



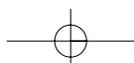
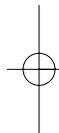
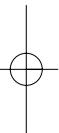
# **Europe. A Beautiful Idea?**

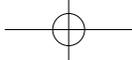
**The Debate on the Idea of Europe**

**by the Dutch EU Presidency 2004.**

**A Series of Conferences organized**

**by the Nexus Institute.**





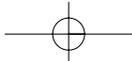
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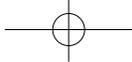
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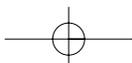
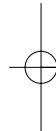
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## 1. Preface – Bridges between Values and Policy

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*Dr. Jan Peter Balkenende, President of the European Council*

What is the significance and political relevance of the idea of Europe? How can we revitalise the core European values for the citizens of Europe? What can we do to make these values a powerful inspiration for the politics of the European Union?

Europe is more than a market and a currency. It is becoming increasingly clear that the intangible aspect of European integration has been neglected for too long. With European values like freedom, respect and solidarity under attack from extremists, with tensions flaring up between various communities and with many individuals lukewarm about the EU, we need to spotlight and discuss that intangible aspect of Europe.

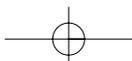
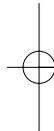
On behalf of the Dutch Presidency, the Nexus Institute has organised a series of international conferences on European values and their significance for our future. A few hundred prominent thinkers and decision-makers participated in debates on this subject in The Hague, Warsaw, Berlin, Washington and Rotterdam. In these debates special attention was paid to building bridges between values and policy.

What follows are the results of the conferences. I hope that they will find their place in subsequent Presidencies and that the ideas they have generated will be used as building blocks for future policy, on a national level and by the European Commission, Council and Parliament. This is necessary. Making European values explicit and encouraging an ongoing dialogue about what Europe stands for is crucial for the Union's vitality and effectiveness.

This project couldn't have materialised without the Nexus Institute and the many participants from all over the world. Let me thank them for their work and inspiration.



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## 2. Introduction - Speaking of Europe

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In Retrospect

*Rob Riemen, Founder and Director of the Nexus Institute*

### I.

To explain what it is to be a European, one has no need of long stories. A brief anecdote will do.

In 1934, Thomas Mann was faced with the task of writing an *In Memoriam* for a man who had been like a father to him: Samuel Fischer, the Berlin publisher of Hungarian-Jewish descent who probably did more than anyone else to make it possible for Mann to write. Mann recalled the following exchange, which took place during his final visit with Fischer, who was already ill at the time. Fischer was talking about a common acquaintance:

- Kein Europäer, sagte er kopfschüttelnd.
- Kein Europäer, Herr Fischer, wieso denn nicht?
- Von großen humanen Ideen versteht er nichts.

\*\*\*

Great humane ideas, that is the European ideal of civilization. This ideal is based on the insight that our true identity lies not in that which distinguishes us from others, but in that which connects all humans, which is its universal essence. Because we all have a spirit, we all know about freedom, peace, justice, compassion, love and beauty, we all know the difference between good and evil, truth and falsity. It is from these same values that we draw our human dignity, it is because of these values that each human being – because he *is* a human being – has the right to our respect. It is on this foundation that the great humane ideas have grown to fruition.

An ethical ideal. Descent, social status, gender, tradition, power, wealth, all material and external manifestations, are only part of what constitutes our identity. Who we truly are, what we truly represent, is determined solely and exclusively by the extent to which we live up to the highest spiritual and moral values.

An ideal of freedom. Values and virtues cannot be imposed. Only in freedom can an individual attempt to make these his own.

A political ideal. The universality of law and the separation of the political estates, human rights and democracy, as the best guarantee for our individual liberty.

A social ideal. Every individual counts. We *are* our brother's keeper.

A cultural ideal. Only culture, the works of poets and thinkers, prophets and artists, can teach us values, provide us with insight, refine our taste, train us in the cultivation of the human soul and spirit so that a human being can be more than what he is as well: an animal.

A humanistic ideal. Man is pivotal: sentient man, who knows the world of the mind; doubting man, who knows that there is no final knowledge; tragic man, who is aware of his limitations yet does not lose his sense of humour.

A cosmopolitan ideal. The free world is comprised of all those differences in language, culture, tradition, religion and opinion, and of the limitless diversity of forms assumed by our universal values. A European will therefore be cosmopolitan, will learn languages, remain open to

others, enter into dialogues with other cultures and traditions in a never-ending attempt to triumph over his own limitations. His own cultural identity – the mother tongue and culture with which he grew up – forms the basis for further development, not a reason to stand still.

A progressive ideal. Times change, and we change with the time. Traditions cannot do without rejuvenation, and the truth about our lives must be sought after again and again. All supreme values demand a quest. History can teach us, but the ideal of civilization belongs to the future and not to a nonexistent past.

An ideal of civilization. For it attempts to answer the two questions with which every form of civilization begins: How are we to live? What is a good society?

A European adheres to these grand humane ideas and feels at home in the collective memory of European culture in which those ideas have assumed a form, a story, an expression. Despite all their differences, this is the common mark of the greatest Europeans: of Erasmus and Voltaire, Montaigne and Spinoza, Thomas Mann and Czeslaw Milosz, Kafka and Pessoa, Nadezhda Mandelstam, of Cristina Campo and Marguerite Yourcenar.

Being European is an attitude towards life, a choice. Yet, even in his day, Socrates was confronted with the fact that this choice is anything but an obvious one. In the person of Callicles, he met with an opponent who claimed that man's essence lay not in spiritual values, but in the nature of humans themselves. In accordance with the laws of nature, the principle of 'might makes right' applies, and the most important thing in life is to gratify our senses.

*'Natural fairness and justice, I tell you now quite frankly, is this – that he who would live rightly should let his desires be as strong as possible and not chasten them [...]. No, in good truth, Socrates – which you claim to be seeking – the fact is this: luxury and licentiousness and liberty, if they have the support of force, are virtue and happiness.'*

To which Socrates replies:

*'This, in my opinion, is the mark on which a man should fix his eyes throughout life [...] not letting one's desires go unrestrained and in one's attempts to satisfy them leading the life of a robber. For neither to any of his fellow-men can such a one be dear, not to God; since he cannot commune with any, and where there is no communion, there can be no friendship. And wise men tell us, Callicles, that heaven and earth and gods and men are held together by communion and friendship, by orderliness, temperance, and justice; and that is the reason, my friend, why they call the whole of this world cosmos or order, not disorder or misrule [...] Let us, then, take the argument as our guide, which has revealed to us that the best way of life is to practice justice and every virtue in life and death.'*

Socrates' reply is the reply of a European.

## II.

Within the European Union, walls have been razed, nations united, war rendered unimaginable. Peace reigns; welfare, rights and liberties are ensured. But the European spirit is lost. We still speak of great humane ideas, but the words sound hollow, the meaning has left them.

Freedom, we say, and think: but that is an individual matter. Yet the very essence of freedom is the realization that man is the only creature not totally determined by its nature or circumstances, that we are able to choose between justice and injustice. Freedom is the duty to look for our own answers to the questions of life. Freedom is the space we need to attain human dignity. A society in which freedom is reduced to 'an individual matter' is a society of moral zombies: void and insensate.

Values, we say, and think: regulations, duties that can be imposed by an institution or an ideology. But values are the collective experience of life, wisdom, they are the best of life that can be applied as a touchstone in assaying our own experiences against what is right or not right, important or unimportant. They constitute the body of knowledge that sensitizes us to an appreciation of what is around us and what we experience: to recognize or deny its value. And this knowledge must be a collective thing, for none of us is an island. Values are therefore the connective tissue of a society, which would, without them, be nothing but an aggregate of individuals.

Democracy, we say, and think: free speech, free elections. But a democracy, if it is to survive, must be much more than that. Without the cultivation of our knowledge, of our critical capacities and foremost spiritual values, a democracy is prey to demagoguery and populism, our spiritual and moral self-awareness is lost, tyranny lies in wait.

Culture, we say, and think: elitist, obtuse, superfluous. While the exact opposite is true. Without culture there can be no freedom or democracy. Culture exists to enable the spirit, to enable mankind to discover and claim ownership of its highest form of dignity. Culture is the repository of the best of Europe's intellectual heritage (for it is only the best that remains), an inheritance that is cosmopolitan and spans the centuries. Culture is the sum of the many roads people may follow in their quest for the truth about themselves and the human condition.

Laws, we say, and forget that more important than the fear of punishment is the conscience itself, the knowledge of the heart, the keenly sensed difference between what we must and must not do, and the ability to act accordingly.

Tolerance, we say, but without a sense of and a dialogue about universal moral values there can be no tolerance, merely indifference.

Goals, we say, and all too often the goal turns out to be a means and the means to have no goal.

In part three of his novel *Die Schlafwandler* (1932), Hermann Broch provides a discourse concerning one of the most important phenomena of the 20th century: the decline of values. In his analysis, Broch points out that the decline of values does *not* mean that all values disappear. In fact, the very opposite is true. Along, however, with the disappearance of those highest, universal values, to which all other values are linked and subordinated begins a process in which the sundry and remaining values are absolutized. And with the brutal and aggressive logic of the absolutized value, Broch states, the businessman will strive only after more money, the politician after more power, the general after more weapons, the scientist after more technology, the doctor solely after more medicines, etcetera. The cohesion, the universal goal of human dignity, is gone. In its stead comes a host of autonomous, absolute and competing values. The result: 'technologification', legalization, medicalization, popularization, specialization, politicalization, individualization, commercialization. And there is yet another result: the sense of collective responsibility is lost. Everyone feels responsible only for his or her own, always limited and individual world. This society, without a European soul, is no longer fertile soil for the great humane ideas, but for xenophobia, aggression, intolerance, and fundamentalism.

### III.

What is left today of the significance and political relevance of the European ideal? The Dutch Presidency of the Council of the European Union provided a unique opportunity to put this question on the international political agenda, and to open the public debate concerning the future of a united Europe. It has allowed a number of fundamental questions to be posed. Which values do we embrace, and why? Which ideas are dominant in our society, and what are the presuppositions and consequences? What are the responsibilities of European

politics, and what are the opportunities? What should be the binding force among all Europeans? How can we cultivate the European ideal of civilization? What role must Europe play in the world? What does it mean to be a European citizen?

The Dutch government asked the Nexus Institute to organize a series of international conferences on these themes, during the Dutch EU Presidency in the second half of 2004. Major 'thinkers' as well as 'decision makers' were to take part in these meetings. Accordingly, an opening conference on *The Politics of European Values* was held in the Knights' Hall in The Hague, with Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands in attendance. The next stop was Warsaw, where some seventy international politicians, scientists and writers took part in a closed, two-day seminar and exchanged views on European values, European identity and the future of the European Union. After Warsaw, a debate was held in Berlin concerning education and the significance of art, culture and science for the cultivation of the European ideal of civilization. The next debate, held at the Library of Congress in Washington, dc, dealt with freedom, democracy and the protection of universal values. On December 4, 2004 came the final, public conference, in the city that is both a symbol of Europe's resurrection from its own ashes and the birthplace of that one European, Erasmus Roterodamus.

Who were they, the participants in this series of conferences? They came from Northern, Southern, Western and Eastern Europe, from Russia, Canada and the United States, from Iran, Iraq and Israel. Historians, philosophers, lawyers, theologians, judges, scientists, writers, poets, politicians, diplomats, policymakers and opinion-leaders. The motto of all the gatherings was a quote from John Stuart Mill's *On Liberty*:

*'In the case of any person whose judgement is really deserving of confidence, how has it become so? Because he had kept his mind open to criticism of his opinions and conduct. Because it has been his practice to listen to all that could be said against him; to profit by as much of it as was just, and expound to himself, and upon occasion to others, the fallacy of what was fallacious. Because he has felt, that the only way in which a human being can make some approach to knowing the whole of a subject, is by hearing what can be said about it by persons of every variety of opinion, and studying all modes in which it can be looked at by every character of mind.'*

It was for this exact reason that the gathering was extremely diverse in so many ways, for it were the very differences themselves that allowed insight into the complexity of the issues and the presuppositions held by widely divergent persuasions. Yet all differences of opinion were overcome by the realization that this debate itself was part of the essence of European democracy; that the world of ideas and the world of politics must not be separated; that history illustrates the vulnerability of ideals of civilization, and that it is everyone's responsibility to cherish our highest values. It was in this spirit that the manifesto was drafted: *Realising the Idea of Europe, Ten Conclusions for the Political Leaders of the European Union*. For the sake of a united Europe, and for the sake of great humane ideas.

### 3. Realising the Idea of Europe - Ten Conclusions for the Political Leaders of the European Union

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#### I. The debate on the European model of civilisation is of fundamental importance to the European Union, now and in the future

The dream of Europe's founding fathers has today become a reality. The process of economic integration, which had the political aim of pacifying former arch enemies, has resulted in reconciliation, stability and prosperity in an ever closer union. At the same time the European Union, which is still enlarging, is struggling to define its common characteristics amid its diversity. In that sense, the question of what Europe stands for is becoming increasingly urgent. Our answer is that Europe is an idea; a beautiful idea; a model of civilisation. Europe is a culture, a collection of spiritual and moral values, that must be continuously maintained, upheld and protected. This idea has been recognised by the European Convention and the intergovernmental conference, and has resulted in a number of Europe's values being enshrined in the Constitutional Treaty. But this does not answer all the questions about Europe's essence, and the answers it does give are not definitive. After all, spiritual and moral values remain vulnerable, opinions on what constitutes a good and proper society are always divided and times change. This is why we need an ongoing debate on the meaning of the idea of Europe in a twenty-first century context, both at European and national level, and both in politics and in society at large.

- Use Europe Day (9 May) for an EU-wide debate on the European model of civilisation and its values ('European Deliberation Day').
- Promote this debate at European and national level, among politicians and in society at large.
- Support civil-society initiatives that promote this debate.

#### II. Europe's fundamental values are inviolable

Europe is united in its diversity. Unity in diversity is a historical and a moral principle. It refers to the universal values which have come to constitute the foundation of European civilisation over more than two thousand years: respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights. These are the fundamental values that protect a pluralistic, tolerant society from absolutism, relativism and nihilism. These fundamental values are inviolable.

- Guarantee the inviolability of core constitutional values through a democratic, tolerant, but also robust state governed by the rule of law.
- Continually monitor European policy for compliance with core European values.
- Gear the education system to providing schooling in citizenship, both national and European, and promote a constitutional patriotism.
- Maintain a strict separation of church and state while encouraging dialogue between people with different life philosophies.
- Include ethics in secondary school and university curricula by using, among other works, Aristotle's *Ethics*, the Greek tragedies and Montaigne's *Essays*.
- Develop a secondary school and university curriculum which includes the democratic tradition and Western political and constitutional theory and practice.

#### III. Europe's wealth is its diversity, Europe's strength is its openness

Europe's wealth lies in its variety of traditions, languages, cultures. Europe's strength is its openness to culture, knowledge and social progress. Europe has learned to overcome divisions and to respect and even appreciate differences. Europe does not see its own culture as an end but a starting point for getting to know other cultures. In this way, Europe has learned to put itself in the place of 'the other'. And that has made the European identity dynamic and cosmopolitan.

- Protect Europe's diversity against uniformity and excessive legislation.
- Make learning at least one other European cultural tradition and language a requirement in the curriculum.
- View integration – feeling at ease in another culture – in terms of enriching, not taking away your identity.
- Be receptive without betraying your own values. European identity embraces both openness to other cultures and values and confidence in our own.
- Give all people the freedom to distance themselves from an ethnic or religious identity.

#### **IV. European consciousness begins with pride in Europe's values, cultural heritage and natural environment**

*'Europeans can impose their vision only when their motivation comes from within, that is, when they feel bound and motivated by what I would like to call a European consciousness. A deep feeling of solidarity. A deep feeling of unity even if that unity derives from diversity. A profound awareness of a thousand years of shared history and intellectual tradition, shaped by classical Antiquity and rooted in Judaeo-Christian principles. [...] We cannot infuse new life into European consciousness without a conscious perception of this reality, without renewed understanding of the meaning of that perception and without a degree of pride.'*

Vaclav Havel

European consciousness demands European stewardship of our cultural heritage and our natural environment. Europe's consciousness begins with pride in its fundamental values, cherishing its ancient and cosmopolitan cultural heritage and conserving the land and water entrusted to it. In such a Europe, people would choose to be Europeans, a choice that everyone who comes to Europe can make.

- Promote European self-awareness. Recognise towns and rural areas as living entities; the European cultural heritage is founded on them.
- Manage towns, not as museums but as living centres of culture, clean and dynamic.
- Protect European nature in a context of sustainable development.
- Invest in the spiritual landscape: architecture, beauty and style.
- Use museums, concert halls, libraries and the new opportunities the internet provides to make the cosmopolitan wealth of European culture accessible.
- Use the new media, education and the European cultural heritage to promote historical consciousness.
- Promote the exchange of knowledge and experience by increasing the mobility of students, skilled workers and professionals.

#### **V. The European model of civilisation demands leaders with vision and citizens with self-confidence**

The European model of civilisation transcends national interests and calls for European thinking and action. It demands from politicians the ability to look beyond their own constituency or country and stand above the issues of the day. And it requires citizens who are undaunted by the future of Europe and who have confidence in their own national, regional and local identity.

European political leadership is hampered by the absence of a European people and shared language and media. European institutional structures also leave little room for manoeuvre. Nevertheless the formula created in the Constitutional Treaty – of an elected president of the European Council, an elected president of the European Commission and a European Minister of Foreign Affairs – presents the opportunity for a collective European political responsibility. A genuine trans-European debate will however only emerge if these positions are filled by people with ability and vision, who command the respect of European society. However, true European authority will arise only if these leaders can guarantee that European activities will not result in the loss of people's 'own' identity.

- Create the conditions for stronger European political leadership, in part by taking full advantage of the opportunities offered by the Constitutional Treaty.
- Foster a trans-European public debate to this end.
- Respect the principle of subsidiarity.

## **VI. European citizenship begins with education in the spirit of Europe**

It is essential that education does not focus exclusively on acquiring job skills but also on life as a European. We have Socrates to thank for his insight that all knowledge starts with curiosity and awe and that nothing should be taken as a given. Criticism, self-criticism and doubt form part of the European spirit. That is the first thing students must be taught. European citizenship cannot exist without a schooling in Erasmus' European spirit. The arts, humanities and philosophy offer children more than merely a more motivated and richer existence. Cultivating intellectual and moral values creates the conditions for more responsible, peaceful and politically engaged citizenship.

Pupils and students must practice both *l'esprit de géométrie* and *l'esprit de finesse*. Teachers and professors must challenge them to be tolerant in the face of complexity.

- Provide good primary education; invest – also financially – in motivated and respected teachers.
- Encourage continuing education.
- Recognise the value of trades and learning a trade.
- Develop a secondary school and university curriculum which includes philosophy and history and the most important literature, music and art of all the member states.
- Reform universities on the basis of the idea of university, make quality a priority again. The knowledge economy very much needs independently thinking citizens with a broad cultural grounding.
- Make university education much more than skill acquisition: promote the spirit of research, self-knowledge and knowledge of the world.

## **VII. Culture is the key**

Cultural education means becoming acquainted with what has withstood the test of time, with the world of ideas about people and society. Unlike ideology, culture is always open. Culture is the self-knowledge without which we cannot really learn about other cultures. It teaches us to see things as other people see them. Without culture there is no empathy, and without empathy there is no tolerance and solidarity. Culture is both an exercise in courtesy and knowledge of the qualities of existence. Europe will never experience a political and economic renaissance without a cultural renaissance, a renewed acquaintance with the products of the European intellect. Culture must not be subsidised. Like technological advance and economic growth, cultural development can be fostered only through investment.

- Invest in the cultural infrastructure: old and new art, conventional and new media.
- Invest in translations: they open the door to other cultures.
- Invest in cultural exchange programmes: exhibitions, music, theatre.
- Give young artists a chance.
- Use tax incentives to promote private sector involvement in cultural entrepreneurship.

## **VIII. Debate is the means**

Europe has learned from its experience with ideologies that purport to know exactly what makes 'a good society'. We now know that a good society starts with everyone taking part in the continuous debate about what makes a good society. But this demands knowledge, assertiveness and a realisation on the part of the public that they share responsibility for European society. From Europe it demands the creation of a European public domain in addition to the national public domains.

- Stimulate European news media.
- Invest in the quality of the public media and protect the public domain against the excessive influence of media conglomerates.
- Defend freedom of expression but make sure that people are immune to demagoguery, populism and hatred by providing good training in independent thought and the power to differentiate.
- Strengthen the political engagement of the public by giving them responsibility as well as a vote.
- Work together with non-governmental organisations.

### **IX. Europe's greatest weapon is its good example**

Europe's relations with the rest of the world should be shaped by its model of civilisation and its values, including the lessons it has drawn from its history. Europe has a duty to safeguard universal values, promote the international legal order and strengthen multilateralism. It must also enable others to share as much as possible its successful experiences as a regional community in which power is kept in check by law, where strength is derived from diversity, and where methodical doubt acts as a counterweight to fundamentalism. A community that attracts rather than threatens, that inspires its neighbours to disarm rather than accumulate arms. This does not mean that Europe should force its model upon others; but it should serve to inspire other peoples elsewhere in the world who seek new ways of living in peace with their neighbours. Europe should also make it plain that it is ready and willing to play an international role that is commensurate with its economic position and international responsibilities. In so doing, it should wherever possible work together with countries whose values and interests it shares. Europe shares more values with the United States than with any other part of the world. And our similarities far outweigh our differences. We must ensure that these differences do not make us lose sight of what we have in common, and our common responsibilities.

- Strengthen multilateral institutions and the international legal order.
- Promote European values in multilateral institutions.
- Work together with other democracies as much as possible, in particular the US.
- Invest in transatlantic relations, by means of education, exchanges etc.
- Set up a European volunteers' organisation for international cooperation along the lines of the US Peace Corps.

### **X. 'General ideas and great conceit always tend to create horrible mischief' (Goethe)**

Those who use grand words must be well aware of their meaning and consequences. Ideas must always be assessed by their human standard. European politics must avoid being 'rich in thought and lacking in deeds' as Hölderlin said, and must prevent people from again being subordinated to abstract ideas.

## 4. List of Participants

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Benoit d'Aboville	Francis Fukuyama
Jaroslav Anders	William Gass
Mark Anderson	Carl Gershman
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Jan Peter Balkenende	Karsten Harries
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Dick Benschop	Ernst Hirsch Ballin
Ivan Berend	Michael Hofmann
Michael André Bernstein	Robert E. Hunter
Christoph Bertram	Michael Ignatieff
Emily Bilski	Jeffrey C. Isaac
Philip Chase Bobbitt	Ramin Jahanbegloo
Frits Bolkestein	Josef Jarab
Roya Boroumand	Gabriel Josipovici
Ladan Boroumand	Mark Juergensmeyer
Hans Boutellier	Robert Kagan
Rémi Brague	Monika Kaminska
Michael Brenner	Paul Keegan
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Paul Révay  
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Michael Sandel  
Karl Schlögel  
Peter Schneider  
Wolfgang Schüssel  
Roger Scruton  
Tibor Simanyi  
Gary Smith

Aleksander Smolar  
Ronald Steel  
Fritz Stern  
Shashi Tharoor  
Wilhelmina Thomassen  
Bassam Tibi  
Vladimir Tismaneanu  
Olivier Todd  
Tzvetan Todorov  
David Trimble  
Levin von Trott du Solz  
Mario Vargas Llosa  
Vaira Vike Freiberga  
John Vinocur  
Maurizio Viroli  
Joseph Weiler  
Ivan Wilhelm  
C.K. Williams  
Willem J. Witteveen  
Klaus Wölfer  
Richard Wolin  
Rosita Wouda  
Adam Zagajewski  
Adam Zamoyski

## 5. Opening conference ‘The Politics of European Values’, The Hague, 7 September 2004

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### Summary

The first in a series of conferences entitled ‘Europe. A Beautiful Idea?’, organized by the Nexus Institute, was held in the Ridderzaal in The Hague on 7 September 2004. This opening conference, whose theme was ‘The Politics of European Values’, was attended by some 150 participants from the political, cultural and economic spheres and by representatives of European Union government leaders and the main EU institutions. Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands was present at the afternoon session and the closing ceremony.

The opening and closing speeches were delivered by the Dutch Prime Minister Balkenende. There were also addresses by Mr Giscard d’Estaing, Professor Etzioni and President Freiberga of Latvia, and by ten panel members. Almost all the participants welcomed the debate on the idea of Europe, European civilization and European values, although one or two felt that a debate on values was not so appropriate, in view of the way the EU is currently developing.

The following comments can be made in the light of the addresses and the debate:

- Most universal values originated in Europe. European values are the product of a process spanning many centuries, in which crowning artistic and cultural achievements have alternated with extremes of injustice and violence. Bitter experience has taught Europe just how fundamental its values are. It has taken two world wars for Europe to realize that its values must indeed be shared.
- However, Europeans have not yet made up their minds about whether they are Europeans because of the past or because of the future. The EU seems less like a community sharing the same fate and more and more like a club. And the question of whether to join it is no longer ‘why?’ but ‘why not?’.
- Values have an important part to play in the quest for a European identity, especially since many people now perceive their existence to be increasingly uncertain as a result of globalization, technological change, immigration and a changing ‘social contract’.
- In themselves, values are pale, abstract concepts, yet they do guide our actions. Even the most technical European legislation is based on clear-cut values. These must be protected and upheld in the face of indifference, scepticism and selfishness, by making them explicit and discussing them. Such discussion need not necessarily lead to consensus: values can be disputed, as long as there is willingness to compromise and, at the very least, to agree to disagree.
- The question of what European values actually are, and how they are interrelated, can be answered in different ways, but the common thread is respect for human rights, freedom, equality and solidarity. Some speakers stated that it is not the rule of law and solidarity that make the European Union unique – these can just as well be found in Norway, Canada or Australia – but the way in which the Union has shaped transnational relations.
- The EU is the only federal structure that seeks to be a community of diversity rather than a nation – which is why the Union’s neighbours do not see it as a threat. Nevertheless, the postwar principle ‘thou shalt compromise’ has given Europe influence and moral authority. Europe does not seem sufficiently aware of its power, or at least does not do enough to wield it, despite the fact that many non-Europeans expect so much of it.
- In fact, it is this unique attribute – Europe’s ‘soft power’ – that makes it so hard for citizens of the Member States to identify with the EU. This lack of loyalty within its ranks – this reluctance on the part of citizens to ‘join the club’ – is a serious failing.

Looking back, the conference can be seen to have catered to the need for continuation of the often uncompleted Convention discussions. The fact that the debate is not part of an institutional process keeps it informal and ensures that participants do not see things merely from their own national perspectives. It thus has a place of its own, in between the completed Intergovernmental Conference (IGC) and the still uncertain political future of a Union based on a treaty ratified by twenty-five different states.

The conference was followed by three working conferences in Warsaw, Berlin and Washington DC and a concluding 'Intellectual Summit' in Rotterdam. There was considerable national and international publicity both before and after the conference.

## Report

### *General*

The series of conferences entitled 'Europe. A Beautiful Idea?', organised by the Nexus Institute, was opened by the Dutch Prime Minister Balkenende on 7 September 2004. The opening conference, whose theme was 'The Politics of European Values', was attended by some 150 participants from the Netherlands and abroad, including members of the Dutch Cabinet, former ministers, representatives of European Union government leaders and the main EU institutions, the diplomatic corps, artists, philosophers and people from various other walks of life, including business. Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands was present at the afternoon session and the closing ceremony.

The Prime Minister delivered the opening and closing speeches (for the texts of the speeches, see [www.EU2004.nl](http://www.EU2004.nl) and [www.nexus-institute.nl](http://www.nexus-institute.nl)). The keynote addresses at the three sessions – 'The Foundation of European Unity', 'Cultivating Values' and 'Agenda and Policy for the Future' – were delivered by the former French President and former Chairman of the European Convention, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, the American sociologist Professor Amitai Etzioni and the President of Latvia, Vaira Vike-Freiberga, respectively. Each of these speakers then engaged in a debate with a panel and subsequently with the audience.

The opening conference was followed by three working conferences, each attended by about sixty 'thinkers and decision-makers', and a concluding 'Intellectual Summit'. The first working conference, whose theme was 'The Idea of Europe: Past, Present, Future', was held in Warsaw on 1-3 October and focused on whether Europe has a broader basis than simply ensuring prosperity and security. The second working conference, whose theme was 'Living European Values: Arts and Education', was held in Berlin on 22-24 October and examined the role of culture and education in the search for the values that unite Europe. The third and final working conference, whose theme was 'Civilisation and Power: Freedom and Democracy', was held in Washington DC on 18-20 November. The aim of this conference will be to draw lessons from the differing interpretations that Europe and the United States give to the concepts of freedom and democracy. The conferences culminated in an 'Intellectual Summit' in Rotterdam on 4 December.

### *Opening by Nexus*

The director of the Nexus Institute, Rob Riemen, based his words of welcome on the spiritual legacy of Elisabeth Mann Borgese (daughter of the author Thomas Mann), who had declared herself to be a fervent 'European' as early as 1931. Riemen said he hoped that a quotation of hers, which he had adopted as a personal motto, would serve as inspiration for the conference: 'The utopians of today are the realists of tomorrow; the realists of today are dead tomorrow.'

*Introductory Address by Prime Minister Balkenende*

The Prime Minister linked the importance of reflecting on values to the vitality and energy of the EU. Values are not possessions – they are a task, a motivation, an incentive to take action. The EU is the product of Christianity, Judaism, classical antiquity, humanism and the Enlightenment, as well as of dialogue with Islamic and Arabic culture. Europe is a community of values that had been built up over many centuries – the Europe of Michelangelo and Montesquieu, but also the Europe of the guillotine and the gas chamber.

Respect for human rights and human dignity, freedom, equality and solidarity are moral, universal values that united us and were anchored in our treaties. Continuing integration – from Monnet to Delors and Barroso – now offered the prospect of a Constitutional Treaty. Yet is there still the necessary enthusiasm to proceed with it? Increasingly, citizens seem to be turning their backs on the project. Even in the new Member States, enthusiasm is waning.

The Prime Minister identified three specific threats:

- Indifference and scepticism: Europe belongs to all of us, but there is a risk that it will end up belonging to no-one.
- Increasing emphasis on self-interest: even free markets need a moral foundation.
- The EU is not convincing or identifiable enough in its approach to present and future challenges.

These threats are due to our failure to see the 'leitmotif' in our European mosaic, and to the lack of a 'demos'. Europe is united in its diversity, and we should derive positive energy from this. The Prime Minister also placed the conference in the context of growing cultural and religious diversity and the anxiety that had arisen since 11 September 2001, the feeling of uncertainty and the tendency to withdraw into our own shells. Also relevant in this respect are the ongoing process of EU enlargement and the prospect of EU membership negotiations with Turkey.

PM Balkenende said that we must use values to achieve what could not be achieved by purely economic means: Europe citizens must 'accede to Europe'. We must prevent Europe from becoming a spiritless machine and grinding to a halt.

The Constitution for Europe was an important step forward. Shared constitutional values are the glue that bind the expanding Union together, for governments as well as citizens. The concept of values even embraces the Lisbon Agenda, since competitiveness also depends on trust and understanding between citizens.

Freedom, solidarity and respect for one another are the values that did, and should, guide us in our actions and in our efforts to achieve:

- Sustainable economic growth and social justice.
- A society in which people can realise their full potential.
- Freedom, peace and prosperity for as many people as possible.

**Session I: The Foundation of European Unity**

The keynote address at the first session was delivered by the former French President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, and was followed by a debate led by the Greek-French researcher Kalypso Nicolaidis. Also taking part in the debate were the French philosopher Pierre Manent, the American professor of law Joseph Weiler and Robert Cooper, British aide to the Secretary-General of the Council of the European Union Javier Solana.

Giscard's address emphasised the importance of the series of conferences. European values had always played a part during the Convention, if only in the background, but Giscard believed that not enough use had been made of them.

He examined three key issues:

1. How should the EU be organised?
2. What should its long-term outlook be?
3. What were the values that typified the EU?

Giscard stated that political leaders were finding it hard to make a clear choice between three models for Europe:

1. A large market without borders. This model is especially popular in the new Member States.
2. A large market with a certain amount of political coordination, for example on the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and on defence. This is favoured by the United Kingdom and the northern Member States.
3. An EU with extensive powers and influence of its own in the world, typified by values such as citizenship and European patriotism. This is the model envisaged by the EU's founding fathers, but it appears to have lost its appeal.

In short, there is no common house. As Giscard saw it, the overall ambitions of integration had been reduced in the 1990s and following enlargement. The focus of integration has shifted from community to cooperation. The 'sons of the founders' are hiding behind national interests. These contradictions had emerged clearly during the Convention. Referenda will have to show whether a single Constitution for twenty-five states is feasible. Giscard warned that this constitutional text was the last chance to construct a 25-state model.

There had been little discussion of citizenship during the Convention. Giscard felt that in many respects European citizens were ahead of their leaders in seeking a European approach to all kinds of sensitive issues.

Giscard mentioned the equality of states and citizens: citizens have equal rights in their dealings with EU institutions. Values should not be confused with rights, and there should be more emphasis on duties. The Charter of Fundamental Rights goes further than many constitutions (including that of the United States of America).

Giscard stated that many values had originated in Europe, but were now universal. Respect for human dignity, tolerance and the social dimension are typically European values. More generally, Europe has an unmistakable culture of its own, but this has not been explicitly elaborated. Europeans are the vehicles of a culture that has become universal: the Hellenic philosophical tradition, the Roman legal tradition, the Judaeo-Christian tradition, democratic freedom (the Enlightenment), science (in the nineteenth century) and research (in the twentieth century). The EU can be seen as a 'pioneer of values'. It is up to us to re-examine these values critically and cast them in a new mould. How are newcomers to adapt to our societies and function within them? How shall we deal with clashes between freedom, equality and emancipation? Communications and the role of the media are also important here. It is our task to be the vehicles of European culture and continue to give it shape in a transnational context.

Kalypso Nicolaidis mentioned the 'Dutch paradox', that is the combination of a pragmatic approach and idealistic goals (i.e. a conference on European values). She then laid out the fundamental questions to be addressed during the first session: why discussing 'values' in an age of indifference? Why *European* values – surely many were universal? Assuming European values do matter, how do we translate these into an operational compass for action? And in which domain will the highest values capable of uniting Europe be realised? In this context she quoted Milan Kundera: 'In the Middle Ages European unity was based on a shared and common religion. In modern times this was replaced by culture, which became the realisation of the highest values. Values in which the Europeans could recognise one another. Today it is culture's turn to move aside. But for what and for whom?'

Philosopher Pierre Manent was not convinced of the usefulness of a debate on values. After the UK's accession, the community has become a mere 'club' that is driven more and more by the demands of those still outside it, and less and less by internal dynamism. A shared fate has made way for shared obedience to the rules of the club. The question asked of candidates for membership had once been 'Why?', but now it is merely 'Why not?'. Manent felt the EU had lost sight of its original mission. Political ambitions are no longer in touch with reality. How could Turkey fit into a culture characterised by Catholicism, the Enlightenment, the Reformation, bourgeois democracy and so on? How is it possible that the Convention/IGC had declared the Christian dimension – 2000 years of European history – taboo? Under such circumstances, a search for values seems more like an act of desperation than anything else.

Joseph Weiler considered the debate on values essential to the emergence of a European political identity. Values are not something isolated – they are present in everything we do. Every rule laid down by the Union – from the Common Agricultural Policy to security – is based on a particular value. These values will always have to be made explicit in order to clarify the choices and make clear what Europe stands for: 'Bring into the open what is already there.'

Weiler said Europeans had not yet made up their minds about whether they were Europeans because of the past or because of the future. Meanwhile, values have effectively taken the place of such traditional unifying elements as race and religion. However, this does not mean that they will always be the same: values can be disputed, as long as there is willingness to compromise and, at the very least, to 'agree to disagree'. Europe appears to have succeeded in this, and in that sense it has an exemplary role, and indeed power. It is not the rule of law and solidarity that makes the European Union unique – these can just as well be found in Norway, Canada or Australia – but the way in which the Union has shaped transnational relations. The EU is the only federal structure that seeks to be a community of diversity rather than a nation or state.

Robert Cooper also wondered whether Europe was defined by the past or by the future. Kissinger described values as 'unspoken guidelines for behaviour'. Europe has a strong sense of shared experience which is largely determined by wars, including two world wars. Hence the feeling – the value? – expressed in the cry 'Never again!'. The first function of the state is to wage war, and the second is to protect the population. The EU only performs the second function and has replaced might with right. This is 'a beautiful idea' that has caught people's imagination, witness the steady enlargement of the Union. The fact that the growth of this 'voluntary empire' is not perceived as a threat by any of its neighbours is unique. On the other hand, citizens find it hard to identify with such 'soft power'.

Cooper did not see Turkish membership of the EU as a problem. In acceding to the Union, countries relinquish their exclusive national identities, in accordance with the commandment 'thou shalt compromise'. As long as Turkey is also prepared to do so – which Cooper believed was likely, since an increasingly large section of Turkish society identifies with Europe – there should not, in principle, be any obstacle to its accession.

Giscard again emphasised that this was just the beginning of the debate, and encouraged the Prime Minister to continue on this course. However, he once again pointed out the EU's peculiar 'club rules', which appear to be dictated by outsiders rather than by the founding states. Finally, on the basis of his own experience during the Convention, he noted the emergence of a double identity: one national, the other European. While travelling during the Convention, he had felt at home throughout Europe – even in Downing Street!

Weiler stated that the European demos – which still hardly existed – was based on a deep-seated, implicit knowledge: the memory of burning cities in the Second World War and the resulting preference for right rather than might. Hence the opposition of European public

opinion to the war in Iraq, which in some cases was at variance with their own leaders. This collective consciousness distinguishes us from Americans. The American response to '11 September' was a typical shock reaction to 'the first time'.

Nicolaidis closed the debate by recalling Giscard's notion that Europe meant 'feeling at home abroad'.

## Session II: Cultivating Values

The keynote address at the second session was delivered by the American sociologist Professor Amitai Etzioni, and was followed by a debate led by the Israeli political scientist Fania Oz-Salzberger. Also taking part in the debate were the Italian political scientist at Princeton University, Maurizio Viroli, the Turkish Minister for Religious Affairs, Mehmet Aydin, and the former Dutch Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dick Benschop.

Etzioni's address emphasised the importance of values for the smooth functioning of society. Values are underpinned by an informal social fabric. Where this fabric is damaged and values are neglected or suppressed, there is a risk of a moral vacuum with all its negative implications, as for example in the former Soviet Union, post-Taliban Afghanistan and China. In Europe the problem is not that traditional values have been eroded or abandoned, but that nothing has replaced them. In the 1950s there was a clear system of values, with low rates of crime and a close-knit social order. At the same time, however, these values are often authoritarian, encourage the oppression of minorities and condemn women to inferior status, and they have therefore been deliberately, and rightly, undermined. Yet the search for new values has been neglected. Governments have a duty to undertake such a search, which Etzioni felt should start with a dialogue on dialogue. Experience shows that simply talking about values leads to changes in behaviour. Examples are the Club of Rome and environmental awareness, women's liberation and the position of minorities. Such a dialogue should not lead either to a new set of uniform values or to unbounded multiculturalism, but – under the motto 'unity in diversity' – to agreement on a minimum number of fundamental values. We should agree about democracy and human rights, but we could have differing views about religion, national affinity and our choice of a second language.

Etzioni's opinion of the EU as a new model of government was, moreover, extremely positive: 'The EU defines itself against its own history, not against the rest of the world.' According to Etzioni, no group of states had been more devoted to peace and human rights than the new post-1945 Europe. Furthermore, the Union has succeeded in striking a balance between market forces and social compassion.

Oz-Salzberger opened the debate by describing the decline of Europe's moral leadership and calling for its revival. The European diaspora in Israel has always viewed Europe as its moral compass, she said. She illustrated this with a reference to classic European children's literature – 'stories of courageous children from the wrong part of town'. This was the universalistic reflection of Europe's rich moral heritage, including humanism, human rights and the rule of law. Yet today such leadership is lacking. 'Where is Europe's voice?', Oz-Salzberger asked. It is significant that a united Europe did not have a European newspaper. At the same time, she emphasised that Europe need not sound a monolithic note – it never had done.

Viroli stated that the debate on values should focus on promoting good citizenship and responsible political behaviour. In this connection, it is important to win people's 'hearts and minds': values must strike a chord with them. Tradition and history could act here as catalysts, as could public holidays, commemorations, monuments and songs – all of them national phenomena. Accordingly, the cultivation of European values should take place at that level. Moreover, a good citizen of a nation state is also a good European. Where governments fails to cultivate such values, there is a threat of populism.

Aydin felt that Europe did not have unique values, and at the same time emphasised Turkey's historical links with Europe. He stated that Europe's values are *also* – rather than exclusively – Christian, Jewish and humanistic. Moreover, some of these values are universal. He therefore preferred to speak of values in Europe, rather than European values. Aydin acknowledged that historical experience was highly relevant to the development of values, but he did not believe that Europe and Turkey differed greatly in this respect. On the contrary, the description of the Ottoman Empire as 'the sick man of Europe' in the early twentieth century is significant. Turkey's history over the past three centuries has effectively been European, said Aydin. The Turkish Constitution has been inspired by the European one, and intellectual and cultural life in Turkey is influenced by elements from the Enlightenment. Conversely, various European thinkers and writers, including Thomas Aquinas, have drawn inspiration from the works of Islamic philosophers. Aydin felt that Europe and Turkey had similar religious values.

Benschop drew attention to the clashes between certain European values. Human rights, diversity, freedom, equality, respect and solidarity are 'portmanteau' concepts, and each community places them in a different order. Emphasis on freedom can degenerate into consumerism and threaten solidarity, and emphasis on diversity can lead to cultural insecurity – both of them highly topical developments. In this connection Benschop spoke of the 'trilemma triangle' – the trade-off between freedom, equality and diversity. 'You can't have it all,' he said. What matters is to achieve a social consensus about the proper balance. Freedom is a basic European value, and diversity has to be fitted into this ('the share price of diversity has plummeted'). Respect is 'the new hard currency of society': everyone wants it – 'from the Prime Minister to the Surinamese players in the Dutch football team' – but no-one is prepared to give it. Benschop also proposed that during the coming year the Prime Minister should hand out yellow cards to anyone who demanded respect. He was one of the few speakers to mention standards, which he felt could help in upholding values.

From the audience, the British Minister for Europe Denis MacShane asked speakers how they thought their views could be applied in practice: how can values be influenced? Benschop stressed the importance of education and positive role models. Etzioni warned against relativisation: 'The moment you say values are relative, you are lost.' Governments should not tolerate compromise when it comes to values, and should deploy their political and economic resources so as to produce as many exemplary citizens as possible. The bottom line is 'Do not unto others what you would not have them do unto you'. Aydin, too, stressed the importance of good neighbourliness.

### **Session III: Agenda and Policy for the Future**

The keynote address at the third and final session was delivered by President Vike-Freiberga of Latvia, and was followed by a debate led by the Norwegian Prime Minister Kjell Magne Bondevik. Also taking part in the debate were the Spanish professor of sociology Víctor Pérez Díaz and the Canadian philosopher John Ralston Saul. President Vike-Freiberga's address focused on the expectations of the new EU Member States. These concern not only economic prosperity, but also, specifically, the values that have characterised the 'early' Union: peace, stability and freedom. She used the following event to illustrate the emotional import of these values in the new Member States: in 1993, on the anniversary of the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact, the Balts joined hands to form a chain along the Russian border, symbolising their desire for freedom, democracy, sovereignty and the return of the rule of law. According to Vike-Freiberga, European values are the sum total of everything that Europe has achieved over the centuries. The notion of a *demos* has been a common thread throughout our history, with Christian and Hellenic influences. Within the *demos*, individuals (originally in God's image) are part of the 'social contract' and can perfect themselves at will through education. This notion – improvement of the individual through education – is typically European.

Over the centuries, the question of 'what it meant to be human' had been examined in ever greater depth. What is needed in order to live a 'good' life? Each generation has to ask these

questions, constantly reassessing customs, traditions and values – which is what this series of conferences is all about. We have to ask these questions precisely because European values are the unique result of the encounter between pragmatic, scientific method (i.e. the European Enlightenment) and ‘revealed’ Judaeo-Christian wisdom. This has enabled us to abandon the ‘absolute’ morality that has prevailed before the Enlightenment and has left a broad trail of bloody religious conflict across Europe. It had taught us how to make political and moral choices, and eventually we have been able to choose an EU that brought nation states together. As Vike-Freiberga saw it, the key concept is stated in Article 2 of the new Constitutional Treaty: human dignity. Human beings are never complete – they remain open to improvement, they are more than just utilitarian cogs in a machine and they are part of a spiritual, human community.

The key concept in Prime Minister Bondevik’s appeal was ‘inclusion’, in which human dignity, stewardship and love for one’s neighbours and family all had a part to play. He expressed concern at people’s tendency to seek more freedom but less responsibility. He believes solidarity is the backbone of society. According to Bondevik, the key question is how everyone can take part in society and how moral consciousness can be raised. Identity is never complete but is constantly emerging, and the demos is thus a ‘learning process’ of developing political consciousness.

Professor Pérez Díaz stressed that citizens’ rights must be accompanied by duties. The general public must become more closely involved in politics. Values are the unifying factor here. ‘Political education’ is needed in order to create an ethos of political involvement and responsibility.

John Ralston Saul saw Europe as a complex, multi-tiered vessel full of multiple loyalties. This was why Europe remains so interesting – there is always more to discover, such as the legacy of the rationalist Aristotle, which has come down to us via Islamic culture and thus has contributed to ‘our’ Enlightenment. The opportunity for a second European Renaissance that had presented itself after the Second World War has only partly been exploited. The Union’s obsession with methodology has been at the expense of content, and the influence of the consultant caste has been detrimental to open debate. Under these circumstances, a return to populism is by no means inconceivable. It is therefore vital to get citizens involved in politics once more. Values can best be conveyed through education. However, education will have to rediscover the great – and typically European – methodical value of doubt and uncertainty. EU programmes such as Socrates and Erasmus – perfect names for values such as these! – provide ideal ways of teaching the new twenty-first-century notion of European citizenship. Europe’s new young citizens will, so to speak, reinvent their own countries and their continent through such programmes, through a process of systematic exchange. Naturalisation and integration programmes also have a part to play in defining ‘individuality’ and promoting good citizenship. What is certain is that open societies are more effective than closed ones. However, the question remains how this could be combined with the preservation of European identity.

The discussion with members of the audience focused on the idea that appreciation of diversity should not just be a moral stance, but should be part and parcel of the Union’s institutions and mechanisms.

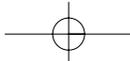
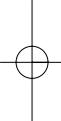
The Prime Minister concluded the day’s proceedings with a reflection on the debate and a preview of the forthcoming working conferences and ‘Intellectual Summit’.

- Europe needs to make its fundamental choices explicit. It is better to talk about values and have differing views about them than not to discuss them at all. History should inspire us but not hold us captive. Europe is not complete, but is ‘happening’ every day.
- Values are not abstractions, but inspired our daily actions and need to be constantly upheld.

- The principle of 'diversity in unity' calls for respect for the whole in addition to respect for the individual. The aim is not cultural universalism, but consensus amid differences.
- Every civilisation has its own fundamentalism. Attempts to stigmatise any particular religion should not be part of this debate.
- The combination of freedom and responsibility has been neglected for too long. A free and democratic Europe needs to strike a balance between them.
- Local and European citizenship go hand in hand.
- The fledgling Union needs renewed idealism. We should not avoid a debate with society about awkward issues, for such a debate offers new opportunities.
- The promises and successes of European integration – their crucial significance – should be made much more visible, and should be linked to the values that Europe stands for (sustainable growth in combination with solidarity, security and integration in combination with freedom and respect, etc.)
- In future, we will need to focus on the following questions:
  - What values can we really all agree on?
  - How can we use those values to win – or win back – people's hearts and minds?
  - How can they serve to inspire our policies and our relations with the rest of the world?



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## 6. Working Conference 'The Idea of Europe, Past, Present and Future', Warsaw, 1 to 3 October 2004

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The conference was a closed session, held under the Chatham House Rule.

### Summary

The first Nexus working conference of the series 'Europe. A Beautiful Idea?' was held in Warsaw from 1 to 3 October. About 60 'thinkers and decision-makers' debated the meaning and political relevance of 'the Idea of Europe'.

The participants generally found that Europe – in the sense of European integration – is a 'beautiful idea', both conceptually and as a specific reality. A union of states focused not on nations but on Europe was constructed from the ashes of the Second World War. Fundamental values were enshrined in law and institutions and guaranteed to every citizen by the rule of law.

Most participants found, however, that the essence of European civilisation cannot ultimately be secured by institutions in Brussels, the Constitution for Europe and the Court of Justice. This notion raised the question of whether Europe as a legal community must also be a community of values. There were three opinions on that subject:

- The community of values. In addition to being an economic and a political-legal community, Europe must also be a community of citizens with shared values. When citizens of different origins are forced to deal with one another, those values should determine what they do or do not do. Which means that the EU must cultivate moral values in addition to material ones.
- The moral face. 'Europe is the West minus North America and Australia'. Europe has a moral authority which must have an effect through its external policy.
- The legal community. It is neither necessary nor possible to turn Europe into a community of values. Europe is founded on legally enshrined commitments about norms – norms which put us in a position to deal with conflicting values.

Differences of opinion aside, most participants believed that striving to attain a certain communality of values was desirable. 'Never again' is the founding and generally accepted ethic of post-war integration. With a view to the future, the following additional motives behind the quest for common values were also included:

- The tension between functionalism (what works) and political support (what is considered acceptable). Corollary question: how can solidarity between member states be guaranteed?
- The development of an effective common external policy.
- The increasing diversity within and between member states, especially the integration of minorities and dealings with Islam.
- The enlargement of the Union to include Romania, Bulgaria, the Balkan states, Turkey and perhaps Ukraine.

Participants seemed wary of translating a present or future community of values into an identity separate from other parts of the Western world, including – and especially – the US. The fear was also expressed that such an identity might express itself in the form of 'passion'. European history has taught us where that can lead.

The discussion proposed a number of points on which to base policy and saw better leadership as part of the solution. All the participants agreed that the greatest improvement will derive from better education, in particular, education that stimulates spiritual development.

## Report

The first Nexus working conference of the series 'Europe. A Beautiful Idea?' was held in Warsaw from 1 to 3 October on the subject 'The Idea of Europe: Past, Present, Future'. The participants were a group of 60 'thinkers and decision-makers' among whom were optimistic Eastern Europeans, critical Britons, Jewish Europeans with their ever-present history, and Americans whose love for Europe is unrequited. The Dutch EU Presidency was represented by Minister for European Affairs, Atzo Nicola?.

The conference was a closed session, held under the Chatham House Rule. This means that information exchanged may be used but that the identity and affiliation of speakers and participants may not be revealed. Accordingly, no names appear in this report.

The theme of the working conference was 'The Idea of Europe' – a beautiful idea based on a number of common values. The central issue was the meaning and political relevance of that idea. The question was dealt with in four parts. At the opening dinner on 1 October and at three plenary sessions on 2 and 3 October, the following corollary questions were discussed. What are our common intellectual and moral roots? Are they still relevant to Europe today? What values do we now share? Are they sufficient to guarantee a successful EU today and in the future? Which values should the Union embrace?

Just what 'Europe' means was not always explicitly set out in the debates. It embraced many visions: the European Union, the 47 countries in the Council of Europe and Europe as a continent. 'Europe is one set of values, two ideas and three organisations', said one speaker. Still, the major focus was the Europe of the European Union.

### I. Opening Dinner

#### *A Community of 'Old' and 'New' Europe*

The opening dinner speeches on 1 October dealt with the enlargement of the Union to include countries in Central Europe.

One speaker compared the development of 'old' and 'new' Europe. Whereas Central and Eastern Europe, he said, suffered under the *acquis totalitaire*, Western Europe had the good fortune to be able to construct its *acquis communautaire* in freedom according to the Monnet method. Since the fall of the Wall, after a great effort the *acquis communautaire* has replaced the *acquis totalitaire* in Central and Eastern Europe. Totalitarianism tried to destroy vibrant culture. Conversely, however, when the *acquis communautaire* was being constructed in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, a conscious choice was made not to impinge on the cultural dimension and to use coal and steel as a point of departure. The speaker pointed out that regardless of the differences between the historical and cultural experiences of Eastern and Western Europe, we now face the challenge of working together to give the EU a foundation that ensures that our citizens have an active role to play and that we have the courage to seek European solutions to thorny problems while being allowed to remain who we are.

Another speaker discussed the social and cultural changes in Central Europe since enlargement. In some ways, he said, Europe had gone back to where it was before the First World War. The movement of people and goods in Central Europe is once again following the historical patterns which existed before the Bolshevik revolution and the Iron Curtain. Russia is again a neighbouring country. An urban corridor is taking shape between Berlin and St Petersburg via Warsaw. Ideas follow people and goods. Nonetheless, the renaissance we are witnessing in Central Europe remains fragile. The gap between the urban and rural areas is especially troubling. A world of difference separated by only a few kilometres creates a social and political risk which must not be ignored.

## II. Plenary Sessions

The overriding theme of the plenary sessions was the search for the essence of Europe in the past, present and future.

It was clear that the concept of Europe is rooted in the past. At the same time, Europe without a vision of the future is inconceivable – whether desired, anticipated or feared. Historical, current and futuristic interpretations also covered a broad spectrum from passion and religion via morality to rationality, normative instruments and functionality. The differences between European and American experiences were frequently mentioned. America's founding fathers saw American integration as a model on which to build whereas the European objective – within the more heterogeneous European playing field and the more complex post-war phase of history – is still unclear. The image of what Europe will ultimately be very much resembles the Rorschach test ink blot whose interpretation says more about the interpreter than about the ink blot itself. As a result, the discussions were unable to overcome disagreement about just what Europe is. Some speakers felt that there is both too much and too little Europe, others that Europe belongs to everyone and therefore to nobody. Some even said that we should stop trying to define Europe. That – as with the concept of energy – a definition is impossible. In practice, however, we do understand what we mean. The best way to find Europe is 'by telling stories'. That Europe has constantly reinvented itself is certain even though there have been times when it did little more than survive.

### *Historical and Intellectual Foundations*

The participants were divided about the historical and intellectual foundations of presentday Europe and about the extent to which they remain relevant. Whatever the case, whether the issue is the 20th century or previous centuries, it is always difficult to use the past as a basis for making legitimate assertions about the actual or wished for identity of Europe and European attitudes to current issues such as Islam and international terrorism. One person, for instance, referred to the Holocaust as a prime example of impotence while another pointed out that Europe had succeeded better than any other continent in dealing with minorities.

Some participants saw the late Roman Empire as the cradle of Europe as a legal community, a space where law – originally natural law – soon freed itself from the whims of continental history. Others spoke of the fundamental significance of the meeting of Roman and Semitic cultures whose product is values like reconciliation and forgiveness which they took to denote an important difference between Christianity and Islam. For some this meant that European culture was closely related to, if not synonymous with, Christian culture. One outlined the 'organic' development (like that of a tree) of European 'high culture' which was struck by the lightning bolt of the Enlightenment and gradually died out. From that vantage point, nihilism led to an 'egotistic' popular culture and the domination of 'rights' and equality at the expense of 'obligations'. In this connection, the spiritual void perceived by many people in Europe was also mentioned. Nonetheless, a branch of high culture seems to have survived (and even to be flourishing in the midst of all the 'dead wood'), albeit without protection against deconstructionism and nihilism. From the perspective of 'high culture', the EU was associated with 'low minded' politics.

One speaker presented a fictionalised, late medieval perception of the present-day EU in which a number of our familiar concepts like secularism were put into a surprising light: secular was said to have originally been the connection between 'temporal' and 'eternal' with the Pope striving to attain secular (i.e. temporal) power and the emperor ecclesiastical power. Secularism referred to the domain in which we must do 'good' and which was inconceivable without religion and faith. The speaker concluded that that period was essentially more 'rational' than 21st century Europe with its many -isms. People were not familiar with the concept of 'values' in our specific, modern sense, let alone the possibility of creating new ones.

Quite a few speakers saw European development, that is, institutional Europe, firmly – even autonomously – rooted in the Enlightenment. They related Kant's philosophy to the process of integration. Only one characterised the development of EU itself as a mix of late Enlightenment and early post-modernism. Historically, the Enlightenment is seen as a European phenomenon – even though the values it produced are universal. One speaker cautioned Europe against looking at those values as its own possession even if, typically, Europe gives concrete form to them through institutions (EU, Council of Europe) in order to serve the needs of everyday life. Opinions were divided on the issue of whether the post-war process truly expresses Europe's shared moral and cultural 'acquis'. Those who raised doubts related them to the highly fluctuating loyalty of citizens to the EU as a political identity in each member state. In this connection, the Copenhagen criteria were also discussed. If they are seen as a proper expression of our 'civilisation-acquis', no additional criteria may be used when applying them (for example, with respect to Turkey's candidacy for EU membership).

### *Jewish Perceptions of Europe*

There was broader agreement about recent history, especially the relevance of the Second World War. Many participants said that the war did not really end until 1989 and held that the central issue was to explain (or as many said, come to terms with) that past. In this connection, the issue of the Jews' experience in the twentieth century was approached from differing perspectives. One view essentially claimed that Europe has disqualified itself as a 'civilisation' because it was unable to prevent the Holocaust. Nazism was not a completely irrational phenomenon. The Nazis used democracy to come to power and people like Eichmann were basically 'ordinary'. Why was 'enlightened' Europe so blind to those imminent horrors? The anti-Jewish character of the European Christian tradition was discussed. Unlike the US, where many Jews sought a safe refuge, Europe has a moral debt, and, from this perspective, it is a debt which will not be paid until Europe finds the moral strength to respect its own standards. Others stated that the Holocaust cannot continuously be invoked when dealing with Europe. It is important for Europe and the Jews (including Israel as a society) – which have a thousand years of common experience – to join forces to save moral civilisation. There may be no clash of civilisations but there are many cracks in the civilisation on which our societies are based. Much of Israeli society has an ambivalent relationship (love-hate, attraction-suspicion) with Europe. Still, it is possible to break through the ambivalence in a positive way, and in that connection, reference was made to the emotions stirred by Adenauer's visit to Israel.

### *The Shadow of the Enlightenment, Religion and Secularism, Turkey*

Several speakers drew attention to the darker side of the Enlightenment, which cannot be divorced from what it gave birth to over the next two centuries – colonialism, revolutions and two world wars. During the years between the two world wars, Paul Valéry observed that our civilisation is mortal. A hundred years earlier, Wordsworth characterised the French Revolution as a failure of the Enlightenment. The threat that Enlightenment culture posed to religion was experienced in different ways in different European countries. One speaker noted that a country like Poland could not have survived if religion had not been so strong. This is why the Soviets in the 1980s did not repeat Stalin's rhetorical question 'How many divisions does the Pope have?' In countries like France, religion was ruthlessly driven from the public domain.

Some participants felt that suppression of the spiritual and public role of religion in Europe had led to forms of secular fundamentalism with tangible social consequences. The notion of 'a French republican fundamentalism with a certain implicit intolerance' was discussed. American religious fundamentalism was said to be more conjunctural – with consequences that do not colour European society in the same way as in the United States. In that connection, it was observed that the experience of the US with the unification of its states is very different from Europe's. American 'integration' arose from a combination of enlightened

principles and a strong religious influence (with its white Anglo-Saxon Protestant origin). That mix protected America from the illusion of building an earthly paradise as opposed to Europe which embarked on utopian adventures (and resulting tragedies) throughout the 19th and 20th centuries.

Several speakers focused on the opposing trends of secularisation in Europe and desecularisation elsewhere in the world. Seen from this vantage point, the EU's and European society's renewed acquaintance with Turkey represents a challenge. It recalls earlier phases in history when European identity was confronted with the emergence of the Islamic world. Still, today's situation is more complex. Modern Turkey may be an Islamic country (and much more religiously active than the EU) but religion is kept within a secure secular context. One of the speakers posited the following: just as the Jews contributed to European identity for centuries by their identity and life style which were not bound to any particular country, European Muslims might form an important source of renewed European identity.

Other speakers however observed that Europe, at least for now, has yet to develop a sustainable *modus vivendi* with the growing Muslim population within and outside its borders. The need for a moderate European Islam based on European values is pressing, but how to develop and encourage it is still unclear. In the meantime, there is the danger of alienation and radicalisation, especially among young Muslim men.

#### *Europe as a Community of Values?*

Is present-day Europe a community of values? No consensus was reached about the relationship between values and typical European identity. Most participants seemed to agree with the concept of freedom, solidarity and respect expressed by the Dutch Prime Minister on 7 September but refrained from attaching too much value to it. Only philosophers can come to grips with global values not bound to time or place. Politicians however know that they must apply values to specific national situations. In this connection, some speakers asserted that when national politicians make those values a central issue in their discussions with their constituents, the debate will be about national issues, national tensions and national minorities. As Tip O'Neill put it, "all politics is local".

Some participants saw no point in trying to enumerate European values. They said that although Europe may well have typical values like intellectual curiosity, scepticism, a sense of ambivalence and cosmopolitanism, these and others can quickly become so general or so specific that they lose any real significance. It was suggested that the issue of identity be separated from values and that people must be given the opportunity to 'rationalise' political and social conflicts, to participate in the political debate and to apply values to that debate. This needs a proper institutional structure which also creates a healthy sort of constitutional 'patriotism'. The fact that the EU – unlike the US – does not have this attitude is linked to its lack of a transnational political and public space (language, media). In such a Europe-wide political space, EU policy would also acquire a much more human 'face'. Citizens' preferences could be better harmonised with the plans of the European executive. Such developments would be instrumental in ensuring that all parties, 'Brussels' and EU member states, have a greater feeling of EU 'ownership' at political and civil level. One speaker did point to the hesitant beginnings of a Europe-wide policy, referring to the debates and demonstrations about the war in Iraq, the way the Stability and Growth Pact problems have led to widespread political passions and discussion, and to current debates about Turkey's EU candidacy.

#### *Europe as a Legal Community*

The question of whether Europe could limit itself to being a legal community came up several times because values – whether or not they conflict – are reconciled in law in the form of clear, recognisable norms: "the EU is a legal community, an abstract system of norms not related to specific groups". For many speakers, this relative 'freedom of values' in law was

precisely the reason to argue for a community of values to supplement a legal community. In addition, it was pointed out that a legal community with a separation of powers always needs a political counterweight. The history of Belgium, for example, shows that a legal community without political accountability is doomed to fail. One participant posited that, in its most extreme form, the 'rule of law' equates to the 'rule of judges'. The case of Iran shows where that can lead. In the opinion of some speakers, the tension between European law and limited political accountability went a long way to explaining the lack of loyalty to Europe. A solution to the problem is not obvious. "In all multilingual states, there is a tendency to organise politics regionally." Some speakers also raised questions about the freedom of values in the law. In this connection, the individual right of petition was brought up. It was suggested that, in many ways, the Council of Europe, the European Convention on Human Rights, the International Criminal Court and the Yugoslavia Tribunal personify European values better than the institutions in Brussels.

#### *Europe viewed from Outside*

Several speakers warned against excessive European introspection. The Union cannot allow itself to remain a continental project. The EU may not concern itself with the rest of the world, but the rest of the world will concern itself with the Union. Many topics were raised – globalisation, migration, terrorism, the Middle East conflict, poverty in the Third World, Russia's uncertain future and the rise of China. Several speakers expressed concern about the deteriorating relationship between the US and the EU. "We are experiencing a major clash of civilisation and in the middle of this we fight," said one. The participants tried to identify the causes of the 'Atlantic rift', in Europe especially, with its internal divisions, unwillingness to invest in European defence capability, lack of courage, an abhorrence of power and an obsession with 'keeping things quiet'. 'Europe is too busy being even-handed and forgets objectivity' said one speaker, with the result that Europe tolerates extremism in countries like Iran but opposes the US. Americans do not understand such ambivalence and feel like 'a disappointed lover'. More than anyone, Europeans should know that conflict is not the rule but the exception. Only if Europe reconciles itself to this fact will it be possible to conduct an effective foreign policy.

Several speakers rejected the image of an inwardly-directed Europe and recognised that the Union remains primarily an economic union and that the culture of compromise, so characteristic of the Community's working method, may not be a great source of inspiration. Still, this very integration process has changed Europe into an area of sustainable peace and stability. This has not gone unnoticed – as seen in the enthusiasm for accession and Asia's interest in Europe as "a creative merger of cultures which have historically clashed with one another". That Europe is assuming its external responsibilities is demonstrated by its support for dissident movements in the former Soviet bloc (Charta 77), its contribution to the CSCE/OSCE, its role in the Balkans, Africa and the Middle East, and its significant contribution to development cooperation. In addition, a Europe pursuing its own policy must not be taken for a Europe that opposes the US. One participant actually viewed Europe's opposition to the US as something functional. Didn't the Boston Tea Party have the same function in the creation of an American identity?

Several speakers argued that a debate over the foundations and cement of the EU would also need to address the question of Russia's place in Europe. Reference was made to the fact that Europe's great transformation began with changes in Moscow during the 1980s. Russia's important cultural role in Europe before the First World War was recalled. A debate about Russia's place in Europe requires not only architectural/institutional reflection but also consideration of other areas like safety (no more 'Chernobyls').

#### *Towards the Future: 'Never again' or 'Never say never again'?*

Although there was no consensus about whether Europe is a community of values, the participants did feel that a debate about values was useful and necessary. It was generally noted

that the EU needs common values. 'Never again', the call which is both a value (wish) and a norm, occupied centre stage. This has become the basic, generally accepted ethic of post-war integration. One speaker however warned that one should 'never say never again'. Several speakers stressed the fact that a generation is growing up today which has no living memory of war.

Others warned of the danger of Europe's deteriorating into a place of nostalgia and looking backwards and emphasised that Europe should instead be defined from the perspective of the future. Someone suggested that the past – with all its passion and emotion – should remain at national level and that we should only Europeanise the future. "Europe is about overcoming group mentality", said one speaker. Europe should not embrace the values which characterised it in the past but only those which it can share with the rest of the world.

Several speakers, mostly from Central Europe, questioned this, saying that "beautiful ideas are often born out of misery". Not long ago the new member states in Central Europe found themselves on the wrong side of history. The memories of people from that part of Europe of the deprivations of Communism are still fresh. Such deprivation continues to exist in several of their neighbouring countries. For some of those member states, stability is not something to take for granted. In this respect, reference was made to the large Russian minority in the Baltic states. Which is why the European aspirations of the new member states and their peoples are driven by a need for 'a sense of belonging', solidarity and security.

In addition to 'never again', the following additional motives were mentioned when seeking common values:

- The tension between functionalism (what works) and political support (what is considered acceptable). Corollary question: how can we guarantee solidarity among member states?
- The development of an effective common external policy.
- The increasing diversity within and among member states, specifically, the integration of minorities and dealings with Islam.
- Enlargement of the Union to include Romania, Bulgaria, the Balkan states, Turkey and perhaps Ukraine.

No connection was made with the economy. At most, tension was observed between Europe in its normative capacity and the Lisbon Agenda because, within the certainty of the monetary union, member states retain space for conducting their own socioeconomic policy.

#### *The Way Forward: the Importance of Education and Training*

The discussion proposed a relatively limited number of points on which to base policy. An important part of the solution was seen to be better leadership, and "the betrayal by the political class" was mentioned. Politicians were criticised for their lack of leadership, vision, political courage and initiative. "Let politicians learn from people wiser than they are", said one participant.

Cultural and media policy were touched on only in passing, but educational policy was the subject of much discussion. "The tip of the iceberg is culture, the rest of it is education." There was general agreement about how crucial education is for the ideal of European civilisation in general and for the transmission of values which contribute to active citizenship in Europe in particular. Many participants felt that the level of education in Europe is regressing in terms of both quality and ambition – whereas what a united Europe needs is well-educated citizens to safeguard a competitive economy, the intellectual well-being of European society, its civilisation and its rich cultural traditions. "Europe risks forgetting that it is the largest living civilisation", said one speaker. And knowledge is needed for citizens to participate in the complex European political process.

The regression of education was linked to deconstructionism as the dominant mentality in present-day European training and education: deconstruction of authority, disrespect for teachers, specialists, and even the people (demos). The result is the emergence of a prosperous but only moderately educated underclass with neither moral nor intellectual goals. A class that the European executive is unable to reach or influence, but which is susceptible to the popularism of outsiders like Haider and Fortuijn.

This is expressed in a gap between elite and mass cultures. On the one hand there is 'enlightened' tolerance of what is 'different' and on the other an ever less educated mass of people, less interested but more unrestrained, more mobile and more assertive. Pop singers and top sports heroes set the tone, and few politicians are able to impose their authority. Some say that this indicates a lack of political instruments to deal with democracy in that social context. The problem is even more pressing in an EU without a transnational political and public space.

Real answers have yet to be found. The intellectuals at the conference demonstrated a natural preference for higher culture. Several decision-makers did not however exclude the possibility that the Champions League and the Eurovision Song Contest could also be a sort of glue to bind Europe together. The participants agreed about the long-term remedy, that is, the need "to rebuild Europe on the basis of education", to invest in good education and a culture of excellence. They said that Milosz' lesson that "knowledge can also be transmitted through poetry and art" should not be forgotten. There is no empathy without art and no tolerance or solidarity without empathy. One speaker also placed this analysis in a worldwide context when he pointed out that of the 6 billion people on the earth, only 2 billion (in Europe, America, and Asia) have access to education and training. Only Europe and America are in the position to bring the others into the circle of training and learning.

At the Nexus working conference in Berlin from 22 to 24 October, "Living Values: Arts and Education", there was further discussion of the importance of education in transmitting values.

## 7. Working Conference ‘Living European Values: Arts and Education’, Berlin, 22 to 24 October 2004

The conference was a closed session, held under the Chatham House Rule.

The second Nexus working conference in the series entitled ‘Europe. A Beautiful Idea?’ was held in Berlin on 22-24 October.

Education minister Maria van der Hoeven gave the after dinner speech, European Commissioner Frits Bolkestein spoke on ‘Culture and Mass Society’ and European affairs minister Atzo Nicolai discussed the question ‘What ought to be done?’. Some sixty ‘thinkers and decision-makers’ debated education and culture in relation to European identity. What is needed in the field of education and culture, what instruments are available to us, and what efforts must be made? The conference was held in closed session under the Chatham House Rule, so individual speakers are not identified in this report.

Has Europe reached a turning-point in its history? After fifty years of peace, does it now need new goals? Could there be a major new European project concerning Europe’s role in the world? And what message can Europe send to the rest of the world, without appearing neocolonialist or arrogant? That message could embrace the notion that Europe is united in diversity, as stated in the Constitutional Treaty. Furthermore, Europe is primarily a community of peoples – not a democracy, but a ‘demoi-cracy’.

The debate focused on the position of culture in general – and the arts, education and science in particular – in European society, as well as how they related to the integration process. What ought to be done in the field of education and culture? What instruments are available to us as we attempt to answer this question? Finally, what efforts are required of both politicians and non-politicians? Some participants felt that the civilised world is facing a crisis, whereas others took the quite contrary view that this very period of peace in Europe is proof that there is no reason to be pessimistic.

No definition of European identity emerged, as definitions were felt to be too narrow as well as too universal. However, there was a consensus that rationalism has often led to some form of materialism or nihilism, and that constructive doubt and a sense of wonder are specifically European traits which education should deploy in the fight against them. Such ‘open’ pursuit of knowledge will lead to a greater sense of community. The arts, and the teaching and experience of the arts, are also vital for a fuller understanding of other people, of nature, of history – in short, of our own ‘reality’.

Another topic was what Europe could learn from America (particularly in the field of university education). A number of American participants said that they specifically felt ‘European’ and that they drew inspiration from Europe and the many different strata of European culture.

There were those who believed much can be achieved through practical changes (curricula, teaching materials, etc.) and extra funding – the instrumental approach – and others who, on the contrary, felt there is a fundamental lack of content in education and cultural infrastructure. There was a proposal that a group of academics be assembled to draw up a European cultural ‘dictionary’ which every European should be familiar with. The EU Presidency was asked to study fiscal measures that would encourage the private sector to invest more in education and to propose additional spending by Member States in that sector. There was also an appeal to schools to give art a fresh boost, for instance by means of a permanent European art exhibition.

## Report

### Session I: Culture, Identity and the Arts

#### *What is European culture?*

One speaker felt the question ‘What is European Culture?’ could only be answered by examining how it differed from other cultures. Jacques Delors’ earlier definition of European culture (rationalism, humanism and Christianity) is therefore not sufficiently distinctive. A quest for the elements that made European culture unique can begin by comparing it with those of other cultures, such as the United States and Latin America. Four criteria can be used to help answer the question of what European culture is:

1. *Religion.* Europe is more or less secular, although in some Member States the religious factor is more evident in society and politics than in others. The fact that in the debate on the European Constitution there is no consensus on the special value of the Judaeo-Christian tradition within the European project is evidence of this prevailing secularism.
2. *Population.* Europe’s population is shrinking and aging, in contrast to that of the Western Hemisphere, which is expanding and younger. Young people are more inventive and prepared to take risks. This will put pressure on the welfare state in Europe and will have major economic implications.
3. *Risk-taking.* People in America are more prepared to take risks than people in Europe, and hence more innovative and dynamic.
4. *Heritage.* Europe has become what it is through such major historical developments as Christianity, the Renaissance, the Enlightenment, the industrial revolution and democracy. Many of these developments did not take place – or have done so only lately and partially – in the former Soviet Union (with the exception of the Baltic states), the Balkans and Turkey. Does this mean that Europe’s borders run from St Petersburg to Trieste, or has continuing European integration and the spread of European values resulted in a new, living heritage?

In the light of these criteria there was a brief exchange of views about where the EU’s borders should be. The dividing line drawn by the ‘heritage’ criterion was irrelevant to the present European debate, since Greece is already a member of the EU and membership negotiations are under way with Bulgaria and Romania. Nor would Turkey, now a candidate for membership, be considered part of European identity if that definition were maintained. If this line of reasoning were pursued further, even Moldova and Ukraine would eventually be able to join the Union. In short, it can be concluded that, following the enlargement of the EU, any debate about European identity is a waste of breath. On the other hand it will be a immense advantage if, as a result of further enlargement, stability can be exported right up to Russia’s borders. Yet this would also mean reducing European integration to negotiations about money, power and influence, without any grounding in European values – indeed, this is already happening to some extent. One speaker considered this highly undesirable.

#### *What is European Identity?*

First of all the discussion focused on whether there was any point in defining European identity, and whether it is even feasible to draw up such a definition.

One speaker felt that, because of all the different sub-identities in Europe, we are no longer sure what kind of Europe we want. Another speaker claimed that, on the contrary, the new enlarged Europe is a veritable melting pot of identities. The American sociologist Amitai Etzioni’s idea of a mosaic was referred to here. The search for identity is a lengthy process. Some wondered how important it really is to define it, since some Americans are even more

European than some Europeans. Furthermore, you can feel European even in the deserts of Egypt. Perhaps the 'idea of Europe' is universal and cannot be labelled as something exclusively European. In this connection, one participant commented that there is really no such thing as a European legal system, a European public opinion or a European language. If we are not prepared to give a name to what we share as Europeans and what distinguishes us from others, there is no point in discussing European identity.

There was broad support for the idea that it is not meaningful to link European identity to geographical boundaries or ethnicity. Thus the idea of Greekness was spread across the Mediterranean world and the Middle East by the Macedonians under Alexander the Great. Identity is determined by the tradition of mythology, of feeling spiritually and mentally linked to a story.

The following aspects were highlighted in an attempt to give a name to European identity. Europe is unique because it is home to various identities. By conveying this message of inclusiveness and tolerance, Europe can put its own values into practice. The decision on Turkish membership makes the debate about European identity more acute. Turkey could spread European values across the Middle East. Turkish membership need not mean that Europe would be reduced to a watered-down internal market.

Other participants felt that an abstract quest for an idea of Europe is not the right way to proceed. We need to discover the idea of Europe in practice. By focusing too closely on what is unique we would throw up barriers, which is precisely what we are trying to avoid. Europe's strength has always lain in being open to other cultures and in its ability to renew its own culture through contact with others. The Bible came from the Middle East, and Japanese painting and African sculpture influenced European art. Insistence on a choice between Beckham and Shakespeare will result in a false dichotomy and a loss of diversity, which is not what we are after.

#### *Is Europe more than a Museum?*

There was general agreement on the importance of the cultural heritage and the need to preserve it and make it accessible to the citizens of Europe. This will contribute to the emergence of a common European identity. Some felt that Europe is a living museum, but preservation is a value in itself, leading to sustainability, nature conservation and living memories that will matter to our children and grandchildren.

Opinions differed as to the value of and need for a standard work on European history. Creating a common European 'story' would certainly be a fine project, but getting to know each other's differing interpretations of 'Europe' (for example through exchanges) can also be instructive and can promote a sense of community. The same topic was raised later during the debate on education.

There were some who felt that the cultural notion of Europe was a piece of nostalgia based on a nineteenth and twentieth-century world view. However, one speaker asserted that the Czech writer Milan Kundera's definition of a European as 'somebody nostalgic for Europe' can in fact be interpreted in a positive sense. Nostalgia is not necessarily retrogressive, but also has a utopian dimension: dreaming of an unattainable 'home' can prevent us from resigning ourselves too readily to an inevitably imperfect present, and so preserve a notion of the future. The idea of Europe is just such a 'dream' – a wistful dream of the future.

One participant asked what role was left for the arts in a European society so strongly based on rationality. No less than 180 years ago Hegel declared art to be obsolete. The speaker quoted the American philosopher Arthur Danto, who saw the Hegelian disappearance of art from practical daily life as a liberation: a coming-of-age and a free, rational self-assertion of humanity.

European Enlightenment had faith in rationality. This trust in rationality was part of European history, but so is an awareness of its limits and failings. In the nineteenth century, freedom proved incapable of being restrained by either religion or common sense.

The arts now seem to be primarily entertainment, and in this age of individual freedom, rationality and technology the experience of art appears to have become an entirely personal affair. The next question is whether the state is entitled to intervene in what is a personal affair. If the arts and culture are indeed forms of entertainment, why should they not be left to market forces?

#### *Freedom, Rationality and the Role of the Arts*

The aforementioned speaker stated that culture and art – just like ‘Europe as a beautiful idea’ – are more than just nostalgia. They are still societally relevant in the sense that they help determine values. And even free, rational adults need values to help them use freedom responsibly and enable them to live in a highly rational, technologically-minded environment. In other words, is there not a price to be paid for Europe’s free, rational self-assertion? What are the darker sides of our freedom and rationality?

As for freedom, can our dreams of freedom lead to a true sense of community? This evokes the aforementioned picture of ‘Europe as a beautiful idea’, as utopian nostalgia, and the possibility of Europe becoming a true community rather than just a Union based on enlightened self-interest. The speaker referred here to Milan Kundera, who had said that the absence of a utopia caused a ‘lightness’ which eventually made our existence unbearable.

And as for our rationality, can an existence based on technology and the scientific method be a guarantee of true progress and meaning in life? The relationship between technology and progress has become so complex that there are no longer any simple answers. This is where art, and above all architecture, come in. It is up to art and architecture to make us aware that progress (and meaning in life) are products not just of technology and objectifying science, but also of a kind of utopian nostalgia. Art can make the tensions between these two kinds of meaning visible and perceptible.

To put this another way, one function of art and the experience of beauty is to shake us up and remind us that our ‘true’ reality is not the same as the reality constructed by science (i.e. our technology-filled environment). Architecture can make this almost literally visible; Rem Koolhaas’ Dutch embassy building in Berlin was used as a metaphor during this part of the debate: a space that offered views of other spaces and of ‘outside’.

Education in the arts has an important part to play here, for it is all about being able to distinguish between ‘real’ and ‘fake’, between art and kitsch. Art must help us protect the humanity of our perception, of our consciousness, against kitsch and the objective nature of science and technology. This should not be misconstrued: science and technology have a legitimacy of their own, but their limits need to be acknowledged. This limited rational legitimacy has shaped our world view, but any further progress depends on digging deeper, and that requires investment in the arts and education.

#### *Europe, a Beautiful Idea? America, a Beautiful Idea?*

One speaker felt the question ‘Europe, a beautiful idea?’ was the hardest to answer. How does the ‘beautiful’ idea of Europe contrast with that of America? European experiences were compared with American ones. The ‘beautiful idea of America’ is less burdened by history and more closely linked to the Enlightenment. Goethe had struggled with this distinction, and got no further than ‘America, you are better off’. But we can now look back on two centuries of experiences that Goethe had never had. The American way of life was based on the notion of boundless freedom and the inexhaustible ‘raw material’ of a limitless country. Few would now

claim that this extroverted, expansive belief in freedom is compatible with sustainability. If the earth is to remain a place where our grandchildren can live their lives, a much more profound understanding of earth and environment is needed. And Europe, with its sense of ambivalence and its tragic history, is perhaps better placed than America to perceive the need for a mental transformation: the beautiful image of a society in which freedom is restrained by respect for the entire individual, who is only an individual in a specific historical relationship to a specific place on this lonely planet, and is linked to other specific individuals – linked in genuine community. A European perspective reveals much more clearly that each human being is not an autonomous ‘mind’ in an increasingly technological environment, but an embodied ‘self’ that belongs to all kinds of communities at various levels, conscious of limits (and of ‘finiteness’) but also constantly transcending them.

#### *Doubt and a Sense of Wonder: Specifically European Traits?*

Doubt is the basis for development and is seen as something specifically European. There is a task here for teachers and professors. They should learn their students’ idiom and teach them to tolerate complexity once more. Some participants said that methodical doubt is a valuable asset. In Europe it helped science to flourish, and at the same time it is an antidote to fundamentalism. Young people should be taught how to make constructive, methodical use of doubt so as not to lapse into fundamentalism or nihilism. Education should take children’s ‘sense of wonder’ as its starting point. Children should be encouraged to discuss things and constantly ask themselves why things are the way they are, and whether they could be any different. Education should also emphasise the notion that learning is hard work. Becoming a European is an assignment, a project.

The Polish philosopher Leszek Kolakowski once said that ‘Europe’s cultural identity resides in the absence of any fully formed identity – in other words, in uncertainty and unrest’. Some participants stated that Kolakowski had got to the heart of what it means to be European. We are doubters. But contrary to what we sometimes imagine, this need not be seen as a failing. Doubt inspired by curiosity broadens our outlook. This was the doubt expressed by Descartes when he wrote *dubito ergo sum*: I doubt, therefore I exist. However, constructive doubt that inspires action can give way to destructive doubt leading to stasis. This creates a climate in which the clamour for absolute values can become ever louder. We know from history where this road leads.

### **Session II: Education, Learning and Citizenship**

#### *What Kind of Education does Europe need?*

There was general agreement that education is the best way to reinforce culture, identity and such specifically European traits as doubt and a sense of wonder, described in session 1. The key question was what kind of education we need in order to maintain the foundations of Europe.

Various participants called for Europe to rediscover its inspiration in learning (in the spirit of Erasmus, not just in programmes named after him). It is vital to make sure that our children are not lost to learning too early. There was great emphasis on the need to design educational techniques that would continue to appeal to young children’s creativity and inquisitive sense of wonder. It is essential that their talent and eagerness to learn – which they can start to lose as early as the age of six – be preserved for the good of learning. It is also important to make clear what high standards are required of them, for uncertainty about this can lead to early loss of talent.

A number of speakers discussed how European culture could be made an integral part of education. One answer might be to teach European culture much more explicitly. This is something schools are still not doing enough – yet education in European culture would have

a decisive impact on children's future and motivation. How else can we expect future generations to understand and grasp the need for the EU's Constitutional Treaty? New methods are needed to help students accept Europe's inherent complexity. There are good reasons why the EU is so complex. European solutions are not simple, and the European legislative process is often lengthy. Some participants backed European education ministers' plans to design a European curriculum in which democracy, citizenship and values would be compulsory subjects.

One speaker mentioned that a compendium containing everything that Americans should know about culture had been published twenty years earlier in the United States (by David Hirsch). The book had been front-page news and the subject of fierce criticism. It was alleged to be conservative, elitist and exclusive. Critics said that each ethnic group should construct its own corpus of knowledge. The speaker went on to advocate a European equivalent, and called on the Nexus Institute to assemble a group of academics who would draw up a European cultural dictionary that every European should be familiar with.

#### *How Relevant is Science to Europe?*

Another participant focused on the relevance of science to Europe, saying that science is Europe's most significant contribution to the world. However, some feel it has been reduced to a collection of technical problem-solving recipes. This concept of science was seen as anti-spiritual. In reality it is much more dynamic, more open (more uncertain) and more socially concerned than many think.. It is an 'unended quest' within a community of scientists who often disagree among themselves and therefore have to continue reasoning and convincing – a constant search for ways of thinking differently about the world and sharing this knowledge.

This process of methodical doubt does not lead to scepticism or nihilism, but to an intellectual acceptance that knowledge evolves. It is this insight, this dynamism, that has made science so powerful and reliable. However, it also has to be acknowledged that science has played only a marginal part in solving certain vital societal or personal problems.

The synchronicity of science and democracy – which had both had their genesis in Ancient Greece – is no accident, but points to a fundamental kinship between the two. Everyone is free to speak in the scientific community, but people can convince others only on the basis of reasoning, not through tradition, money or power. Science and democracy share many basic attitudes: tolerance, debate, rationality, listening, learning and searching together. These are the attitudes that Europe has developed into values over the centuries – core values that need to be nurtured.

The mentality essential for science makes particular demands of education: children must be taught to think critically, to doubt and to feel a sense of wonder. In this sense, science should be treated as a key component of civilisation – alongside the arts and philosophy – in European education.

Some participants were gloomy about the state of European universities. Europe inherited the university from the Arabs and developed it further, but its present-day universities are but a pale reflection of that former age, and indeed of American universities. If they are to become centres of European culture once more, they need a change in their mentality, organisation and funding. Europe should reorganise its main asset (lively curiosity) and remove the main obstacle to it (bureaucracy). At the same time, it should organise its scientific communities as part of the international academic world.

#### *Teaching History: a New Legitimacy*

One of the original motives for European integration was 'no more war'. There was a consensus that teaching history helps us preserve and cultivate our cultural heritage. History

helps people understand that Europe's success in turning its back for more than fifty years on bloody conflict cannot simply be taken for granted. Experience in the former Yugoslavia has taught us that peace must be nurtured and that 'no more war' is not something that goes without saying. Understanding our own history helps us preserve peace.

Some felt that the emphasis on skills and efficiency training in education is detracting from knowledge, especially knowledge of history, languages and culture. We should set high standards for education. Knowledge of history, languages and culture is vital, so that we can understand what identity (or identities) Europe possesses.

#### *Citizenship and Education*

According to some speakers, the key question for the twenty-first century is whether the EU can become a Union *of* and *for* Europeans – i.e. whether Europe's future can be more directly shaped by a civil society of individually and socially active citizens. Education and culture can and should foster a sense of citizenship, and hence social cohesion. The European values of freedom and diversity form the basis for education and culture, but it is also important to create a learning environment which appeals directly to children and challenges their creativity.

In this connection it was commented that the greatest cultural diversity is to be found in our schools. Schools are ideal places to find out what divides and unites pupils, and how they deal with this. Exchange programmes are also experiences in diversity, for they lead to a sharper, critical awareness of one's own values. Today's much larger Union also forces us to ask ourselves what it is that unites us.

All these considerations and developments have led Europe's ministers of education and culture to decide to take the values set out in the Constitutional Treaty as their starting point for national citizenship education. Member States will actively exchange their experiences in order to learn from one another. Citizenship training will be given a prominent place in the curriculum. Reference was made here to a report by the Dutch Education Council, containing practical recommendations for European citizenship and education. The participants stressed the importance of increased mobility. Here there proved to be considerable differences of opinion about the Bologna Process (the introduction of the bachelor-master system throughout the EU): some saw it as highly stimulating, others as extremely limiting.

#### *Education: Differences between Europe and the United States*

The supposed difference between Europe and the USA came up regularly during the debate on education. Various speakers referred to egalitarianism and bureaucracy as highly inhibiting European factors, although countermovements towards a more elitist approach could already be detected here and there. European universities can learn from American ones how to make themselves more attractive.

Parents' willingness to make financial sacrifices, the concept of investment and also inspiration were often mentioned as reasons for the higher achievements of the American system. There is also a much wider choice of educational establishments in the United States than in Europe. There are some 4,000 American universities, of which 3,500 are of a comparable standard to those in the EU. Boston has as many as fifteen (and no-one is complaining!), whereas most European cities have just one. Some saw definite advantages in the American practice of having researchers operate far more as entrepreneurs, whereas in Europe their main source of funding is the state.

### *Funding of Education*

According to some participants, European society does not yet seem sufficiently inclined to think of education as an investment in the future. The future generation will have to change this. Teachers' pay must also be made much more attractive in order to maintain standards and prevent a brain drain to America. Some speakers felt it important to convince politicians of the need to keep budgets for education and culture at least at their current levels, since only financial commitments will enable education to preserve cultural heritage. However, we should not expect too much of politicians. Ultimately it is a question of citizens in a democracy making their own choices.

Some felt that European funding of science has so far been primarily focused on industrial and technological applications. This is short-sighted, for the history of science has shown that technological developments follow in the wake of fundamental research inspired by curiosity. Europe must break away from this short-sighted focus on applied technology.

Various speakers described dealings with the Brussels' bureaucracy (including in the cultural sector) as particularly frustrating, saying that the system is increasingly inflexible, and accountability seems to have taken priority over the pursuit of excellence.

Some felt that the European Union should draw up a directive encouraging Member States to spend a minimum percentage of GNP on cultural activities. Some mentioned the European Commission in this connection, but it was also acknowledged that Member States hold the key to the funding of culture and education.

Some called for an investigation of the scope for private funding (as in the United States), since the business sector stands benefit from good education. This could perhaps be encouraged by means of tax incentives. Many participants felt that a commercial approach does not necessarily conflict with a cultural one.

The EU Presidency was asked to study fiscal measures that would encourage the private sector to invest more in education, and also to propose additional spending on education, on the principle that 'what we don't change today will change us tomorrow'.

### **Session III: Between Hope and Fear**

The conference revealed the existence of two opposing camps which could be described as 'the optimists' and 'the pessimists'.

#### *The Optimists: Educated Citizenship*

The optimists felt that a pessimistic view of the future of civilisation is not very helpful, and that pragmatic solutions are badly needed.

One participant suggested that there are four distinct kinds of citizenship: inclusive, democratic, universal and educated. Although schools and universities certainly have a part to play in creating such citizens, the decision whether or not to become an active citizen is ultimately up to individuals. All that can be done is to make appropriate instruments available to them.

The optimists emphasised that the overall level of education is much higher than some decades ago, and that far more young people are now being educated to university or equivalent standard.

Schools were called upon to give the arts a fresh boost, for example by means of a permanent European art exhibition. Teachers should also be encouraged to teach a sense of wonder and

inquisitive doubt, so that Europe remains innovative and does not fall prey to fundamentalism or nihilism. Finally, schools should provide room for differing views. History seen through other people's eyes teaches us that where we came from does not necessarily determine where we want to go. People should be required to learn at least two other European languages in addition to their own. One participant called on the Dutch EU Presidency to harmonise texts in European history books (there was even a proposal that Latin be taught as a value-free common language).

Universities should encourage both physical and virtual mobility. Reciprocal recognition of qualifications is only possible if universities respect and trust one another. There should be a rotating professorship on the 'idea of Europe'. In general, 'lifelong learning' could be encouraged. A European campaign is needed to convince people that it is never too late to learn.

These practical recommendations were welcomed. The optimists felt that communication and cooperation were key. Indeed, a number of measures could be adopted without too much extra funding and by using the opportunities provided by the Internet.

#### *The Pessimists: Radical Change needed?*

The debate focused on whether the situation in Europe justifies a pessimistic view of the future of civilisation. Some were very concerned, saying that children are not reading enough, their vocabularies are shrinking, families are disintegrating and people no longer know foreign languages. Furthermore, the school system is utilitarian, in other words entirely focused on teaching knowledge and skills that help maximise profits. A number of participants felt that materialism and hedonism are rampant. Contemporary man is *homo ludens* rather than *homo sapiens*. The emphasis is on adventure and entertainment.

Education is the only field that has not been corrupted by commercialism, but it can no longer compete. At a time of growing social tension and a social safety net that some believe is failing, education needs a complete revision, for it is education that creates social skills. Governments can and should legislate for this, and politicians should be aware of its long-term importance. George Steiner said there is something badly amiss if young people rank Beckham above Shakespeare. Some felt the fact that young people hardly read books any more is a serious problem, for we need knowledge more than we need a knowledge economy. Young people are learning short-term skills rather than useful things for the future.

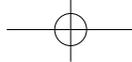
Some participants blamed the mass media for encouraging moral decay. There should therefore be penalties for violence on TV, in newspapers and on the Internet. Public broadcasting could help preserve quality programmes.

One speaker felt that there had been a certain amount of repression in the aftermath of 11 September 2001 and that this has even had implications for critical academic analysis. There is a risk that such specifically European traditions as humanism and tolerance will be swept aside by the fear of terrorism.

Another participant pointed to the opportunities that a crisis could provide. Now we are increasingly aware of the crisis within our civilisation and democracy, there are opportunities to make further progress. Effective criticism is a talent that should be encouraged so that we can continue to benefit from the input of a creative minority in the future.

#### *A Role for Politicians?*

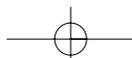
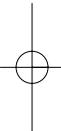
At the end of the conference there was still no clear answer to the question of whether Europe is experiencing a crisis of civilisation. Some participants wondered whether there was really any inconsistency between establishing that there is a problem and asking how it can be



solved, pragmatically or otherwise – or is the fundamental problem the fact that citizens are unmoved by the idea of Europe? If so, the failing lies with politicians.

It is important to make the subject matter simpler, more tangible and more specific, and this is no easy matter. The insights gained now should be translated into a form that politicians – starting with the Dutch EU Presidency – could make use of. There is a link between this Nexus project and the theme of ‘Communicating Europe’ recently discussed by EU European affairs ministers. How do we see Europe, and how do we present it? It is essential to have a shared view of this. The important proposals made for the teaching of languages, history and culture must now be put into practice.

A number of decision-makers pointed out that, important though education and culture are, this does not mean that cultural or educational policy should be decided at European level. Education is a political responsibility that primarily lies with the nation state. The best way to encourage art and culture is to provide an open platform for it. Politicians should make choices and accept their financial implications, but at the same time – particularly when it comes to culture – they should respect citizens’ autonomy.



## 8. Working Conference 'Civilisation and Power: Freedom and Democracy', Washington, Library of Congress, 18-20 November 2004

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The conference was a closed session, held under the Chatham House Rule.

### Summary

The third working conference in the Nexus conference series 'Europe. A Beautiful Idea?' was held in Washington from 18-20 November 2004. Around 60 'thinkers and decision-makers' debated 'the European idea and the American promise'. The focus of the debate were the differences and correspondences between American and European values, the question of how the two continents can guarantee the vitality of their democracies, and the challenge of jointly promoting democracy and human rights, especially in Islamic countries.

Participants noted that, following the end of the Cold War, the strategic interests of the United States and Europe were no longer the same, despite the universal threat from terrorism. In spite of this, the fact remains that many present-day problems can only be solved if Europe and the US act together. Moreover, Europe has more in common with the United States than with any other country or region in the world, and vice versa. Europe and the US share a number of fundamental values, as well as strong economic ties. All in all, these matters should weigh more heavily than the issues that divide Europe and the US. The fact that, despite this, the two continents do not act in unison more frequently must be attributed to politicians and intellectuals on both sides of the Atlantic.

The threats to democracy in the US and Europe are diverse and to some extent different. However, the medicine is the same: civic formation through education and debate. However, the public debate in the European Union has failed to get off the ground, on the one hand because of fears of sowing division on the part of political elites and on the other hand because of the lack of a common language, a common legal system, European media and a European public opinion

Participants felt that there are several things that the EU and its member states can learn from American democracy. The US pursues an active policy of citizenship, which encourages both 'old' and 'new' Americans to identify with their new country and society. The lack of such a policy is one of the reasons for the problems that Europe is experiencing with immigration and integration.

Partly in the light of the recent murder of the Dutch filmmaker Theo van Gogh, it was observed that liberal democracies as yet have no answer to the phenomenon of Muslim fundamentalism within Western societies. Apart from integration, this requires a new balance between 'right' and 'might', between law and power.

The conference was held in the Library of Congress, and was hosted by Librarian James Billington. The Dutch Minister of Justice, Piet Hein Donner, attended the final day of the conference on behalf of the Dutch EU Presidency.

### Report

#### I. Opening Dinner

The speeches delivered during the opening dinner on 18 November dealt with the common values and the bond of solidarity between Europe and the United States.

The keynote speaker made a plea for the 'Euro-American area' to be kept alive. Openness is a condition for addressing today's differences of opinion between the US and Europe. The terms 'old' and 'new' Europe are not constructive in this light - although it has to be acknowledged that the 'American dream' is a much more appealing and recognisable idea for the people of Central Europe, who in the past were forced to live out their lives under the domination of the Communist system, than for the population of Western Europe. The dissidents in the former Communist Central Europe felt a bond with the West because of a commonality of values. In the beginning this was latent, but this commonality became more manifest after the start of the Helsinki conferences in 1975. These conferences marked the first attempt to reign in power through law and gave the resistance a certain legal basis. The Carter administration and the growing attention for human rights also provided support and encouragement for the resistance movement in the Eastern Bloc. The reports on human rights which were brought to the attention of Western leaders caused the Communist regime to adopt a milder attitude to the opposition. Ultimately these developments culminated in the fall of the Berlin Wall. The period after 1990 was one of hope and euphoria, which was translated politically into President George Bush Senior's New World Order.

The terrorist assaults on 9/11 ushered in a more sombre and worrying period. Transatlantic relations have come under pressure as a result of international terrorism and the different approaches to combating it. The result of the recent American elections was a disappointment for many Europeans. According to the speaker, improving Euro-American relations is the only means of offering an effective response to the challenges posed by terrorism. More generally, the importance to both parties of a uniform approach to global problems weighs more heavily than differences of opinion on issues such as the death penalty. The United States could moreover learn from European experiences with what can and cannot be achieved with policy based on religious principles. In conclusion, the speaker summed up the situation looking to the future with a quote by Thomas Friedman: 'I am an optimist, not out of naiveté, not as a state of mind, but as a strategy for success'.

## II. Plenary Sessions

### Session I: 'The Idea of Europe and the American Promise'

During the first plenary session the issue on the table was whether 'the West' actually still exists. Those present explored in detail the differences and correspondences in the values of Europe and the United States.

#### *The End of the Strategic Partnership?*

There was agreement on the proposition that the end of the Cold War had also brought an end to the mutual strategic dependence of Europe and the US. Since that time the two continents have had different agendas. Despite this, the positive effects of Pax Americana are still being felt. The US encouraged the reconciliation on which European unification is based, and provided the security umbrella under which the integration was able to take place. This enabled an island of stability to be created in what is historically an extremely unstable region. It is in the interests of the United States that this stability should continue. One of the speakers voiced the expectation in this connection that a united, effective and strong (including militarily) Europe will also be a more responsible Europe. It is precisely Europe's lack of power that makes it sometimes behave in irresponsible ways (cf. Iraq). The same speaker also sought to qualify the historical unity of the West. As long ago as the 19th century there was distrust in Europe because of the American expansion towards Florida and Canada and because of the persistence of slavery in the United States. This was also when the first cultural differences came to the surface. Seen in this light the post-war period, during which Europe aligned unconditionally with the US, was an exceptional one. Several participants endorsed this view.

### *Different Values?*

Several speakers followed this up by pointing out that many of the differences in values currently being observed between the US and Europe are anything but new. In many cases they have a long history and are often structural in nature: solidarity versus self-reliance and individualism; the welfare state versus the 'nightwatchman state'; secularism versus religiosity; regulation versus liberalisation; reticence regarding military might versus legitimacy of (the use of) military might; 'free of republicans' versus 'free of socialists'. On closer examination, current areas of disagreement - tied aid, the death penalty, Guantanamo Bay - can often be traced back to these differences. An American speaker warned against the expectation held by many in Europe that these differences would be smaller or disappear altogether if there were a Democratic president. The death penalty has been supported by all presidents and is also supported by a majority of Democrats in the American Congress. And even under a Democratic leadership, the US had little interest in multilateralism: the audience were reminded among other things about the absence of a UN mandate for the American intervention in Kosovo. Finally, the point was made that President Clinton referred to religion in his speeches more frequently than Bush.

Other differences in values have arisen more recently. The secularisation wave which began sweeping across the Western world in the 1960s continued in Europe but not in the United States. After the Second World War, the European member states rose above their sovereignty and embraced multilateralism and the international rule of law. By contrast, in the United States the notion of sovereignty still has primacy and the system of checks and balances - with Congress playing a key role - sets limits to the extent to which the US submits itself to binding international agreements. Moreover, the American notion of sovereignty differs structurally from the European variant; if necessary, national law prevails over international law: 'Gulliver does not want to be tied down by Lilliputians', as one (European) speaker put it.

Several participants put these differences into perspective, with repeated mention being made of the recent survey of the German Marshall Fund, which revealed a considerable degree of consensus between the populations on the two sides of the Atlantic Ocean. An American speaker qualified the differences in views on the death penalty with a reference to the considerable support for this measure among the European population.

### *Migration and 'Identity Politics'*

Following the debate on migration and integration in Europe, and more specifically the recent murder of the Dutch filmmaker Theo van Gogh by a Muslim fundamentalist, participants explored the lack of identity politics in the EU and its member states. It was noted that liberal democracies are generally not well equipped to deal with citizens who do not wish to be treated as individuals, but who associate their identity and the rights that go with it with their membership of a certain group. One speaker expressed the view that European liberal democracies have a pronounced anticlerical slant, referring to the French ban on the wearing of Muslim headscarves in state schools.

American speakers in particular felt that the US, as a traditional immigration country, handled this problem better than Europe, largely because of its identity politics. Right from the start these policies have been associated with notions such as religious, political and economic freedom, equality of opportunity, individuality and a sceptical attitude to the state. Opting for American citizenship implies acknowledgement of these values. Ceremony and symbolism help in the transfer and internalisation of these values; moreover, they give newcomers the feeling of being welcome and encourage a desire actually to become Americans. The cultural component of the identity politics is an Anglo-Saxon, Protestant culture that is characterised by tolerance, the work ethic, innovation and self-organisation. This culture has proved to be relatively easily reproducible in the rest of American society and is now separate from race and religion. The result is an open society where everyone feels they have a place and which (therefore) has a universal power of attraction.

The EU and its member states lack such identity politics. Europe is unmistakably liberal, tolerant and pluralistic, but at the same time it accommodates strong national identities, including notions of *Blut und Boden*. Since patriotism is 'not done', these identities are condemned to an existence in 'never-never land' and are expressed largely indirectly in the form of traditions, cultural customs and a certain exclusivity, including a low acceptance of newcomers. In practice this means that newcomers are often *de facto* condemned to an existence in the shadowy margins of semi-citizenship. European institutions such as the welfare state reinforce this. The rigidity of the labour market limits the opportunities for newcomers; the generous social provisions discourage adaptation, self-reliance and initiative. When marginalisation is accompanied by the encouragement of sovereignty within one's own group, as with the principles of corporatism and 'pillarisation' - vertical divisions of a society along ideological, political and religious lines - there is a danger that parallel societies will arise, including 'pockets of intolerance', especially among Muslims.

The concept of multiculturalism has a similar effect. In some countries this concept is no more than a mask for nonchalance. In some countries it is however symptomatic of the lack of self-confidence in their own values: these are not regarded as valuable enough to transfer them to old and new citizens. Meanwhile immigration waves bring a constant flow of newcomers with no knowledge or experience of democracy, while Islamic radicals use the freedom of religion and freedom of speech to preach their disdain for democracy openly. Against this background, the murder of Theo van Gogh was regarded by many (though not all) of those present as not just a murder, but as symptomatic of a larger problem. Reference was made to a report by the French Secret Service which revealed that there are 300 *agglomerations* where the law of the Republic has *de facto* given way to forms of Islamic law.

The American participants in particular felt that in the light of the foregoing Europe could learn from the experiences of the United States. One (American) speaker advised that Europe should throw out the concept of multiculturalism once and for all and re-embrace the notion of *Leitkultur*. It must be made clear that there are limits to tolerance, especially the tolerance of intolerance. At the very least citizens must have a sense of shared identity. This could be derived from a common civil culture based on a shared notion of national and European citizenship. The key to the assimilation of newcomers lies in education, and specifically in the transfer of values that contribute to active citizenship.

Another (American) speaker expressed doubts as to whether Europe would be able to change course in this way within the near future. The political centre-right was best placed to carry out this task, but it seemed as if people were still too intimidated by the political left and by the culture of political correctness to take on this task adequately. One positive exception, according to this speaker, was France's Interior Minister Nicolas Sarkozy.

Several European participants countered that Europe had managed to absorb relatively (very) large groups of immigrants within a relatively (very) short space of time, despite the lack of an 'identity policy'. Reference was also made to the profile of this group, which includes many Muslims. This was a substantial difference with the United States. Another participant pointed out that some member states most definitely do operate a form of identity politics, for example France. In spite of this, these countries had the same problems with integration as member states which did not have such a policy. Finally, a number of question marks were placed against the American identity politics. These have not been able to prevent many members of non-Western population groups in particular becoming marginalised ('the working poor'). Reference was also made to the typical American inability to put itself in the place of others and to understand other people's identity. According to one participant this was something that regularly exacted a heavy price from US international policies, in which connection reference was made to Iraq.

Despite these differences, many of the European participants found themselves concurring with the analysis of the differences in migration and integration policy. Europe unmistakably

has difficulty in combining its values of solidarity with large-scale migration. This problem is all the more pressing in the light of the low birth rate in Europe and the continuing growth in the numbers of non-Western migrants. 'We want workers, but we get people', as one of the speakers put it. Question marks were however placed against the suggested solution; Europe's history of diversity does not lend itself to the concept of the 'melting pot'. Several participants therefore called for a 'layering' of different identities (the 'onion skin' model) as used in the Habsburg empire. In this model cultural identity is separated from national/geographical identity. European identity (the outer skin?) would have to be related in such a model to the traditional driving force behind European unification: 'never again'. Under no circumstances should Europe derive its identity from setting its face against the 'other' as it had often done throughout history (the Muslim world and the Soviet Union, respectively), and is again in danger of doing (against the US? Against Turkey/the Muslim world?). One speaker claimed that European enlargement would help it to overcome its 'Calimero complex', especially if the Union were to admit Turkey. This prompted the riposte from another speaker that a Union with Turkey would be a Union without identity.

### *The Future*

Few expect that the terrorist threat will breathe new life into the strategic alliance between Europe and the United States. In contrast to the US, Europe does not (yet) perceive an existential threat. There are also often differences between Europe and the US with regard to other threats to the world order. Nonetheless, the fact remains that in many cases only cooperation between Europe and the US can offer a solution. Moreover, Europe has more in common with the United States than with any other country or region in the world, and vice versa. Europe and the US share a number of fundamental values and strong economic ties.

The observation that the cooperation between Europe and the US does not run as smoothly as it might should be attributed to politicians and intellectuals, according to one of the speakers. Restoring the strategic partnership demands extra efforts, partly in the form of education and exchanges. The participants were however agreed that the partnership will never regain its old intensity. Its colonial history means that Europe has doubts about the export of liberalism and is reticent in the use of force. Reference was again made to the German Marshall Fund survey, which showed that 82% of Americans believe that war is justified under certain circumstances, compared with 35% in Germany and France (EU average: 45%). Perhaps more important is the fact that the EU is of no strategic importance for the US in most parts of the world. One exception is the Middle East, but here the two parties have a difference of opinion; moreover, Europe has always been more reticent with regard to this region because of the presence of a growing Muslim community in the EU. These observations led to a prediction by one speaker that any renewed strategic Atlantic partnership would be limited to (wider) Europe.

It was however pointed out that the US still seeks European support in order to give legitimacy to its foreign policy. This gives Europe a degree of influence - influence that Europe could throw away if it were to decide to derive its identity from the distance it is putting between itself and the United States ('the EU as non-US'). 'The US could very well get used to the idea of acting alone', as one speaker put it.

One speaker spent some time exploring the concept of 'new' and 'old' Europe, a term that is used among others by US Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld. This dichotomy was accurate to the extent that public opinion in the new member states towards the US does indeed differ from the attitude in the EU-15, being considerably more positive. This can be explained among other things by their heritage of (Soviet) Communism and the fact that the people still felt threatened by Russia; the widespread use of notions of power, morality and religion, as in the US; gratitude to the US for its support during and after the Cold War (accession to NATO) and fears of disappointing the US; the association of the US with the West (after Europe had disqualified itself from 1939 onwards); disappointment about what is felt to have

been a cool reception by the EU in general and irritation about the admission requirements in particular. The new member states saw the correctness of their pro-American attitude confirmed by the reaction of France and Germany to their position on Iraq. Not only was that reaction almost condescending, but the German and French leaders moreover found themselves on the same side as the Russian president in their opposition to the allies. It should however be mentioned that, following their experiences in Iraq, the new member states are beginning to distance themselves rather more from the US. The speaker even made a comparison with the way in which Ukraine distanced itself from Russia following the war in Chechnya.

Few words were devoted to the phenomenon of anti-Americanism. One (American) participant argued that the European peace movements have for a long time implicitly or explicitly supported dictatorships and that they turn against precisely those from whom they have nothing to fear, in this case the US. A European participant claimed that the US could help Europe to counter anti-American feeling by accepting that the Union occasionally charts its own course in forums such as the WTO.

## **Session II: 'Is Democracy Weakening in the West?'**

The second session of the conference concentrated on the question 'Is democracy weakening in the West?' Both the United States and Europe attach great importance to democracy, but how is one to deal with the tensions between freedom and democracy?

### *The Importance of Civic Formation*

One speaker wondered how it is possible that such a complex constitutional system as democracy has managed to exist for so long and to continue to exist. According to this speaker, the answer lies in the continual engagement of the people. Without citizens, democracy would be a skeleton without flesh. The culture of consumerism threatens to undermine citizenship, however. The daily bombardment by the media, including with pornography, the reduced role of the family and religion and the culture of 'more, more' are causing Western society to lose its moral compass. This is leading to moral schizophrenia and undermining of our civil capacity. In addition, democracy is wrestling to find a balance between cultural diversity, respect for minorities and defending itself against those who use democracy as a means of undermining democracy. Historically, democracies have always had difficulty in coping with internal threats, as exemplified by the rise of Hitler in the 1930s. These trends can be countered through the 'civic formation' of 'old' and 'new' citizens. It was emphasised that economic prosperity alone offers no guarantee of the continuance of civil liberties. In a time of large-scale immigration it is imperative that a society gives newcomers the confidence that the rules and benefits of democracy also apply for them. Newcomers should really only be invited if there is a willingness to allow them to become citizens as quickly as possible. This prospect is psychologically important and fosters a feeling of shared responsibility for the new society. This is not possible if citizenship is a distant and vague concept. In the US the promise of democratic participation is demonstrated by presenting every migrant child with a biography of Lincoln. Europe does not have such an 'inculturation' process; newcomers are much more likely to come up against cultural indifference. It was particularly this, plus the fact that the European welfare state will become unsustainable under the pressure of population ageing, that prompted the speaker to express fears for the future of democracy in Europe.

### *Christian Fundamentalism*

The speaker looked in detail at comments by European participants on the rise of the religious right in the United States. It was commented that religious activists in America have a completely different focus from religious activists in Europe. They respect the rule of law

and the constitution on which it is based. For this reason they would probably also have accepted John Kerry as president. They do not want an overly close relationship between religion and government and wish to maintain the separation of Church and State. For the same reason, for many the debate about Muslim headscarves represents an infringement of the freedom of religion. Discouraging or punishing expressions of faith is not a matter for the state in American eyes. More generally, there is a belief in the United States that societies have a great deal to thank religion for. A sizeable number believe that Europe denies itself a great deal of benefit by banning religion entirely from public life. The impression of many Europeans that the Christian right in the US is becoming ever more radical was countered, among other things with a reference to the little-known fact that a majority of mainstream churches in the US came out against the war in Iraq. Moreover, Christian/social conservatism in the United States by no means always goes hand-in-hand with a right-wing political orientation; reference was made here to the 'high' churches. Finally, the Oklahoma bombing had a moderating effect on fundamentalist radicals; for them, too, this represented the crossing of a line.

#### *Elites as a Threat to Democracy?*

One speaker felt that the very presence of an elite in Western societies poses a threat to democracy: 'We think we are the doctors, but we are the disease!' The political, administrative and also the intellectual elite have become alienated from the population. This problem is more evident in the United States than in Europe, and for this reason the adage 'a stronger Europe means a more responsible Europe' would probably not apply in the case of the US. The threat posed by the elite according to this speaker manifests itself mainly in corruption in the form of lobbies, options on shares, the funding of political parties, regressive taxation, etc. Another threat, according to the speaker, is the 'determinism of the elite'; the elite want as little debate as possible, frequently present a particular policy as the only possible solution and continually confront the public with *faits accomplis*. In the EU in particular this is a chronic phenomenon. It is only now that European integration is beginning to falter that the citizen is being 'discovered' - after almost 60 years. That same elite brought migrant workers to the West in the 1960s and 70s without any consideration for the humanitarian and cultural consequences.

One participant pointed out the historical fascination of intellectual elites with 'evil'. This, the participant felt, was partly the reason for their difficult relationship with democracy. This fascination today serves as an inspiration for radicals in the Muslim world, in this participant's view.

#### *Cultural Excellence as a Solution for the Shortcomings of Modern Democracy?*

One speaker contested the notion that 'cultural excellence' could somehow counter the shortcomings of modern democracy. There can be no doubt that 'cultural excellence' badly needs its defenders in the present climate of unbridled neo-liberalism (what the French call 'pensée unique'); but there are limits to 'high culture', especially when it comes to finding solutions for the practical dilemmas facing modern-day politics. The title of Baudelaire's work 'Les fleurs du mal' is a striking expression of aesthetic awareness: all manner of objects and themes are interesting despite their intrinsic ugliness; in fact, from an aesthetic standpoint they arouse our interest precisely *because* of their ugliness, and no topic or theme is taboo. To illustrate the problem further, the speaker cited the observation by the German composer Stockhausen that the assaults on the World Trade Centre on 11 September 2001 constituted the 'greatest aesthetic spectacle' in human history. The strictly formal criteria of aesthetic appreciation - the internal success of an aesthetic design without limits, including moral limits - lead automatically to this observation. We do not turn of our own accord to models of absolute truths. We appreciate modern art because it leaves scope for our own interpretation. And yet 11 September demonstrates that there are limits to the appreciation of history and politics from a purely aesthetic perspective. Feeling satisfaction or pleasure because of a deed

which, in this case, led to the gruesome deaths of almost 3,000 people, proves the risk of rejecting the 'moral vision'.

#### *The Importance of an Autonomous Moral Judgement*

The speaker followed his argument by setting out the role of morality, law and education. Contemporary moral views are the descendants of a revolution in practical morals that coincided with the 18th-century democratic revolutions: the transition from a society based on birth and privilege to a society based on the acknowledgement of modern natural laws and a universal morality. Or, in the words of Immanuel Kant: all people and their characteristics must be treated equally. It was this normative framework that gave form to the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen and the American Bill of Rights of 1789.

However, history teaches us that codes of universal morality and rule of law are not enough to guarantee democracy. The problem of political culture has to be addressed, the cultivation of democratic feeling, what de Toqueville defined as 'habits of the heart'. Universal moral ground rules cannot simply be drummed into people's heads or, as we are now seeing in Iraq, imposed from above. They have to be internalised, and this is especially necessary if they are to be applied in a meaningful and practical way. It was the lack of civil courage on the part of normal, apolitical Germans that allowed Hitler and his movement to come to power. The only solution to this problem, in the words of Theodor Adorno, is: *Erziehung zur Mündigkeit*: cherishing the capacity to express an autonomous moral judgement.

Seen from a normative perspective, the characteristic of a modern democratic civilisation is the cultivation of a post-traditional morality. Traditional morality suggests an uncritical identification with the prevailing social and societal mores. That means solidarity with a peer group or an attitude of unthinking patriotism: 'my country is good or bad'.

Conversely, post-traditional morality can be characterised by an ability to reach autonomous moral decisions. It creates the possibility of criticising or questioning the prevailing social logic. It means the development of what Kant called an 'enlarged mentality'; the capacity to rise above one's own limited standpoints and take into account the perspectives of others. Post-traditional ethics also encompasses the possibility of saying 'no': cultivating the capacity for principled moral judgement. A society that distinguishes itself through a post-traditional ethos is a society that tolerates a high degree of nonconformity. This demands a solid democracy with an equally solid institutional basis. Raising civil awareness can guarantee this. That awareness can in turn best be fostered through education and public debate.

#### *Democracy According to De Toqueville*

One of the speakers sought inspiration and advice from Alexis de Toqueville, who opened the dialogue between the US and the EU. De Toqueville believed that it is our historical fate to live in an ever more democratic and egalitarian society. This leads to two possible outcomes: it either results in an unprecedented culture of human dignity and nobility, or it leads to a general degradation of humanity. The latter outcome is the more likely and was described by De Toqueville as follows:

*'(...) An innumerable multitude of men, all equal and alike, incessantly endeavoring to procure the petty and paltry pleasures with which they glut their lives. Each of them, living apart, is as a stranger to the fate of all the rest, - his children and his private friends constitute to him the whole of mankind; as for the rest of his fellow-citizens, he is close to them, but he sees them not; he touches them, but he feels them not; he exists but in himself and for himself alone (...).'*

According to De Toqueville, there were two ways of combating such a scenario.

In the first place the individual must be encouraged to escape from the cocoon of family, friends and work and to work for the benefit of the collective. This means that the government needs to decentralise and that power and authority need to be devolved. In a modern Western society this means that the 'social midfield' or civil society takes over responsibilities: 'A strong democracy is a divided democracy'. In the US this trend was initiated in the 1990s. It was observed that the utility of growing government spending was declining. 'Big government is over', as Clinton put it. According to the speaker there are as yet no signs of such a development in Europe. It may be that the influence of European integration will lead to a strengthening of the position of local government. At the same time, the possibility should not be ruled out that more and more power will flow towards a centralised bureaucracy in Brussels.

The second antidote to democratic decline is a collective decision by citizens to undertake a nationally meaningful project. The national consciousness then replaces the narrow individual interest. The debate on the constitution in the United States had such a function, was moreover carefully thought through and resulted in a lasting decision of and by the people. The question is whether Europe will succeed in finding similarly motivating projects. To date this has not been achieved, despite the relevance of the European project. The fear on the part of the political elites of sowing divisiveness plays a role here. Major issues of principle, such as EMU and the euro, Turkey, transatlantic relations and a 'wider Europe' are not addressed as such but are instead largely depoliticised. 'Must unity be deadening?', wondered one speaker. Or can Europe engender a debate without awakening the destructive ghosts from its past? The answer to these questions will determine Europe's democratic development.

During the discussion that followed it became apparent that most participants do not expect to see a European political debate in the near term. The lack of a common language was pointed out, as well as the lack of a common legal system, a European media and a European public opinion. According to one participant, the oft-quoted pronouncement by Geremek, 'we have Europe, now we need Europeans' is nonsense. What is a European? Does having a European passport make you European? Must all Europeans be the same? Politically, equality does not exist. Equality can only exist in a unitary state, and Europe is not such a state and will not become one. Some participants were sombre about the level of democracy in Europe: elections for the European Parliament are a national matter. The functioning of the European administration would be labelled undemocratic in any other democracy. Continually holding referendums until the people say 'yes' is not democracy. One participant missed a reference in the discussion to shortcomings in the constructing of the political agenda. It is a major problem if politicians do not recognise or address certain social themes, as in the case of migration/integration in Europe.

### **Session III: Human Rights and Democracy: the Defence of Common Values**

The third session focused on the challenge of jointly promoting democracy and human rights, especially in the world of Islam.

According to the speaker, the West is increasingly being confronted with the paradox of liberal democracy: the desire by some not to be treated as individuals, but to derive their social and political identity from their membership of a group. This means that these people (collectively) recognise a higher authority than the (liberal) state. In order to escape this paradox, solutions are sought in the area of cultural relativism and tolerance. Are other solution pathways possible?

#### *The European Union in Search of a New Equilibrium between Right and Might*

In the light of the recent murder of the Dutch filmmaker Theo van Gogh, the first speaker looked at the challenges posed by fundamental terrorism to Western democracy in general

and the EU in particular. The fact that fundamentalism is now also inspiring Muslims in Europe is new. The interaction between their acts of terrorism and the (sometimes also violent) public response to them has created a new climate of uncertainty. The question is how democracy should defend itself. This gives rise to dilemmas because it could lead to conflict between fundamental values and rights, such as freedom of religion, freedom of speech and freedom of education. Freedom in one domain can elicit violence in another. How is it possible to prevent fundamental civil rights from being unnecessarily jeopardised? And from the perspective of the legislator, how can acts that are against the law be effectively distinguished from other acts?

The speaker noted that it is in fact an unfortunate choice to start the discussion from the perspective of defending values. This places the emphasis on what already exists, what has to be retained, and in reality on looking backwards. The challenge, however, is to engage in and win the battle for future freedoms. A spirit of optimism - living practice - is needed to shape future values. In the realisation that society is the result of both centrifugal and decentrifugal forces, we must aim to strike a dynamic balance between democracy, human rights and diversity. How should we apply values; where should we curb some values (freedoms) precisely in order to protect and preserve them? Addressing these questions and accommodating diversity requires a climate of trust. And in order to achieve that trust, safety and security are needed. Safety can no longer be guaranteed by individual states, but demands the shared exercise of sovereignty. It demands a new legal order. New balances must be sought between law and power, between 'right' and 'might', in the spirit of Blaise Pascal: 'Without power there is no law, and without law there is no power.' The development of the legal order within the EU is unique: a European framework that is able to combine and reinforce the various national practices in terms of policy and law.

#### *Europe as a Democratic Transcultural Area?*

The speaker underlined the fact that several perpetrators of fundamentalist-inspired terrorism in the West were fully integrated into Western society. This means that integration is not the only answer to radicalisation. The dissatisfaction among certain groups of immigrants will have to be addressed. Efforts will have to be made to create a situation in which groups can live alongside each other as groups. According to several speakers, Islam and liberal democracy are not irreconcilable within the context of democracy and legal institutions, and where necessary strong law enforcement. Muslims must also be able to feel that they play a full part in such a context, be able to raise their voices. In this connection reference was also made to the Turkish candidacy for EU membership. Anyone wishing to exclude that country on cultural grounds is in fact also saying no to the model of European integration itself, which has always had an 'open' attitude within the framework of the rule of law.

A non-European observer referred to the problematic mix of European arrogance and European self-denial, and to the two faces of Europe, one attractive, one ugly. Europe is poised unsteadily between an inward-looking European 'Leitkultur' and a 'cross-border' identity, and is consequently in danger of losing its identity altogether. The EU must not hesitate between these two, but must combine them to create a transcultural moral (pluralistic) identity with democracy and human rights at its heart. In doing so Europe will demonstrate within its own borders that a 'clash of civilisations' can be averted. Success in moving towards this (together with the integration of Turkey into the EU) could serve as an example for Arabic countries, though in the form of inspiration rather than duplication. One speaker pointed out that in seeking to intensify their dialogue, European Christians and Muslims could draw inspiration from the experiences in Indonesia.

#### *The Uncertain Situation in Iraq and the Divided West*

Following on from the discussion about the situation in Europe, one speaker argued that the issue of Iraq demonstrates that Europe is renouncing its fundamental values. This was the case

during the war of liberation and that was once again the case during the reconstruction phase. The speaker warned that failure in Iraq could directly harm Europe's interests.

These observations did not go unanswered. The situation in Iraq was placed in an entirely different light, while reference was also made to the European perspectives and the efforts of various member states to promote stabilisation and peace. Success in Iraq is in the interest of everyone, but it is not acceptable to close one's eyes to questions about the legitimacy of the war itself. It was also observed that strikingly little public attention is devoted in the West to the suffering and deaths of tens of thousands of innocent victims in Iraq. One speaker pointed out that the West itself has 'frozen' the political systems in the Arabic region for decades and that the intervention in Iraq has destabilised this fixed system without offering any prospect of a genuine turn for the better.

#### *The Struggle Against and the Quest for Modernity*

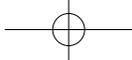
One speaker gave his impressions of a series of discussions with Iraqi citizens (including in Fallujah). The people they wanted democracy, but did not want outsiders. They wanted to take control of their own lives and their own futures. There was also suspicion regarding the true motives of the Western alliance in Iraq and fears that they are in reality directed against Islam itself. It was argued by speakers that it is better not to see tensions between the West and Islam as religious in nature, but to regard them much more as a struggle for modernity. Religion is then more of a symptom than a cause. The struggle for modernisation can be observed throughout the world in all forms and at all stages, and reference was made to the experiences of people with Islam in China, India, Pakistan, Russia and Indonesia. In the context of globalisation, people worldwide are searching for an answer to the question of who 'we' are, of how a responsible civil society - also referred to as 'modern peoplehood' - can function.

The desire for identity is accompanied by a desire for a new social contract. The speaker remarked that new answers are being heard to the question of who people feel they are. The tangible geographical dimension of identity is supplemented by an identity in cyberspace (Internet identity), which goes beyond the geographical. In this dynamic process ideas are placed in a totally different context from the context in which they were conceived. This adds an entirely new - often difficult to grasp - postmodern quality to the social realities of the 21st century.

#### *The World after 9/11*

According to one speaker, if the 20th century was born in Sarajevo in August 1914, the 21st century can be said to have begun on 11 September 2001. The violence of 9/11 brought to an end the certainties of the 20th century. The speaker spoke of a 'clash of incomprehensions' and argued that terrorism is born of blind hatred and blind fear of what is 'other'. That terrorism is also often perpetrated by well-educated people using modern means. However, this must not divert attention from the bigger picture of large-scale poverty and marginalisation. On 9/11 ten times the number of victims of the terrorist attacks in the US died from hunger alone throughout the world. The situation in sub-Saharan Africa remains worrying in terms of human safety. As long as large numbers young people have no real prospect of a 'civic education' followed by a life of genuine human dignity, a mix of Koran and Kalashnikov (or similarly dangerous mixes) remains more likely. One speaker did however point to the hopeful situation in Bangladesh, one of the poorest countries but a democratic country with a good record on human rights and free of terrorism.

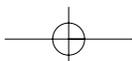
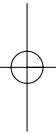
Europe and America must mobilise and take action to help to bring the millions of excluded people worldwide 'into the fold' rather than propping up dubious regimes. If we wish to maintain, rescue or secure (moral) values, there is no other choice.



*Europe and America Stronger Together*

At the end of the conference one of the American participants expressed in powerful and impressive words the desire and the hope that the United States and the European Union, despite the sometimes bitter experiences of the years since 9/11, up to and including the recent American elections, will once again come to see that they are 'stronger together'.

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## 9. Closing conference ‘Europe. A Beautiful Idea?’, Rotterdam, 4 December 2004

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### Summary

The last in a series of conferences entitled ‘Europe. A Beautiful Idea?’ organised by the Nexus Institute was held on 4 December 2004 in Rotterdam. This European Intellectual Summit was a public event. About 1,100 people attended – representatives of the political, cultural, and intellectual spheres, the EU's institutions, the Member States and several third countries.

The conference focused on the major topics of the series: European citizenship, European culture and education, and European values. Towards the end of the conference, ten recommendations by the preceding conferences were transmitted to policymakers. The closing debate, where the speakers included European Commission President José Manuel Barroso, Austrian Chancellor Wolfgang Schüssel, Jordan's Prince Hassan bin Talal and Prime Minister Jan Peter Balkenende of the Netherlands, was devoted to the agenda of the future.

*The Lectures and Debates give Rise to the Following Observations.*

Europe is unique in its diversity. The question which arises is how – despite our differences – to find and sustain the common ground on which the European project relies. To some degree, that common ground can be found in the values and related fundamental rights now enshrined in the Constitutional Treaty. Those values are fundamental and unite us in our diversity. However, the Constitutional Treaty does not answer all the questions about Europe's essence, and the answers it provides are not definitive. Spiritual and moral values remain vulnerable, opinions on the definition of a good society are always divided, and times change. Moreover, the values are under attack, not on account of differences between cultures or beliefs, but from small groups of radicals in Europe and elsewhere. A free, democratic Europe depends on responsible citizens. Freedom and responsibility go hand in hand. Education, culture and the arts play a vital role, and openness is a characteristic of European civilisation. Europe is a project of inclusion. Europe must not define itself as the opposite of something or someone else but must fight the ghosts of its own past.

At the end of the series, the Prime Minister identified the following points for action:

- Europe's fundamental values are inviolable. The EU must act with this in mind. The legal order and basic rights must be defended inside and outside the EU because they are the cornerstones of the rule of law.
- Education is vital in transferring values which contribute to active citizenship in Europe. Cooperation and exchange of experiences in the area of citizenship education should be promoted as much as possible. The values enshrined in the Constitutional Treaty should be made part of the education system of member states.
- Mobility in Europe is a prerequisite for European citizenship and must increase.
- European politicians must break ‘the conspiracy of silence’. ‘Communicating Europe’ is still urgently needed.
- Europe needs to be united in its diversity. Newcomers should have the opportunity to become fully-fledged members of our society and assume their responsibilities as fellow citizens.

The members of the European Council will be informed of the results of the discussions, and the Austrian Presidency has indicated its readiness, on taking office, to continue the debate about the European model of civilisation and its values. The College of Europe in Bruges has agreed to launch a European Citizenship Programme for which the Dutch Presidency will provide the initial funding and which will take the form of a structured dialogue between prominent thinkers, students and policymakers. The Programme will include a rotating Chair on European values.

## Report

### *Introductory Address by the Dutch Minister for European Affairs, Atzo Nicolai*

Minister Nicolai emphasised the political significance of the debate on the European model of civilisation and its values and referred to three developments in particular: the ongoing enlargement of the EU, the increasing involvement of the EU in the lives of Europe's citizens, and the diminishing appeal of the original rationale for integration ('never again'). Today, more than ever, the Union should ask itself what it is that holds us together.

The first conference in The Hague made it clear that Europe derives its strength from unity in diversity but that this requires a strong foundation of commonly shared and inviolable values.

In Warsaw, the question of Europe's identity dominated the discussions. The conclusion there was that we must be wary about translating Europe – as a community of values – into a distinct European identity, separate from the rest of the world, particularly America. In Berlin, the discussion centred on Europe and culture, and the role of the arts and education. The consensus was that European rationalism had led to great progress but to forms of materialism and nihilism as well. Typical European qualities such as constructive doubt and a sense of wonder should to be incorporated into the educational system of member states in order to counteract this tendency. The discussion in Washington found that Europe and the US – despite deep-seated differences – have more in common with one another than with any other country or region in the world. It is crucial that the two join forces to promote democracy and human rights, particularly in the Islamic world. Moreover, while the US has a kind of constitutional patriotism that is alien to Europe, it might help Europe to find a way to help migrants identify with their new country and society.

Minister Nicolai said that even though the conferences were ending, the debate had to continue. Until such time, politicians must draft initial, practical conclusions and make sure that the intellectual debate has a political effect.

### **Session I: A Citizen of Europe**

The keynote address at the first session was delivered by the Polish poet Adam Zagajewski. This was followed by a debate chaired by Nexus director Rob Riemen. Other participants included Lithuanian-Canadian historian Modris Eksteins, Greek-French academic Kalypso Nicolaidis, German historian and Slavist Karl Schlögel, the EU's Counter-Terrorism Coordinator and former State Secretary for the Interior of the Netherlands, Gijs de Vries, Professor Bassam Tibi of the University of Göttingen, and the advocate-general at the European Court of Justice, Miguel Maduro.

Zagajewski's put forward the proposition that the idea of Europe comprises not only a half real, half symbolic space which we want to be free from war and dictatorship, but also takes a certain delight in contradictions. Zagajewski named several of these 'vital dualities'.

First, the contradiction between Europe's cultural beauty and historic evils. Europe is different not only because of its rich cultural heritage but also, and primarily, because it allows and even invites criticism and self-criticism in science and society. But Europe also gave the world fascism, communism and the holocaust. To the list, Zagajewski added Western Europe's indifference to the plight of Eastern Europe under Soviet rule in general and the pro-communist stance of the majority of its intellectuals in particular. In addition, he pointed to Europe's shameful failure to act during the war in the former Yugoslavia.

Second, the struggle between the sacred and the profane. Although the profane has won out, the sacred has survived – no longer in powerful institutions but mainly in the imagination.

And still Europe acts as if the only Europe it knows is the Europe of technology and economics. For Zagajewski, Europe "is a rational action undertaken in the presence of a dream". Which implies that rational actions without the dream degenerate into banality.

Third, the opposition of fantasy and reality – the fantasy of Europe's vision and splendid promise contrasted with the reality of petty quarrels in Brussels and Strasbourg. This makes Europe a work of fiction which may inspire admiration but which nobody is prepared to sacrifice their life for.

On the basis of these contradictions, Zagajewski described the citizen of Europe in the following terms. The citizen of Europe has a good memory, remembers what was good and what was evil in European history. He is never arrogant because that evil makes presumption impossible. He respects the achievements of the Enlightenment but does not have contempt for the Middle Ages and its faith. He knows that there is room in Europe for analytical thinking and prayer, for physics and music. He does not think that the US is a military giant but an intellectual dwarf. He hopes that the taste of his favourite cheese will not be entirely determined by Brussels pundits. He is not particularly optimistic about the future of the common foreign policy. And despite all this, he continues to believe in Europe and does not forget that it is an admirable fiction (like so many other things that help us live). He loves European landscapes and blackbirds singing their joy in the spring everywhere between Portugal and Ukraine. If he is from the 'old and rich' Europe he is not condescending and does not feel that his own humanity outshines that of the 'new', poorer Europeans. If he is from the 'new' Europe he knows that great responsibilities come with privileges. He enjoys culture because the democratic system in which he lives is intellectually vague and does not offer enough spiritual sustenance. He needs culture to counter democracy's tendency to deride itself and to demolish foolish utopian longings for a perfect political system.

Zagajewski reached the conclusion that the EU's negative imperative – its wish to avoid war – limits its vigour. The EU lacks the great energy of a march into the unknown. For those who are disappointed with this, there is the comforting thought that the 'real' Europe lives on in the narrow streets of old towns and human minds.

The discussion focussed on two questions: what keeps the EU together and how can this be sustained.

The participants agreed that the countries of Europe have incredible wealth and unprecedented destruction in common.

Gijs de Vries pointed out that Europeans also share the classic Greek approach to fate and tragedy. He noted that when confronted with evil Europeans sometimes lack the determination to act. Still, the fact that after 200 years of animosity, young people in France and Germany no longer consider each other the archenemy is an enormous achievement even if that animosity has become indifference. Equally impressive is the recent enlargement of the EU to include ten new member states. The fact that Europe does not appeal very much to most Europeans is partly due to the economic nature of the integration process (a common currency does not promote loyalty) and partly to the depoliticisation of Europe, at national level especially (the conspiracy of silence).

Europe has yet to make explicit just what its values are and then act accordingly. De Vries believes that this requires resetting the EU's priorities: less support for internal agricultural policies and an increased contribution to peace and stability in third countries, including development and emergency aid. It also means that greater attention must be paid to transferring and maintaining common values, through exchange programmes such as Erasmus, for example.

Kalypso Nicolaidis felt that Europe should not define itself against 'others' except in respect of its past. Europe's beauty is its diversity. Above all, being European means celebrating the fact that every European has his or her own personal definition of that meaning. Europeans should embrace the spirit of unity in diversity reflected in the new European Constitution and eventual enlargement to include Turkey. She also said that a great lesson to draw from the four previous conferences was that being a European often means learning to live with our contradictions. For instance, feeling at home anywhere in Europe while also seeking to be a citizen of the world. Above all, European citizenship is about doing rather than being. She agreed that if it is to succeed, Europe must involve its citizens. One way to do this is through increased and more intelligent mobility ('Erasmus-plus') and the right to vote in one another's national elections. In respect of calls for more passion, she supported the attempt to find a middle ground between the passion of our nationalist past and the reason of the Enlightenment, i.e. a passion for reason. We have moved on beyond the patriotism of dying for Europe. Nevertheless, it would be desirable for Europeans to devote more time and energy to each other on basis of the principle "don't ask what Europe can do for you, but ask what you can do for Europe." Rather than dying, we must live for Europe.

Bassam Tibi said that Europe needs an *esprit de corps* which is not exclusive but open and inspiring. It is not reasonable to expect others to respect a Europe which has contempt for itself. Muslims and other migrants will contribute to Europe only if Europe itself makes an effort to provide a model of citizenship that promotes integration. Although the fact that Europe has two faces should be acknowledged – one which is ugly and one which is beautiful – it should try to show the beautiful face. That requires commitment and passion as well as the sacrifice that passion entails. A European by choice – Tibi is a Muslim from a prominent Syrian family – he stated clearly that he was prepared to die for democracy.

Zagajewski warned against defining Europe by contrasting it with the US. Still, he agreed that the European project needs more passion. Politics alone cannot provide it. Culture is a necessary ingredient.

Miguel Maduro underscored the need for Europe to instil loyalty in her citizens. Belonging is not enough. This does not mean that Europeans should have a common vision or have one single identity but that they share a common political space. The space should be open and inclusive and can be created by increased mobility (feeling at home abroad) and by empowering citizens. Nor should the ultimate test of loyalty be the readiness to die for Europe. After all, who is still willing to die for his country?, Maduro asked rhetorically.

According to Modris Eksteins, Europe is defined by its history. Because that history cannot be rewritten, Europe has limited options. Its most important legacy is (self-)criticism. The idea 'I doubt, therefore I am' applies to Europe.

Karl Schlögel was another participant who did not see the need for a grand vision or share the often underlying cultural pessimism. Considering where Europe came from 60 years ago, it is obviously succeeding. This prompted him to express the hope for a new age of cultural wealth.

## **Session II: European Culture and Education**

The keynote address at the second session was delivered by Jaqueline de Romilly, a former professor at the Collège de France and member of the Académie Française. The address was followed by a debate chaired by Nexus director Rob Riemen. Other participants included Adam Zamojski, a writer and historian of Polish origin, Jos de Mul, a professor of philosophy at Erasmus University, Rotterdam, Yvonne van Rooy, chair of the Executive Board of the University of Utrecht, the Swedish-Hungarian scientist and author George Klein, and the Hungarian conductor and founder of the Budapest Festival Orchestra, Ivan Fischer.

Jaqueline de Romilly spoke about the kind of education Europe needs. She began by pointing out that the EU has already taken many practical steps – to some degree pre-empting the question before her. For example the question related to the recognition of diplomas and degrees and to student exchanges through Erasmus. However, one specific question has not yet been answered: what do we teach and what should we teach?

European school systems are based on admiration for the progress of science and technology and ignore the literature of the ancients. Old texts can give us moral guidance and help in times of social and political indifference. The values that we are debating – respect, human dignity – are dealt with in the classics. According to Dr De Romilly, humanism has been forgotten in schools in many countries. She made a plea for reviving the teaching of Latin and Greek because they are rich languages and a starting point for finding answers to many of the questions we ask ourselves today.

De Romilly observed that, in the debates, we are looking for culture in Europe. In the search, we seem to forget that the culture which does and did exist has its origins in Greece, spread to ancient Rome and was revived in the 16th century with the rediscovery of Greek and Latin texts.

Three Greek words can help in our search for values: democracy, philosophy and theatre. Democracy was defended, and sometimes criticised, enthusiastically by the ancient Greek writers. The main criterion for joining Europe today is the same and very much debated issue – democracy. The Greek wise men (sofoi) asked philosophical questions like: Why are we here? What is civilisation? What are our values? Theatre was a way of thinking in ancient Greece. Nowadays it can be a way of thinking about how to make progress in Europe. The ancient Greeks used legends and heroes to teach and try to answer questions about man. Greek heroes were not superhuman – they did not have several pairs of eyes and many arms. Even if they had a kinship with the gods, they remained human beings who suffered and died. And that is why we are moved by them even now.

In her plea for Greek and Latin, Dr De Romilly made a subtle distinction. Not every child needs to study those languages and not all countries need them in equal measure. Nonetheless, children should at least know the names and stories. A country like France with its deep Latin roots should give children the opportunity to learn where they come from. Some will object and say that teaching ancient languages is a sign of elitism. We must realise that the children we do choose to teach those languages to on the basis of their abilities should be conscious of their responsibility. They must take advantage of their studies and understand that their knowledge will be the basis for making progress. Even more important is the fact that immigrants will learn their new language and culture more quickly thanks to Greek and Latin.

Following De Romilly's opening address, Adam Zamoyski offered his views about education in Europe. He stated that modern education reflects the shock of war. It rejected 'old Europe' and its authoritarianism, 'old teaching' and religion. But in doing so, it threw everything away. Children were taught that they were as good as everyone else and not to show parents and teachers too much respect. This was said to be the way to create independent minds, but this did not prove correct. We must now return to the basic notion that the only right in the classroom is the right to a first class education. Achieving excellence derives from knowing one's own ignorance. From the sense that we know nothing and that the more we learn, no matter how difficult it seems, the more we will know that excellence must be part of education from the very beginning. Zamoyski agreed with De Romilly that teaching the classics is the start. Education is what is left when you forget everything else you have learned. The accumulated wisdom of the many generations who came before us makes us wiser and better.

Jos de Mul argued for introducing the sense of the tragic. George Steiner (whose essay on the idea of Europe was the starting point for the series of conferences) argued that Europe is built on two pillars: Judeo-Christianity and Rationalism (Socrates, Plato, the Renaissance, the Enlightenment). However, Steiner did not mention a third pillar – tragedy, which can be found everywhere in the world but which as an art form is unique to Europe. Tragic wisdom is what distinguishes Europe. We must cultivate that tradition and nurture it. De Mul proposed developing a computer game based on *Antigone* as a way of transmitting the notion of tragic wisdom to our youth.

Yvonne van Rooy stated that one cannot learn to be European. That this is an experience of life itself. However, education does create the preconditions. Education today is overly pragmatic. Dilemmas can help in our search for values. They teach us the 'value of values' which we can use to teach young people how to become citizens. More than debate, we need dialogue to try to understand one another. She acknowledged that these are ideals which do not necessarily reflect the real situation in universities. The quality of higher education is a problem. The egalitarian attitude of the 1970s remains embedded in universities. But the tide is shifting. As globalisation develops, we dare to differentiate between students in terms of talent and motivation. A silent revolution is taking over continental Europe. The bachelor-master system allows students to select broader programmes and the education which best suits their needs.

George Klein emphasised the communality of science and the humanities. Together they form part of the quest for knowledge.

Ivan Fischer stressed the role of music in developing empathy. This begins at an early age when mothers communicate with their babies by singing to them. Education has an important role to play in teaching songs.

### **Session III: European Values. The Philosophical Debate.**

The third part of the conference was a philosophical debate on the values of democracy. The debate was led by Dutch philosopher and essayist Marjolijn Februari. The participants included the American philosopher Thomas Pangle, the France-based Bulgarian philosopher Tzvetan Todorov, the American political philosopher Michael Sandel and the Austrian political scientist Peter Pulzer.

In her introduction, Marjolijn Februari said that viable democracy demands critical, independent people and a language that speaks the truth. She suggested discussing three types of values: judicial, economic and state.

Thomas Pangle pointed out that the spirit of the EU Constitution calls for civic virtue. He made a distinction between two value realms which are related: democracy and high culture, that is the life of the mind and tragic wisdom. Both are rooted in European humanism. The EU and the US face huge, albeit different, challenges in these fields. In the EU, democracy is the weaker realm, whereas in the US high culture is weaker. American culture puts the emphasis on productive work, 'easy' leisure and play and has much less appreciation of the leisure of so-called non-productive work, the values of the mind and the arts. High culture in Europe is primarily concerned with its own vulnerability and tends to see democracy as vulgar. Preferring argument to action, it also tends to forget the true values of democracy, the spirit of civic and moral values, and the need for public responsibility. It frequently shies away from responsible participation in democratic life.

Referring to De Tocqueville, Pangle mentioned three key dimensions of democracy:

1. focusing on decentralised government and remaining close to the people;
2. cultivating energetic non-governmental associations instead of central government;
3. using great projects to energise (like a public debate on ratification).

America should learn about the true leisure of the mind from Europe. In contrast, Europe should learn the importance of self-government and its elite must learn the value of decentralisation. Europeans must organise a meaningful, transnational debate in which trans-European political parties have a crucial mediating role to play.

According to Michael Sandel, the EU must find ways to decentralise and bring power closer to the people. It must become democratic at all levels. The EU needs to do justice to its diversity by recognising regional entitlements to power and the desire for self-determination. The existence of cultural communities should also be recognised. In this regard, it is essential that European individuals who already have access to the European Court – although not in every field – have direct access to the Court in the fields where their community of origin is competent. Linking the principle of subsidiarity and individual access to the European Court prevents the individual from being overruled by the collective.

Peter Pulzer began by saying that the American Constitution was a product of high culture and therefore a pleasure to read. The same can be said of the Federalist Papers. In his view, those qualities are lacking in the European Constitution.

At the heart of the EU, he sees a conflict between the notion of an ever closer Union and the demands of subsidiarity. Strengthening the powers of the European Parliament tends to centralise governance. This tendency can be seen in the history of the US where greater legislative power for Congress coincided with relatively centralised projects like the New Deal and the Great Society. Pulzer proposed organising European democracy around issues ('a community of projects'), not institutions ('an institutional community'). Transnational problems like waste and security which affect ordinary people come to mind.

Sound justice is the key to such a community which means an independent judiciary with non-partisan judges able to balance risks to national security and restriction of individual rights. He emphasised that the public understands the need for a powerful, well governed trans-national legal system. There is a strong sense of the rule of law 'in the street'. A free press is also very important.

Pulzer feels that the EU as a community of moral values which puts the emphasis on individual human rights has a tendency to neglect the values of social justice. This has led to an unsatisfactory European social community and a relatively weak public ethic within the EU. Pulzer proposed that the EU experiment with a more modest project based on smaller scale solidarities because we learn values through their particular, not their general, expression. This is why learning to appreciate the arts and music – always expressed in particulars – is also important. For its institutions to obtain public approval, the EU must settle for a more humble form and recognise national, regional and cultural identities. We must learn to live with multiple identities because there is no sense in denying the ambiguities of political life today.

Todorov analysed current threats to society. First, mass media have a systematic influence on public opinion because of their systematic pre-selection which carries the real risk of manipulating free choice. Second, the forces of globalisation are not under the control of the national state. Third, terrorism has become a growing threat to society because of great technological progress and the fact that terrorists are organised in small groups. In all cases, state action is the antidote. But what state are we talking about? Our states are too small to counter the threats. Our only choice is to organise ourselves in a European framework. A framework which encompasses different religions and manners, where divergence brings conflict but never war, where state and church are separate. We must prevent the return of secular religions, like communism and nazism, and attempts to create an earthly paradise. We must recognise that our societies are imperfect and have no 'glorious' futures. In other words, we must recognise that the 'original sin' of our societies cannot be eradicated. Our high culture should not forget the true life of democracy and its need for mass participation. The European Parliament should be strengthened in order to increase legitimacy. The rule of law demands civil vigilance.

## Session IV: Closing Debate

The closing debate started with a presentation by Nexus director Rob Riemen of the ten recommendations for the EU's political leaders. The complete text can be found in chapter 3.

- I The debate on the European model of civilisation is of fundamental importance to the European Union, now and in the future.
- II Europe's fundamental values are inviolable.
- III Europe's wealth is its diversity, Europe's strength is its openness.
- IV European consciousness begins with pride in Europe's values, cultural heritage and natural environment.
- V The European model of civilisation demands leaders with vision and citizens with self-confidence.
- VI European citizenship begins with education in the spirit of Europe.
- VII Culture is the key.
- VIII Debate is the means.
- IX Europe's greatest weapon is its good example.
- X 'General ideas and great conceit always tend to create horrible mischief' (Goethe).

The subsequent debate was chaired by professor and author Michael Ignatieff. Taking part were the President of the European Commission, José Manuel Barroso, the German author and former professor Fritz Stern, Chancellor Wolfgang Schüssel of Austria, Prince Hassan bin Talal of Jordan, novelist Mario Vargas Llosa and Prime Minister Jan Peter Balkenende of the Netherlands.

Main topic of discussion was the question of whether European values like democracy and freedom of speech are threatened by the terrorist attacks in Madrid and the recent murder of Dutch film maker Theo van Gogh. How should these challenges be met?

Commission President Barroso considered that a major challenge for politicians is fighting populism which uses over-simplification to exploit the fears of people. Policy should be based on European core values like freedom, solidarity and the rule of law. European identity should be pluralistic and open and should not be defined in opposition to others. The Erasmus programme is a good example of the Commission's contribution to a common public, value-based space. In Barroso's personal hierarchy, culture comes before the economy. Economics makes a good life possible, but culture makes life worth living. Education is indeed the key. Barroso remarked that he hoped that political leaders would take this into account when discussing the next Financial Perspectives.

Vargas Llosa stated that the terrorist attack in Madrid in March 2003 was an attack on progress. He pointed out that Spain was a very successful example of a society which had progressed from dictatorship to democracy, from poverty to wealth, and from isolation to openness. He regretted that terrorism had been allowed to affect Spain's foreign policy. He urged politicians to stand firm against the attempts of terrorists to interfere with our lives and to influence the direction of policy.

Chancellor Schüssel, however, stated that a little more populism would be good for democracy. With its one million immigrants, Austria is an example of peaceful integration. On the other hand, polls indicate that 10 years after Austria's accession to the EU, a majority of people believe that things have changed for the worse. The story of Europe's success should not be exaggerated. The reality is that people are afraid – of immigration, organised crime and economic insecurity. Politicians must confront the right questions and be honest with their constituents. The EU needs to be clear about the limits of integration.

Prime Minister Balkenende said that in the Netherlands, after the dreadful murder of Theo van Gogh and the attacks on mosques and churches, wisdom and mutual respect are needed. Politicians must fight terrorism effectively, but a coherent vision and long-term

strategy are also essential. Europe is a project of inclusion and diversity. As a source of inspiration, culture can help.

Fritz Stern stressed that the EU is not only a success story but, since the end of the Second World War, also an extraordinary, unprecedented leap forward. Western values like freedom should not however be taken for granted. The EU must be both preserved and reformed in the face of new threats like terrorism. As in the 1920s and 1930s, fear and angst can be exploited politically. Trust in the institutions must be restored.

Prince Hassan bin Talal appealed to the EU to get its priorities right. The Union spends the largest part of its budget on its common agricultural policy. Only a fraction is spent on culture. Moreover, (national) defence expenditure is huge. The first sanction against Libya that was lifted, typically, was the arms embargo. Hassan emphasised that terrorism did not begin on 9/11. Security is more than rounding up the usual suspects. We should form a coalition of the coherent and caring, not of the willing. We must sustain civil society, fight poverty and exclusion, engage in dialogue and form alliances between academia, media and politics in Europe. There should be a free flow of education, and Erasmus' name must be revisited. Hassan proposed the establishment of an organisation of Mediterranean countries for the humanities.

Commission President Barroso pointed out that the EU is by far the biggest donor in the world, including in the Mediterranean region, and recalled the programmes for this region.

Vargas Llosa cautioned political leaders against giving in to populism. Just as it is impossible to be a little pregnant, it is impossible to be a little populist. Populists know no borders and constitute an immediate threat to trust in political institutions. Latin America in general and Argentina in particular are examples of the dangers of populism.

Chancellor Schüssel reiterated his objections to political correctness. People's concerns must be taken seriously. The capacity to integrate newcomers is limited – the labour market is an example of this. Achievements like equality of men and women need to be preserved. *Leitkultur* can be a useful concept. Europe needs to be popularised. Communicating Europe is essential.

Prime Minister Balkenende said that problems with integration in the Netherlands had been neglected too long. This is now being addressed and debates are more open. Populism, however, does not provide for real solutions. We must make sure that debates respect sensitivities and do not accentuate the differences between groups. In that sense there are limits to the freedom of speech.

Vargas Llosa advocated total freedom of expression as the only way to recognise monstrous ideologies such as communism, anti-Semitism, and fascism. Europe's strength and richness lie in its open society and in its culture and acceptance of diversity and choice.

Prince Hassan reminded the audience that absolutism still reigned in most Arab countries. Good examples from the free world are essential. The killing of Van Gogh was a hideous crime, a manifestation of multiple identities in conflict.

Chancellor Schüssel announced that the Austrian EU Presidency plans to carry the debate further by organising a conference on the idea of Europe and its culture in Salzburg on 27 January 2006, 250 years after Mozart's birth.

*Closing Remarks by Jan Peter Balkenende*

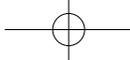
Prime Minister Balkenende concluded the session by reflecting on the debate and summarising the results of the previous conferences. The initiative of the Dutch Presidency on

the idea of Europe was relevant and opportune. The conferences produced many ideas, thoughts and suggestions. On the basis of the ten recommendations for the EU's political leaders, the Prime Minister identified the following elements for action:

- Europe's fundamental values are inviolable. The legal order and fundamental rights in Europe must be defended as they are the cornerstones of the rule of law. The European Council recently drafted a comprehensive security programme which provides for intensive cooperation and information exchange to narrow the scope for terrorists and extremists. As a legal community, the Union also projects moral principles in the world to which it should live up.
- Education is vital in transferring values. Education teaches openness, curiosity and surprise. It is the foundation of European citizenship. Europe's education ministers have suggested that the values enshrined in the Constitutional Treaty should also be a part of the education system. They urge the greatest possible cooperation and exchange of experiences in the area of citizenship education.
- Mobility in Europe is a prerequisite for European citizenship and must increase.
- 'Communicating Europe' is still urgently needed. The European Commission is right to make this a priority. European politicians must break 'the conspiracy of silence'. The Dutch Presidency will propose that the European Council invite the European Commission to incorporate the results in its Citizens' Programme and Communication Strategy for 2005.
- Europe needs to be united in its diversity. Newcomers must be able to play a full part in our society and they must indeed play that part. Last month, the Council agreed on common basic principles for integration, which provide member states with solid tools for action.

The members of the European Council will be informed of the results of the debates. The future Austrian Presidency will carry on the debate on the European model of civilisation and its values. The College of Europe in Bruges has agreed to launch a European Citizenship Programme in the form of a structured dialogue between prominent thinkers, students and policymakers. The Programme will include a rotating Chair on European values. The Dutch Presidency will provide the initial funding.

This series of conferences came about with the financial support of the European Commission (Socrates Programme) and the Dutch Ministries of General and Foreign Affairs.



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