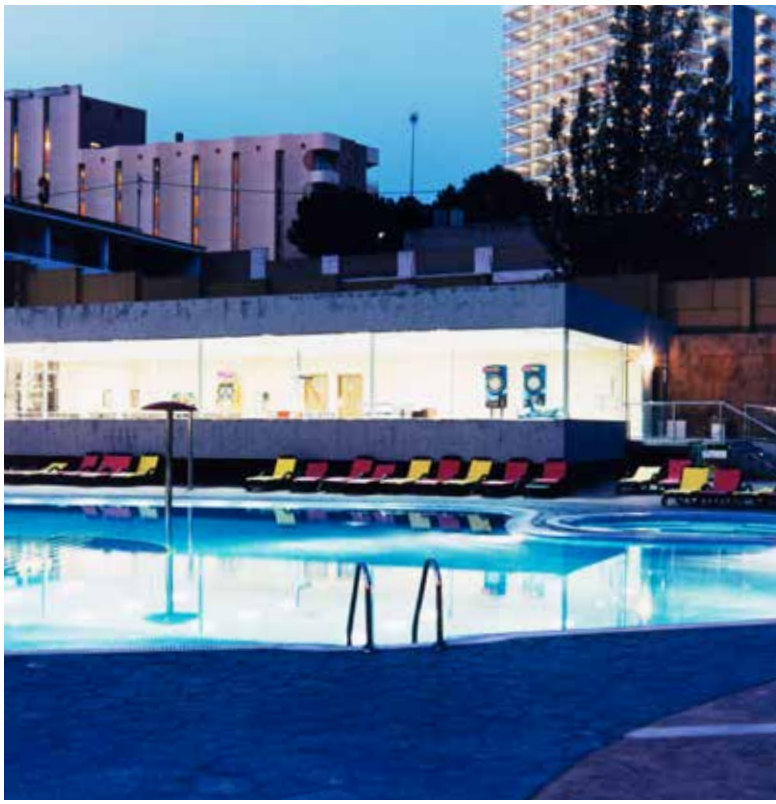

## Europe's cultural policy at home and abroad: a conversation

**Artists have been travelling from one country to the next since the beginning of civilisation. Cultural exchange may be very old, but international collaboration has only become common practice since globalisation, which began some thirty years ago. This evolution is not neutral. What about Western dominance, unequal access to the means of production and distribution, the precarious situation of individual artists and the trend for arts to become a commercial commodity and be alienated from society? An interview with Walter Zampieri, Andrew Murray and Koen Verlaeckt.**

Europe is first and foremost an economic project, and cultural policy is shifting towards creative industries; a sector that has become very important in terms of employment. Europe challenges North-America and Asia who used to dominate this sector. Europe is working on a new European project and this reflection also stimulates the debate on European cultural policy. The British Council published its policy note *Culture matters: Why culture should be at the heart of future public policy* in 2014. The Belgian sociologist Pascal Gielen compiled the book *No Culture, No Europe*. Where are we today in the rethinking of the European project? Is culture something peripheral? Or is it the heart of the European project?

*Mr Zampieri, what is the actual status of these intentions towards bringing culture in the heart of the European project?*

**Walter Zampieri:** Eleven years ago the European Union (EU) started dealing with culture in terms of policy. There was more optimism then. Before the crisis we probably thought that things would come automatically. Culture was considered more as a luxury. The priorities were 'hard' projects in the economic field. I think today there is an awareness that there are also cultural divides that need to be tackled. And you can only tackle them in an indirect way, in the long term and through culture.

The Gothenburg communication after the Summit of November 2017 stressed the importance of strengthening European identity through education and culture. That was very important because it was the first time that we said very clearly that culture is an important element for active citizenship, European integration, identity and for the sense of being part of a community.

We value our diversity, which remains essential to the European project. But diversity should set ourselves apart from each other. There is still a lot of work to be done, especially to promote the circulation of works of art and of artists and cultural workers. The Berlin Philharmoniker will always tour Europe and the world. But for less famous artists it remains very difficult to be part of the transnational conversation that is the essence of culture. Culture is the conversation that underpins the European public space. We often complain that there is no such European public space, but if you look at the cultural section of your newspaper, you realise that it does exist. It has always existed.

In Gothenburg we signed our 'contract' for cooperation at EU level in cultural matters. And of course, the international dimension, our relations with other countries and regions, is also a shared ownership with the Member States.

*Does that mean that the budget for culture will go up?*

**Walter Zampieri:** The budget for culture is not only Creative Europe (1.46 billion euros). If you include the Structural Funds, we are already around 1% of the European budget. And that is what the UN asks. Even when it comes to Brexit, I want to be optimistic: I'm not giving up hope that the UK might continue to participate in cultural exchanges. It would be very odd if the UK should leave the education and culture programmes altogether.

*Let us turn to the Flemish government. Mr Verlaeckt, we have seen a shift in policy that stresses the importance of 'nation branding' and the role of culture in civil society.*

**Koen Verlaeckt:** "I think there are basically three dimensions. There is international cultural policy. That's the policy that is being set up by the ministry of culture in the Flemish government and that is basically about internationalising the priorities of the domestic cultural policy. There is an overlap with the other dimensions where foreign affairs is more in the driver's seat.

The second dimension is about nation branding. It's the 'old school' approach where culture and foreign affairs meet. I still remember the times when Luc Van den Brande was Minister-President (1992-1999) of Flanders. He appointed Cultural Ambassadors with big chunks of money. After Mr Van den Brande left office, the money was transferred to the ministry of culture and so the whole idea of culture as an instrument for nation branding disappeared from the political spotlight.

Kunstenpunt, the Flanders Art Institute, invited three privileged witnesses from the Flemish and European level to discuss civil society, active citizenship, transnational realities and intercultural dialogue:
**Walter Zampieri** is Head of the Cultural Policy Unit of the Directorate General for Education and Culture of the European Commission.
**Andrew Murray** is Director of the EUNIC Global Office. EUNIC is the European Union National Institutes for Culture.
**Koen Verlaeckt** is the Secretary-General of the Flanders Department of Foreign Affairs. He is also the current President of EUNIC Global.
The interview was conducted by Dirk De Wit, Coordinator International Relations of Kunstenpunt, where it is also published. It was transcribed by Karl van den Broeck (BOZAR).

The third dimension is where we try to – and I know this is dangerous – instrumentalise culture. We use it to intensify our bilateral ties with other countries. If you want to foster economic ties with the USA and you have a business delegation visiting the country, you create added value if you can invite them to a concert afterwards.
Then there is culture in civil society. I would like to emphasise the role of EUNIC in this regard. In December 2016, the conference *European Angst* took place at BOZAR. It was one of the first events with big visibility, where the role that culture can play in the societal debate was really put centre- stage.
But there is also the capacity building programme the Flemish government put in place in the 1990s. We paid a lot of attention to the 'new' Member States (Poland, Hungary, Baltic States, etc.). Our government invested 3 to 4 million euros annually in a programme that was aimed at capacity building, while at the same time opening dialogue. We also invested in our relations with Ukraine. One of the messages that I will always cherish is that almost the only way for Russians and Ukrainians to keep talking to each other is through joint cultural exchanges. That remains the only lifeline for them.
**Andrew Murray:** The nineties were very important. I was working for the British Council in Romania and Poland in that period. The British Government set up the UK Know How Fund to support the accession process and as part of that process to help build an independent cultural sector. This was an important shared objective and was part of a carefully thought-through strategy.
Today we have a strategic approach to EU international cultural relations but we do not yet have a strategy. We need an agreement between the Member States, the European institutions and the cultural sector about how to implement this approach. The primary goal is promoting mutual understanding and trust between people. We also need an inclusive definition of culture. It is about more than the arts. It is also about education, science, sport, tourism, and cultural heritage. At this point we are trying to work out what the roles and responsibilities should be of these three actors and how they can pool their resources.
A big problem is that culture and education are competences of the Member States. How can we go back to the spirit of the '90s when we had the ambition to help build and strengthen an independent cultural sector with our partner countries?

*How does EUNIC deal with countries that promote nationalism? The independent cultural sector in these countries is taken over by governments or it faces serious budget cuts.*
**Andrew Murray:** We can put forward the arguments for culture in its wider sense and its importance for the European project. Most individual Member States support this view. Questions often arise when we try to define what are European values. Values are a really difficult concept to define and elaborate. Often, they are defined in a prescriptive way, and they are used to divide people rather than to build bridges. I would rather use values to describe what people value themselves. If you prescribe values to promote a sense of identity, you risk not only building walls between Europeans, but also between Europeans and the rest of the world.
**Walter Zampieri:** What are European values? They are listed in the Treaty. I like to think in terms of 'framework values', as proposed by political philosopher John Rawls: all we need to agree on for democracy to function

is a 'framework'. If you look at the values that we have in the European Treaty, we are talking about human rights, the rule of law, democracy, non-discrimination, gender equality. These are framework values that allow a free conversation to take place, but they do not dictate anything about the content or even the tone of that conversation. But you have to comply with that framework. If the Commission believes that this is not the case, and there have been recent cases, in Poland and Hungary, then action is taken to try to redress the situation.
Our framework values make us more credible partners worldwide. We don't put forward French values or German values. We promote European values. This is also an opportunity for the Member States. Nation branding is for the Member States, my job is rather to look for the added value of the EU. But nation-states can also brand themselves as countries that are responsible and important players in Europe. In that case it makes sense to work together with the EU.

*You mentioned the cultural public space. That is a complex concept in an era where migration is becoming very important. Migrants want to identify with the culture they are living in, but they stay in contact with the culture of their country of origin. How do you deal with this complexity?*
**Walter Zampieri:** It's a large scale experiment that is taking place before our eyes. Never in history has it happened so quickly and so widely. On the other hand, migration is not an entirely new phenomenon. I'm not sure that keeping your ties with your community in the 'old country' really hinders integration. Look at the experiences of the Chinese and Italian communities in Europe and the US: they keep their ties with their countries of origin, but they also identify with the country they live in.
In the US a lot of people said that Hispanics would not learn English because they were in constant contact with Latin-American media. But in reality we see that they do learn English. The fact that you have access to your own culture doesn't mean that you are not ready to integrate in a new one, on the condition that it is interesting and appealing and that it doesn't refuse you. And I think that's the key point. If you refuse them, they will stay within the boundaries of their own communities. If we multiply the possibilities of exchange that will not happen. I think the final result will be better.

*The University of Antwerp conducted a study that showed that people from migrant communities feel more comfortable identifying with Europe than with Belgium or Flanders. An opportunity for Europe?*
**Walter Zampieri:** With all the caution that we need to have, we can be confident about the attractiveness of Europe.

*Mr Verlaeckt, how does Flanders deal with this 'hybridisation' or 'transnationalism'?*
**Koen Verlaeckt:** In Flanders we are not dealing directly with these issues because there is the division of competences between us and the federal ministry of foreign affairs and the colleagues dealing with asylum and migration procedures. At the Flemish level, it's more about integration policy, which doesn't fall within the competences of my own ministry.
On the policy level we see more emphasis on defending the interests of our own local population. The basic rhetoric you keep hearing in discussions about integration policy in Flanders or in Belgium, is: 'We fully respect the culture of people arriving in our country but they have to comply with our own values.' This brings us back to the same problem. What are our own values? The typical European 'between-brackets-values' of the Enlightenment.
Recently an Iranian human rights activist, Darya Safa, joined the political party N-VA. It is a step in the right direction to hear a woman who fled Iran because of the problems she had with the regime, defending the values of the Enlightenment.
Our government is also trying to reach out to a number of diaspora communities. There is the Darna project (formerly known as Darkom). It used to be a house for Moroccan-Flemish cultural relations in the heart of Brussels. It has been replaced by a much lighter and more flexible programme of cultural activities. But we have to be aware that countries like Morocco are really putting in place a very explicit diaspora policy that is not so neutral. There is always a risk of a hidden agenda.
In countries like Hungary and Poland we make sure that we keep our differences out of the government-to-government interaction. We put only neutral topics on the agenda: economic or academic cooperation. Cultural cooperation is one of the chapters but in a lighter dimension: the exchange of some dancers, some music festivals. What we are trying complementary to this government-to-government dialogue is to invest directly in civil society. We do that under the radar. The embassies of these countries are instructed to focus on the softer areas of cooperation. They just pretend that nothing is wrong, which I find pretty uncomfortable.

*Do you think it's possible to work under the radar, to work on the two levels?*
**Koen Verlaeckt:** Yes, we are doing it in some countries, and we try to combine both. I think the most stupid thing to do is to close down your channels of communication with the government. You should not antagonise them. You have to make sure

you use the dual approach.
**Andrew Murray:** There is a place for traditional cultural diplomacy. For example, in Iran at the moment, you can only operate through embassies. We have to use the tools available for us in a certain context. There is a variety of different approaches available for practitioners of cultural diplomacy and cultural relations: from traditional nation branding to the 'arm's length' approach, where you basically enable cultural operators to work together and operate without interference from their governments.

*EUNIC is working in Rabat (Morocco) with several European Cultural institutes, including the British Council, Goethe Institute, Institut Français, Cervantes and others who are members of a EUNIC collaborative cluster. On the other hand we have organisations like Darna who work with Moroccan communities in Brussels. How can the two relate?*
**Andrew Murray:** We are not making enough use of these connections between civil societies in the EU and the Southern Neighbourhood. The work that Kunstenpunt is doing by mapping those connections between Morocco and Flanders is very interesting for us. We lack data and evidence. So, at the moment, I think EUNIC is still learning how to work with civil society organisations. It's a very young organisation. Only 10 years old. It is composed of diverse members ranging from ministries to arms-length institutes. They are still learning how to work together. I think the EU institutions can help us with that, as a catalyst.
In countries like Morocco and Tunisia the EU partners are starting to understand that we have a common purpose: the building up of an independent cultural sector. The paradox is that the members of EUNIC are working together more closely outside Europe. We have a clear common purpose there that we often don't see when we work in in the EU.

*Mr Zampieri, recently the Commission put in place an extra fund for Tunisia. The money is distributed to Tunisian applicants through the EUNIC Cluster in Tunisia. What are the possibilities of this new fund?*
**Walter Zampieri:** For us, this is a long term project. We need to see what the added value of the EU is. We can serve as a platform for national cultural institutions and cultural operators from Europe.
The cultural world lacks multipliers. If you look at education policy, you have universities that all pursue the same mission. In the cultural world it's not so easy to identify good, reliable, effective multipliers. We think that national cultural institutes can do a very good job in that respect. That's why we want to work with them.
Tunisia is an experiment. What we lack is the instruments to do something like that on a bigger scale. Creative Europe is limited. We can only work in Europe and the neighbouring countries. Of course, there are more resources in other DGs like DEVCO (Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development) and DG Near (Directorate-General for Neighborhood and Enlargement Negotiations), but this money is not earmarked for cultural exchanges. That's the problem we encounter if you want to fund activities in certain countries, we find that DG DEVCO can finance activities over there, we can finance activities here, but it's impossible to find a project that pulls the two together.

*We hear that in Tunisia some people are afraid of the negative perception that the money is again managed by the former colonising countries.*
**Walter Zampieri:** As for post-colonialism, that's who we are, that's our history. We can only be open and transparent about it. And it's probably better to go there as Europeans than as Brits, Italians, or French.
**Andrew Murray:** Let's look at this from a different perspective. If your goal is to support an independent cultural sector in Morocco or Tunisia or anywhere else in the MENA region (Middle East and Near Asia, KvdB), the governments of those states might not necessarily want that, because the independent cultural sector could be critical of the government. If you were to give the money directly to the government, it may not be used for that purpose, so you need to find some intermediary. And at the moment, that's the experiment. We are looking at European cultural institutes to work as an intermediary between the cultural sector and the government. We are doing the same in Ukraine. By channelling small grants, funded by the EU, through the cultural institutes the cultural sector can grow and learn how to support itself.

*There is also the private sector. In the MENA region you have foundations like the Kamel Lazaar Foundation in Tunis, which do a lot of education and art archiving. They do it because the government doesn't. Is there a way to cooperate?*
**Koen Verlaeckt:** They could partner with the local EUNIC cluster. There should be no problem.
**Andrew Murray:** A good example is the Anna Lindh Foundation (ALF), which gets some funding from the EU. We are working with Anna Lindh in our cluster in Athens, where the head of EUNIC is also the head of Anna Lindt.
**Walter Zampieri:** There is also an issue with the visibility of aid. We should make sure that people identify the aid as coming from Europe, and this applies also to EUNIC-led interventions. It would lead to a better perception of what we are doing

in many countries. In some cases there might be a need to keep a low profile, but I can see this problem arising only in a very limited number of cases.

**Andrew Murray:** We have to remember that most of the funding for cultural diplomacy and cultural relations is spent by Member States. The key challenge is for Member States to re-allocate some of that bilateral funding to multilateral funding to support European cultural relations. This is what is happening in Tunisia and it proves that with this little bit of money we can achieve a lot. We can achieve even more if we want to start to use some of the bilateral funding which is mainly used for traditional cultural diplomacy. It is important to get foreign affairs, culture and development ministries in Member States to work together. The Dutch are a good example, they have a more integrated approach than most Member States.

*Can the EUNIC Cluster in the western countries learn from the EUNIC Cluster in Rabat, Tunisia or in Turkey? They are doing fantastic work in collaborating in Turkey now.*

**Andrew Murray:** We have 40 clusters inside the EU and about 70 outside of the EU. Over the past few years, we have focused more on outside the EU. What should our priority be inside the EU? The Presidents of our EU clusters have agreed it should be social inclusion. Some clusters are also tackling emerging challenges like populism and nationalism. Here in Brussels, the *European Angst* conference started to think about how we can respond to that challenge.

**Walter Zampieri:** We want to do more for intra-European mobility of artists and cultural professionals. We will never have the money Erasmus has. On the other hand, there are lots of small-scale activities in Member States, also thanks to cities and cultural institutions.

**Koen Verlaeckt:** If you look at the Tunis example. The programme is being delivered by a local cluster consisting of those organisations that are on the ground. The question is how can EUNIC members like Flanders and the Netherlands benefit from these experiences? I think it could also help to counter this idea of 'the old colonial masters are back'.

If my ministry of culture or my ministry of foreign affairs would see that this dialogue is meaningful for us, they would be willing to find money. You have to sell the message to your political masters.

If you just want to sell the message about cultural cooperation or nation branding, they will say that that is not essential in 'these difficult economic times'. It all changes when you say that you are investing in cultural dialogue and an independent cultural sector. The Moroccan government wants to be our first ally in North Africa. They say they can help us. We have problems with education and training of imams in our local mosques. They can help us find a solution. And it's about selling that message.

**Andrew Murray:** We have not yet found a set of indicators to evaluate the impact of funding culture so that we can convince finance ministers to spend more on culture.

**Koen Verlaeckt:** Efforts should be made to try and to measure the impact. Even if the outcome is only raw statistics. We did something with the Flemish University Council. We did a study about the impact of universities on Flemish society. The study showed that, for every euro invested, there is an outcome of 6 euro, and that's a very conservative guess. We should explain the concept of cultural diplomacy to the people who will be standing for elections for the European Parliament next year. Efforts could be made to make sure that this concept finds its way into the party programmes. That's really an urgent task because those programmes are being written as we speak.

*How important is it to broaden the definition of arts and culture?*

**Andrew Murray:** It is gradually being broadened. For example, the European Commission has funded the European Year of Cultural Heritage to the tune of 8 million euros. I'm impressed with how the programme was put together for the Year of Cultural Heritage. Their ambition is to be applauded. And their vision is about the future, not about the past. Cultural heritage is about how to build a better future.

It will be interesting to see what happens at the end of the year. What will be the legacy? What has been the return on investment?

## EUNIC 2017

2017 was a pivotal year for EUNIC as it made a major step forwards realising its ambition of becoming a partner of choice for the EU Institutions with the signing of the Administrative Arrangement with the European External Action Service (EEAS) and European Commission (EC). The Administration Arrangement will facilitate the development and implementation of joint pilot actions between EUNIC clusters and EU Delegations (EUDs) as recommended in the Joint Communication Towards a new strategy for culture and EU external relations (June 2016). EUNIC Global was invited to speak at the Council of Ministers meeting which approved the Joint Communication in May 2017.

The relationship between EUNIC and European Union Delegations strengthened with many EUD colleagues attending EUNIC Regional meetings with clusters. In March, EUNIC Global held its first African regional cluster workshop in Addis Ababa which was attended by the cluster members from South Africa, Sudan, Namibia, Mozambique, Senegal, Cameroon and DRC. EUNIC learned that although EUNIC members have a diverse approach to culture and development, there is a growing interest in how our members can work better together and with EU Delegations and DEVCO. EUNIC clusters have signed contracts with EU Delegations in Sudan, DRC and Senegal to strengthen the capacity of the local cultural sector. EUNIC Global followed up these visits to Kinshasa and Senegal to help them develop their joint strategy with their EU Delegation. A new cluster was approved in Abuja and discussions are ongoing to set up new clusters in Kenya, Rwanda, and Madagascar.

EUNIC focused on further developing the network of clusters through a cluster governance reform process to make clusters more operational and capable of delivering the Strategic Framework by offering support with cluster strategies. By the end of the year 77 out of 105 clusters had either completed or drafted their cultural relations strategies. This was achieved in part via the Cluster Development Programme which organised regional workshops with clusters in EU, Neighbourhood EAST and SOUTH, the Balkans, and Sub-Saharan Africa as well as a new, more strategic Cluster Fund. The Cluster Fund supported projects such as artist-in-residence programmes in Iran and Serbia, experimental theatre plays on privacy in the current digital era, capacity building in the Ukrainian museum sector, and supporting the Bulgarian government for their EU Presidency.

As part of its research programme, EUNIC organised the first Siena Cultural Relations Forum in 2017 which brought together academics, practitioners and policymakers to discuss issues related to the implementation of the Joint Communication. Working with the University of Siena, EUNIC has been granted Jean Monet funding to run four more events which will culminate with the second Siena Cultural Relations Forum in summer 2019.

EUNIC continued its programme of knowledge-sharing workshops. Camoes hosted a session on Culture and Development and EUNIC Global was invited to present the results at a Task Group meeting in Luxembourg.

In its work with members, EUNIC reformed its governance to foster stronger collaboration and improve its decision-making. The Board of Directors expanded to 6 members making much better use of the knowledge and experience of the Heads. Focal points meetings replaced the Strategy Group, enabling a much more inclusive approach to strategy consultation. Over the summer, EUNIC Global drafted a business plan to ensure the organisation's sustainability over the next 4 years. The General Assembly approved this in December and agreed to increase membership fees by fifteen per cent.

In EUNIC's work in digital cultural relations, as well as the launch of the new EUNIC app 'Invisible City', EUNIC designed a new website and a series of webinars for members on a variety of topics from developing social media strategies to how to market the new EUNIC app to local audiences.

EUNIC further improved its financial viability until 2021 by successfully bidding for funding under the Creative Europe Programme for its Crossroads for Culture programme. The previous three years of funding had enabled EUNIC to strengthen the EUNIC Global team, financed the Cluster Development Programme, EUNIC Focal Points meetings, our work with members and experts on cultural relations policy, and the development of a new version of the EUNIC app, which was launched and made open to our stakeholders in the cities around the world. From 2017 EUNIC will use the Creative Europe funding to help create a European Cultural Relations Sector as well as to continue to support members and clusters achieve their shared goals.

# Spotlight on EUNIC Reports and features from around the globe

## ITmakES

ITmakES (Italy and Spain making together) is a programme created with the aim of developing new channels for dialogue between Italy and Spain in the most dynamic areas of creativity.

Since 2016, the Italian Embassy in Madrid has been working with the Italian Cultural Institutes in Madrid (which held the presidency of the local EUNIC cluster in 2016-2017) and Barcelona, and with Spanish public and private partners to promote the ITmakES programme. The aim is to develop joint projects involving young Italian and Spanish professionals who work in design studios, on architectural projects and in digital fabrication laboratories, known as 'fab labs'.

The programme includes Vivace, an open call for young designers that aims to promote the work of professionals in the creative sector in Madrid and Barcelona. The Fab Linkage selected nine Italian and Spanish fab labs and brought them together in Madrid to start work on joint projects, which were later presented at the Maker Faire Rome 2017, one of the most important venues in the European 'Maker' movement. The 2018 edition will focus on projects related to Life & Health, Education, Social Sheltering, Fashion & Wearable, Music & Interaction.

The second phase of ITmakES involved young professionals in the field of Food & Wine. It provided an opportunity to present Italy's enogastronomic culture through initiatives aimed at raising awareness of key issues, such as sustainability, territory, social cohesion, legality, food waste reduction, and creativity.

After two successful years, the ITmakES approach will continue and be extended to new fields of activity, such as the visual arts and cinema.

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## The European Day of Languages in Jordan

For this 2017 edition, the European Day of Languages (EDL), coordinated by the Institut Français in Jordan, brought together many countries, all eager to demonstrate the richness and variety of the languages and cultures of Europe to the widest possible audience. The five cultural institutes in Jordan were represented (British Council, Cervantes Institute, Dante Alighieri Society, Goethe Institute and the Institut Français), as were, for the first time, the Austrian, Belgian, Hungarian and Swiss embassies. The choice of a single location, which was outside European cultural institutes, helped mobilise countries without their own cultural space and thus helped the space become a genuine 'European village'.

Since a multi-purpose space (a cultural centre for young people) was chosen to organise the event, activities such as cooking, theatre and comic workshops could be organised for the first time, as well as games and competitions. A French cartoon was screened at the planetarium for a young audience, most of whom were there for the first time. Visitors also had an opportunity to learn about aspects of cultural diplomacy by meeting representatives from about ten countries who had come to explain their work and the importance of developing cultural links between Jordan and European countries. They were also introduced to European culture through mini-lessons for beginners in English, French, German, Italian, Spanish and even Hungarian.

This selection of activities attracted a record crowd: 800 children and students from all over Jordan, which was four times more than EDL 2016. It was a genuine success, partly because the activities were opened up to a wider audience. For the first time, the day was divided in two, with the morning being for children aged eight and older to discover European languages through educational activities that had been specially organised by the participating countries. The afternoon was for those aged 15 and over.

In addition, students from several universities in the country were able to join in the activities due to the work of student associations. Finally, we wanted to promote the values of European inclusion and diversity by inviting, for the first time, underprivileged children (orphans and refugees) through partnerships with associations. 'For the first time, the orphans we are looking after had a chance to learn about the cultures of European countries and they were delighted to learn some words in French or German', explains Faten Al-Malky, founder of the One Love association in Jordan.All students received a 'language passport', which was a booklet with information on each participating country and the language(s) spoken there. Extra pages were added so that each child/student could write down the new words they had learnt during the day.

The day ended with an interactive quiz featuring pictures, songs and videos on European cultures and languages before a captivated audience led by Sally Shalabi, a master of ceremonies and storyteller with a great reputation who is hugely popular among young Jordanians. The winners received eight language classes from the cultural institutes in Jordan

as well as presents from the embassies (books, comics, gadgets, etc.).

## Home as a physical and mental state

Mobile Home 2017 was a joint venture of four Finnish cultural institutes in Paris, Berlin, the Benelux countries, and London. The project explored different meanings of home through experiences, architecture, art, and sociology during 2017, when independent Finland was celebrating its centenary. Each institute took their own, unique perspective on the theme of home and instead of showcasing similar exhibitions or installations, different interpretations were commissioned from Finnish artists and architects.

Mobile Home 2017 was a mutual initiative and a collaboration model where the institutes joined forces regarding project design, fundraising, and communications. One important goal was to present the projects together in Finland in order to strengthen the visibility of the institutes also in their homeland. Mobile Home 2017 gained wide international press coverage, with over 600 media articles.

The Finnish Institute in Paris approached the theme through Finnish hospitality, communality, architecture, and design. Conceived and curated by designer Linda Bergroth, KOTI (Finnish for 'home') transformed the project space of the institute to a village of design cottages for 100 days. KOTI was a living installation that enabled guests to experience a Finnish summer cottage sleepover in the heart of the city. The cottages accommodated 12 guests every night and could have been booked through Airbnb. Each day, the installation was open for the public to visit. After Paris, the installation was showcased in Helsinki for 30 days.

At the Finnish Institute in Germany, the meanings of home during the current era of global mobility were explored through visual art, culture, and science from spatial, psychological and social perspectives. The installation created to the exhibition space of the institute by a Finnish artist Tuomas A. Laitinen and a German architect collective Raumlaborberlin looked at the issues of bio and energy politics and the vision of home in the future. It consisted of Laitinen's Thermocene, which explored survival strategies, future homes and the architecture of animals and Raumlaborberlin's Habitation Objects, which focused on the transportation and creation of home through objects.

Mobile Home London created opportunities for sustainable and innovative wood construction combining wood building know-how, university collaboration, and technology. Mobile Home London was produced in collaboration with architecture professionals and students and was an integral part of the architecture studies of the University of Westminster. Under the guidance of architects Harry Charrington and Sami Rintala, students developed environmentally friendly building materials and models with low emissions, and finally designed and built a wooden Lastu shelter for a wilderness trail at Lusto Finnish Forest Museum in Punkaharju, Finland.

The Finnish Institute for Benelux explored concepts of home as a physical and mental state through migration and homelessness. The Mobile Home(less) project was centred round a new work of art by sculptor Anssi Pulkkinen, exhibited in the Benelux region and in Finland during spring and summer 2017. Street View (Reassembled) consisted of the ruins of a Syrian home imported in the urban space of Europe creating a caravan-like temporary street view. It contemplated the migration of the home and the aesthetics and symbolism of the ruin. Through the work, Pulkkinen studied the meanings evoked in us by the imagery of ruins.

## Sunu Cinema: Senegalese cinema on show

The Senegalese authorities have highlighted the current lack of professionalisation of young actors in the film industry and shortcomings in particular as regards scriptwriting. Since 2010, the Senegalese State has set up a proactive policy for relaunching cinema and making it a genuine cultural industry, the objective being to breathe life into the sector and encourage the emergence of a new generation of Senegalese film directors.

In light of this, the European Union National Institutes for Culture (EUNIC) cluster in Senegal started the Sunu Cinema project, a programme to professionalise and promote cinema, with the aim of supporting screenwriting training, increasing the expertise and skills of local structures, and effectively contributing to the revival of the Senegalese film industry.

The EUNIC cluster is complementing the work of the Senegalese government which includes creating the FOPICA (Senegal's Film and Broadcasting Industry Promotion Fund), which has an annual budget of 1 billion CFA francs (almost €1,525,000), and is to be increased to 2 billion in 2018.

The EUNIC cluster project itself receives €150,000 of funding from the EU Delegation in Dakar. Bringing together the Wallonia-Brussels Delegation, the Goethe-Institut, the British Council, Aula Cervantes, the Spanish Embassy, the Camões Institute and the Italian Embassy, the project was

implemented by the Institut français in Senegal, which chairs the EUNIC cluster in Dakar.

Fifteen young Senegalese film directors have thus received support in scriptwriting techniques. The workshops are organised at the Place du Souvenir Africain in Dakar, over three 15-day sessions totalling 315 hours of training. They are run by five European and five Senegalese training officers to help the young people write their scripts.

Five screenings have been organised in association with local actors, associations and city authorities, in areas with high population density and many young people but few cinemas. These open-air screenings in various Dakar neighbourhoods (Mbao, Pikine, Grand Dakar, Yeumbeul and Cheikh Anta Diop University) have had great success due to their close proximity to local populations, with attendances in excess of 3,000.

Planned screenings: Samba by Eric Tolédano and Olivier Nakache, Fuocoammare by Gianfranco Rosi, Le Sel de la Terre by Wim Wenders, I Am Not Your Negro by Raoul Peck and Félicité by Alain Gomis.

To implement the project, the EUNIC Senegal cluster drew on the expertise of local professionals:

- Moussa Touré, who has his own production company, Les Films du Crocodile, and directed The Pirogue, (which competed in the Un Certain Regard category at Cannes 2012 and the Bronze Stallion at Fespaco 2013). For many years, he has also been organising screenings in the Dakar suburbs to introduce cinema to young people and develop their critical judgment.
- The Cinékap production company, which produced Alain Gomis's film Félicité (winner of the Silver Bear at the Berlinale and the Golden Stallion at Fespaco 2017), and which since 2013 has organised the Up Court-Métrage shorts programme (training and assisting young directors to organise training sessions).
- To help with the project's communications campaign, Studio Sankara, the leading Senegalese production company, which organised Stromae's concert in Dakar in 2014. The internationally-known singer Didier Awadi is head of the studio.

Several TV, radio, written and online press partnerships and press conferences have enabled targeted distribution and have led to major media interest in all activities. A major digital communication campaign helped increase the project's profile, which includes a Facebook page with over 8,800 followers and a YouTube channel featuring all of the project's videos.

The Sunu Cinema programme enabled 15 young Senegalese directors to have a completed script which will be presented at the next call for Fopica 2018, but also to have the tools and methods for scripting a film project. The residents of the various Dakar neighbourhoods were enthusiastic about the proposed screenings, and the mayors of the different localities thanked the Cluster for this initiative and hope to create open-air cinemas, in collaboration with Moussa Touré.

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## CREATIVE AUSTRIANS

**Progressive Thinkers for Tomorrow's Society**

Creative Austrians. Progressive Thinkers for Tomorrow's Society is a new initiative from the Austrian Foreign Ministry's Department for International Cultural Policy with the aim of promoting new talent.

While Austria is relatively small in terms of its land area and population – and has limited raw materials, resources and means of production – the same does not apply to its potential for creativity. Austria is recognised throughout the world as a leader in culture, creativity and innovation. It is a creative country, not only in the spheres of arts and sciences, but also in the world of business. Hence, CREATIVE AUSTRIANS is rooted at the interface of these areas. This is a new kind of approach for international cultural policy in Austria.

The programme supports innovative and creative minds that work on socio-politically relevant topics and provide practical solutions for potential future developments for application at both local and global level. It helps these progressive thinkers achieve recognition beyond Austria's borders, find opportunities to present their work internationally, and make relevant contacts. In addition, this programme also aims to spark international interest in Austria's dynamic creative industry, particularly among a growing circle of 'mobile creatives'.

Every year, the network of Austrian International Culture cooperates with 4,500 partner institutions worldwide and provides a platform which enables Austria to improve the networking opportunities of CREATIVE AUSTRIANS in the international discourse, and at the same time position Austria as a hub for new ideas and international exchange on creative solutions to future challenges.

## DutchCulture

On 1, 2, and 3 June 2016, artists and thinkers from all over Europe came together in Amsterdam for Re:Creating Europe, the first Forum on European Culture. Re:Creating Europe was an initiative of DutchCulture and De Balie, The Forum was such a success, it will be repeated in 2018, from 31 May until 3 June.

The Forum, focused on the strength, impact and value of art and culture for Europe. What are the cultural values that unite us? How can art and culture offer creative solutions for problems that seem to be splitting us apart? How can European artists shape the future of Europe?

The programme included a non-stop 12-hour interview marathon by Rem Koolhaas; a theatrical journey through European history with György Konrád; the presentation of the anthology Re:Thinking Europe with Tom Holland, Philipp Blom, Stella Ghervas and Larry Siedentop; and a selection of surprising pinnacles of contemporary European art, selected by prominent curators. The most special event was the opening performance directed by the internationally acclaimed director Ivo van Hove. The performance was created specifically for Re:Creating Europe and included an international cast of prominent actors, including Jude Law.

Performances, talks and debates, exhibitions and film screenings filled the city of Amsterdam, in collaboration with the Stedelijk Museum, Het Concertgebouw, DeLaMar Theatre, Rijksakademie and many other cultural institutions. The Forum on European Culture was funded by private contributions, from the Gieskes Strijbis Fund, among others. More about the Forum here: https://cultureforum.eu/

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## Slovakia in EUNIC Rome in 2017 - The beauty of poetry and linguistic diversity

Presenting Slovakia and its culture in a country where the artistic tradition is just as old as the country itself is a real challenge. Rome, the capital of Italy, is a city full of art that offers a rich array of cultural and artistic events of different characters and genres.

Rome is also the home of the Slovak Institute, the cultural institute that promotes Slovak culture in Italy, Malta and San Marino. The institute, a long-standing member of the EUNIC Rome cluster, is therefore part of the 'European family' made up of different national cultural institutes and other international organisations, united in the promotion of culture and intercultural dialogue in Italy's capital city.

In 2017, we had the opportunity to be part of two major, successful events organised within the EUNIC Rome cluster, whose main focus was to promote linguistic and cultural diversity of European languages.

In March 2017, under the patronage of UNESCO and in the occasion of the International Day of Poetry, readings by 11 European poets took place in Rome. Slovakia was represented by the poet Dana Podracká, whose gave a very emotional reading in the Slovak language. Podracká presented some of her poems, full of archetypal figures, mythological tales and Christian symbolism, in which she usually analyses the comparison between inner sensitivity and the surrounding world. Thanks to the Italian translations of the poems, which were being screened during the readings in national languages, the Italian and European audience had the opportunity to experience the authentic emotions coming from the sound of different EU languages and compare them to the Italian version of the poem.

In September our Institute took part in another linguistic event, this time with children as a target audience. In the beautiful spaces of Explora, the children's museum in Rome, together with the Slovak language lecturer at La Sapienza University in Rome and Slovak language Italian students, we prepared and held a workshop of origami animals, during which young visitors had the opportunity not only to learn how to create an origami animal, but also to learn some new expressions in Slovak. And what fun we had! More than 600 kids and 590 adults visited the Explora Museum that day to discover the linguistic and cultural heritage of Europe. The 2017 edition, organised by the Representation of the European Commission in Italy in cooperation with the Explora Museum and the Embassies and Cultural Institutes of the participating countries, was focused on minor European languages such as Slovak, Polish, Croatian, Lithuanian and Georgian.

Our 2017 as part of the EUNIC Rome cluster was packed with enriching experiences and fascinating moments of intercultural exchange. We can't wait to see what 2018 will bring, but we're sure that the ongoing cultural dialogue and cooperation in today's Europe will bring us even closer to each other.

## A duty to remember

When promoting Polish culture and history, it is impossible not to refer to the period of World War II, which had a significant impact on the shape of modern Poland. As a result of unfavourable decisions made by the major powers at the end of World War II, Central Europe was separated by the Iron Curtain from the independent and democratic states of Western Europe for almost half a century. The lack of a 'Polish voice' in the discourse about the past led to the creation and consolidation of many unfavourable stereotypes about Poland and Poles, and in some cases to sheer falsifications and misrepresentations.

Recalling Poland's contribution to saving Jews during World War II was one of the greatest challenges in historical diplomacy for the Polish Institutes worldwide in 2017. Polish-Jewish relations constitute a permanent and important element of public and cultural diplomacy. The educational activity aimed at describing the complexity of the common history of both nations and restoring the memory of the Polish Righteous – often anonymous Poles risking their lives in order to save Jews during World War II – is the best chance to free ourselves from ongoing stereotypes and prejudices. Occupied Poland was the only country in the world where the law not only condemned to death any Jews who were in hiding, but also the entire families of Poles who sheltered them. Despite such a draconian law, there were still many Poles who were prepared to take this risk in order to protect families, friends, neighbours or even complete strangers.

One such story was described by director Niki Caro in her movie The Zookeeper's Wife (based on the book by Diane Ackerman and the diaries of Antonina Żabińska). The film tells the true story of how two keepers at Warsaw zoo, Jan and Antonina Żabińscy, saved hundreds of people during the German occupation. In the space of three years, hundreds of refugees escaped from Warsaw by passing through the zoo. The heroism of Żabiński and his wife was honoured by the Israeli Institute Yad Vashem, which gave them the title of the Righteous Among the Nations in 1965.

Teresa Żabińska, the daughter of the Żabińscy family, took part in the debates and meetings that accompanied the screenings of The Zookeeper's Wife that were organised by the Polish Institutes in Rome, Leipzig and Brussels. A showing of the film in the Zeughauskino at the German Historical Museum was followed by a debate on the heroism of the Poles who saved Jews (in cooperation with the Witold Pilecki Centre for Totalitarian Studies) with the participation of Teresa Żabińska and Dr Birte Hewere. The Belgian premiere of The Zookeeper's Wife in Brussels took place at the Bozar Cultural Centre with the participation of Teresa Żabińska, historian Michał Trębacz (University of Warsaw) and Belgian journalists Hugues Dayeza and Marc Peirsa. Thanks to the involvement of the Polish Institutes, screenings of The Zookeeper's Wife were also held in Minsk, Brest, Kiev and Paris.

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## Italian in the world

The Società Dante Alighieri (SDA) was founded in 1889 with the aim of promoting the Italian language and culture in Italy and abroad. The SDA has a global network; local centres offer Italian language courses and organise cultural events.

PLIDA (Progetto Lingua Italiana Dante Alighieri) is one of four Italian language certficates that are recognised by the Italian Foreign Ministry. They evaluate language skills at six levels of competence, from A1 to C2 (corresponding to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages). PLIDA B2 and PLIDA C1 are recognised by the Italian Ministry of Education, Universities and Research as a valid university entrance qualification. SDA belongs to CLIQ (Certificazio ne Lingua Italiana di Qualità), the Italian certification system for language assessment, which guarantees the quality of language testing and sets general guidelines for languages tests. ADA is the curriculum of the SDA's Italian language courses, offering guidelines for course organisation and planning as well as reference frameworks for teachers and directors of studies. Every year, the SDA organises refresher courses for Italian teachers and training courses for PLIDA examiners.

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## Knowledge and identity – Italian culture for an online audience

The Società Dante Alighieri has launched a fresh video series as part of its new cultural programme for students and scholarship holders from all over the world.

It involves a series of short videos (six to ten minutes long) entitled Le Pillole della Dante. They are available

free of charge at www.ladante.it. The talks are given by emeritus professors who cover various topics from the fields of history, literature, art history, music and many other disciplines. All the videos were made by Lamberto Lambertini.

The avoidance of jargon and the use of atmospheric images makes the project accessible to a wider audience, including non-native speakers of Italian. The videos can be used both in Italy and abroad for national and international cultural events such as conferences, literary encounters and round tables.

Website: www.ladante.it

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## Culture Ireland

Culture Ireland promotes Irish arts worldwide. We create and support opportunities for Irish artists and companies to present and promote their work at strategic international festivals and venues. Through showcases at key global arts events, including the Edinburgh Festivals and the Venice Biennales, Culture Ireland develops platforms to present Irish arts to international audiences. As part of its role in presenting special culture initiatives globally, Culture Ireland is presenting a year long special focus of Irish artistic activity in Britain in 2018.

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## Culture as a catalyst for social change

As the Swedish Institute (SI) has only one local office abroad, in Paris, Swedish engagement in EUNIC clusters around the world depends largely on the activity of Swedish embassies.

The Swedish embassy in Serbia has a long history of working actively with cultural relations from a Swedish perspective. During 2013-2015 the embassy and the Swedish Institute ran a successful bilateral residence project, Create in Residence, together with local design hub Nova Iskra and literature organisation Krokodil.

Thanks to the work of the Swedish embassy and with funding from the SI and the EUNIC Cluster Fund, the project evolved into the European project EUNIC Artists in Residence during 2017, with several EUNIC members participating. The project is ongoing during 2018 and serves as a good example of how the Swedish Institute works by helping Swedish embassies to scale up existing, well-functioning collaborations, benefiting from synergies from a European perspective, and using culture as a driving force for social change.

Over the coming years the Swedish Institute will continue its strategy of facilitating enhanced European cooperation and Swedish engagement in EUNIC by offering financial and moral support to all Swedish diplomatic missions around the world.

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## The Great War Centenary: an interdisciplinary remembrance project

The First World War, also known as 'The Great War' was the first international conflict on a global scale. Flanders experienced all aspects of this global conflict first-hand: the invasion, the occupation, the four-year trench war and, finally, the liberation. The Government of Flanders is actively engaged in commemorating the Great War through a range of heritage and culture activities.

There are no longer any veterans who can act as direct witnesses. However, we still have an important medium at our disposal: heritage. Throughout Flanders, and especially on the front line of the Westhoek region, hundreds of military cemeteries, commemorative monuments, war memorials, defence structures and landscapes have been given official protection. With the Heritage of the Great War project, Flanders is developing a strategy to allow this heritage to live on.

Flanders allocates operating and project grants to cultural heritage actors. Structural support is provided to a number of important WWI museums. Flanders launched a list of exceptional pieces related to WWI heritage. The objective is to preserve valuable heritage such as posters, diaries, photographs, documents and arts objects.

Flanders is also implementing the News of the Great War project. This project involves digitising the Belgian press, including trench papers and pamphlets, from the First World War. For more details, please visit http://fdfa.be/en/the-great-war-centenary

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## An instrument of Czech foreign policy

Czech Centres are a contributory organisation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, established to promote the Czech Republic abroad. The network of Czech Centres abroad is an active tool of the foreign policy of the Czech Republic in the area of public diplomacy. These centres interconnect presentations in the cultural arena and support external economic relations and tourism. They provide informational services about the Czech Republic. The Czech Centres network consists of the Czech Centres Headquarters in Prague, 22 branches abroad, and the Czech House Moscow.

The Czech Centres' Headquarters fulfils a managerial and service role. It systematically runs and monitors the activities of foreign branches, communicates with the founder, and informs partners in the Czech Republic about Czech Centres activities. It maps and creates projects suitable for presentations abroad.

Czech Centres abroad organise their own activities, provide services and information, arrange contacts between Czech and foreign entities, and support their cooperation. Czech Centres are mainly based in cities, but they also operate in other regions of the respective country. They cooperate with diplomatic and consular offices, especially in the area of public diplomacy.

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## Czech Season in Scotland

Czech Season in Scotland was a multi-genre celebration of Czech cultural richness that ran throughout 2017. Czech theatre has been a regular feature of the Edinburgh festival since 2008, and last year the Czech Centre London prepared its most ambitious programme, which expanded outside of the festival and beyond theatre into a cutting-edge sound and multi-media project and embraced influential contemporary Czech visual artists.

The Czech season started with a number of acclaimed performances and installations as part of major cultural events in Edinburgh, including a concert by the trio Fragile Bliss at the Edinburgh Jazz and Blues festival, and a major showcase of Czech dance at the renowned Edinburgh Festival Fringe. The programme included shows from some of the Czech Republic's top circus and dance companies: Cirk La Putyka, 420PEOPLE, the Spitfire Company, Dot504, and the Lenka Vagnerova & Company. This showcase was prepared in cooperation with the Prague Arts Institute.

These were followed by two Glasgow exhibitions of Czech contemporary photography – in Street Level Photoworks, artists Aleksandra Vajd's and Marketa Othova's retrospective works were brought together in a subtle and complicated curatorial thesis. At another venue – River Clyde – Radek Brousil's solo show Red Naomi was the second of the two exhibitions that formed the Czech Season's photography programme.

Cryptic, the leading Scottish organisation for promoting sound and video art, selected two Czech works for the festival Sonica 2017. Musician Tomáš Dvořák aka Floex and visual artist Daniel Gregor presented their audio-visual work Archifon IV in the University of Glasgow Memorial Chapel. Their new kind of video mapping is called 'sonic mapping'. Visitors were given laser pointers, and when they pointed them at elements of the chapel's architecture they came to life musically and visually. The second work at Sonica was a piece by the Macula group entitled The Hidden Towers, which drew upon steampunk culture.

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## Where Strangers Meet: Arts in the Public Realm

Where Strangers Meet is an international collection of researched essays and reflections on the changing shape of Arts in the Public Realm, edited by Claire Doherty, Director Arnolfini Bristol, commissioned and designed in partnership with the British Council.

'The public realm is a place where strangers meet'. These words by the urbanist Richard Sennett capture the essence of the increasingly interconnected, interactive and urban world in which we meet. By 2026, over half of the world's population will live in cities. This concentration of space, diversity and productivity is inspiring new and necessary ways of people and artists living and creating together.

An open call was put out for an editor to create a brief calling artists and authors from across the world to reimagine what role the arts can play in urban spaces and societies as we move into the first urban century. Contributors were selected from a long list of visual artists, architects, cultural visionaries, policy makers and activists to provide case studies reflecting on their own work and the themes pertinent to their urban environment. Ranging from describing building a cultural sector from scratch

in Dubai, to Jeremy Deller's living WWI memorial We're Here Because We're Here, to theatre mediating between police and insurgent violence in the favelas in Brazil, the ideas for the essays present a vibrant and ambitious picture of how the tradition of static public art is today a hotbed of challenge and change.

The resulting provocations by artists, academics and urbanists from twelve countries explore how the nature of public arts is changing from sculpted to shapeshifting through the mediums of installation, protest, participatory arts and digital intervention to name but a few. The collection formed the basis of a debate at the Festival of the Future City, Bristol with the editor with authors from Lagos, Nigeria; Cape Town, South Africa; and historian David Olusoga discussing how art in the public realm can be a form of memorialisation, public campaign, political contention and regeneration. An engaged audience from the UK and international cultural sector joined in the conversation in Bristol, which will continue in a series of future events with partners including LSE's Theatrum Mundi, starting from June 2018 at the London Festival of Architecture. Alongside the essays, short films, digital photographs and a live soundscape will bring to life the interventions and the diverse cities the chapters illustrate, also asking participants what encounters with arts in the public realm mean to them.

The essays are due to be published online in June 2018 in multiple languages including English.

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## An online game that questions the concept of nationality

The Goethe-Institut is the cultural institute of the Federal Republic of Germany with a global reach. We promote knowledge of German abroad, encourage international cultural exchange and convey a comprehensive image of Germany.

For over 60 years, we have provided access to the German language and culture and have worked towards mutual dialogue with civil societies and artistic scenes of our host countries. Among other focal topics, the institutes address Europe, sustainability, gender and digitalisation in their cultural and educational programmes and information services.

The work of the Goethe-Institut is supported by Germany's Foreign Office and is carried out independently without any political party affiliations. The institute generates about one third of its budget on its own through language courses and examinations. At present, the Goethe-Institut operates 159 institutes in 98 countries, 12 of them in Germany. The Goethe-Institut's network includes more than 1,000 points of contact, consisting of libraries, Information Centres, Goethe-Centres and Language Learning Centres.

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## Collecting Europe

Take a journey 2,000 years into the future… to look back at our world today. Collecting Europe was a collaboration between the Goethe-Institut and the Victoria & Albert Museum (V&A) in partnership with the British Council. It invited learners and artists around the world to imagine how our present might be viewed from the future.

Collecting Europe challenged people to question concepts of boundaries, identity and nationality – themes that are as relevant globally as they are to the debate over Europe.

Kicking off the project, 12 international artists were commissioned to imagine what Europe might look like 2,000 years from now. The 12 artistic commissions formed a display at the V&A. Further commissions, workshops, debates and other events accompanied them and are continued in digital form.

The three organisations have produced the website collectingeurope.net, which includes a constantly evolving digital exhibition of the activities that take place as part of the Collecting Europe programme, and a quiz game, where users are asked a series of questions relating to boundaries and identity: Can you imagine a world without countries? Would you agree that national identities could be replaced by digital citizenship? Would you have a romantic relationship with a robot?

As users answer these questions, they create a coloured shape, a world built from their own concepts of boundaries and borders. Their answers then become part of a collective shape, allowing them to compare their answers with those of others, exploring how people from different countries and of different ages answered each question.

As well as in English, the online game is available in Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Greek, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish and Turkish.

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