

Dear friends and colleagues,

No calendar this year, but a brochure on our condition. Our conscious behaviours, driven by noble and ignoble origin of the human brain, is challenging in managing them.

Man has not been idle: agriculture, key development for sedentary lifestyle, led to the emergence of early civilizations from about 5,000 years ago (the Bronze Age), which first began in Mesopotamia. And to this day, civilizations still continues to make huge progress. However, in the current age humanity has saddled itself with mess.

We live in an ad interim era and in a vacuum in which troublesome and unpleasant symptoms occur: conflicts, grim atmosphere, protests, anger, aggression, and violence. There's injustice, dead ends are being walked and landmarks disappeared. It appears people are missing foundations. What are we heading for?

Nevertheless, it's excellence being human, a skill which helps a person survive, thrive, form meaningful relationships and find happiness. This skill provides perspective for the future and enables us to overcome the challenges. But we do have to ennoble our soul, to focus on human dignity, to change direction of vested political and economic views and of some movements towards principles of the common good, and pay particular attention to Bildung and our value system.

The Greek arête translates readily as moral excellence and refers to a set of behavioural and emotional dispositions, powers of self-control, and adoption of worthy goals. This can be understood well via **Plato's Allegory of the Cave** and **Theory of the Forms**.

It is good to know that excellence of any kind has not disappeared and that the act of living up to one's full potential is being practiced by agents of change:



- the **Nexus Institute**, which brings together the world's foremost intellectuals, artists and politicians to think and talk about the questions that really matter and is at the centre of the Western cultural and philosophical debate;
- thousands of people, who work on **collaborating on a new socio-economic model, using innovative digital techniques for the common good**;
- influential people, active with missions in **new trends in corporate social responsibility**;
- **'Volt'**, a pan-European progressive political movement, focused on changing the way politics is done and how to shape the future of Europe.

Enlightenment ideals brought us tremendous progress: cities like Rome and New York, a man on the moon and great inventions such as money, the wheel, fire, electricity, the printing press, the steam engine, tv, oil refining, democracy, internet, the automobile, telephone, refrigeration, a legal system, the airplane, abacus, facebook, penicillin, solidarity, cotton gin, the compass, multilateral cooperation, anesthesia, the shipping container, blockchain, and the hyperloop.

The art is whether we can really reach each other in order to build a new form of civilization in the spirit of the common good. To do so, let us open our minds again to the Greek arête and be agents of change ourselves to achieve worthy goals.

Best regards,

E. (Erik) van der Kooij
Director **Feeling Europe Foundation**

www.feelingeurope.eu | contribute@feelingeurope.eu
LinkedIn: [feeling-europe-foundation](https://www.linkedin.com/company/feeling-europe-foundation)
twitter : [@feeling_europe](https://twitter.com/feeling_europe) and [@C21_fellow](https://twitter.com/C21_fellow)