



***DECLARATION
BY THE MEMBERS OF THE
EUROPEAN ACADEMY OF YUSTE
ON THE PERSPECTIVES FOR A
CITIZENS' AND SOCIAL EUROPE***

*Royal Monastery of Yuste
June 19th, 2006*



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Since its inception as the European Communities in 1950, the European Union (EU) has progressed much further than anyone could have imagined at the time. The process of European integration secured a peace that made war between the member states appear well-nigh unthinkable. The postwar period was also an era of unparalleled prosperity. Human rights, democracy and the rule of law became ensconced ever more firmly during that half century. The membership expanded from the six founding countries to twenty-five states at this moment.

Yet, integration never proceeded smoothly, some ambitious projects failed, time and again the demands of national states clashed with the claims of European institutions, and every extension of institutional competences or addition of member states had to overcome stubborn mistrust. But each crisis also proved to be a challenge that pointed to different perspectives and prompted the adoption of new solutions.



A permeable Europe

At present, the Union once again finds itself beset by widespread misgivings about the recent enlargement with ten countries, with additional accessions still in the offing. The EU is also plagued by opposition to the Constitutional project, not only in France and the Netherlands, where the proposal was rejected in a popular vote, but widely across the European citizenry.

Fortress Europe never existed, but today citizens must live with the realities and uncertainties of a permeable Europe: The Union cannot close itself against the ever freer movement of people, commodities, capital, ideas, and... germs. Employees in the EU must compete with workers in low wage countries in Africa and specially in Asia, workers in the old member states feel threatened by competition from the new member states in Central and Eastern Europe. At the same time, emigrants from the world's poorest countries will brave any danger, sacrifice what little they have got, just to enter the Union, barely.



European identities

It is this awareness of the permeability of the European space that evokes among many voters a longing for closure and exclusion. Thus, the search for a shared European identity is also a quest for a clear demarcation that will allow to decide who belongs inside and who does not. But every criterion is hotly contested as it is bound to exclude those that others consider to belong to the European family. If criteria are worded so as to encompass all Europeans, they are most likely broad enough to embrace all of mankind.

What, indeed, are the distinctive values of the European project? The most fundamental ethical precepts of Christianity, compatible with those of Judaism and Islam, are also compatible with the other great *Weltanschauungen* (worldviews), religious or secular.

There does not exist an obvious, uncontested definition of European geographic space. But whether or not the nations in South Eastern and Eastern Europe will one day be part of it, the EU will have to live with them in peace and fairness. That objective requires first of all a more realistic and sympathetic understanding of their societies and cultures. This requires a constant dialogue on the basis of the respect for individual rights and human dignity.



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The sense of belonging in and to Europe is also experienced as an intense love for the great achievements of its shared past, which goes back to Antiquity, the artistic and intellectual heritage of the continent, its painters and playwrights, thinkers, scientists and musicians, the lieux de mémoire, the monuments, the cities... And so it should be. But then again, this legacy can only be received in its entirety, assets and debts together. It is somewhat disingenuous to gloss over a history of persecution, exploitation, imperialism, and tyranny, the nadirs of a shared and unfinished European past, for the sake of a smug sense of unity.



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Languages

Today, next to their home language, the vast majority of students learn foreign languages; for nine out of ten that language is English. Each nation finds it hard to accept the language of another people as the hegemonic medium in Europe. The European Union increasingly uses English in its everyday communications, as a lingua franca. At the same time, the EU is bound to honor the principle of full multilingualism for all official languages of the member states, just as it flies all their flags in front of its headquarters. The Union is also committed to foster the vitality of all minority, regional and immigrant languages spoken in its lands.



A European public sphere

Language barriers are an obstacle to the emergence of a European public sphere, but so is the compelling force of each national public space to impose its agenda on the citizens' attention. In comparison, the intellectual and cultural opportunity structure at the European level is only weakly developed. More intensive exchange of ideas across internal European borders is therefore a priority of the highest order. The recent debate about the Constitutional project all across the Union is in itself a prime instance of politicization of the European project and has thus contributed to the formation of an all-European public sphere.

Increased citizens' participation may also result in decisions guided by partisan and short-term interests. That is the risk of democracy. But information and education must not be centrally imposed. Free inquiry, independent media, open debate and free elections are by their very nature unpredictable and unmanageable. That puts a responsibility on the citizens of the European body politic.



The European social model

In recent years, the European Union has somehow neglected its mission for a social Europe. The EU should strive to combine the welfare arrangements of national states with social guarantees at an all-European level. It should reconcile the vitality of a free market with the security of a European social model. In addition, the EU ought to admit asylum seekers for humanitarian motives, and to absorb immigrant workers for economic reasons, without encroaching upon the interests of its established citizens.

Beyond its external borders, the European Union must remain true to its commitment to education, to the maintenance of peace and international law, to a more even development and more equitable distribution of the world's resources, and to a sustainable environment, if only because Europe's own future is also at stake in all these objectives.

The Academy is especially concerned with the worldwide effort to improve health services and to fight epidemics. The European Union needs coordinated agencies to monitor the spread of infectious agents across the globe, to develop new vaccines, and to help prevent and cure contagious diseases anywhere in the world.



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The Academy, by its very nature, is dedicated to the preservation of the cultural heritage for present and coming generations and the promotion of cultural diversity. The EU must support the protection of existing depositories, such as museums, libraries and archives and promote the safeguarding of electronic records.

We, the members of the European Academy of Yuste¹ are older than the European Union and its predecessors. We rejoice in its unparalleled achievements, in the unprecedented voluntary coalescence of sovereign nation states into a functioning entity: this is the veritable *acquis communautaire* of the EU, that by far transcends its regulations and institutions, admirable as they may be. We too are concerned about Europe's future and about the predicaments it presently faces.

¹ **Members of the European Academy of Yuste:** José Saramago (*Rembrandt Chair*); Reinhard Selten (*Shakespeare Chair*); Umberto Eco (*Plato Chair*); Sir Peter Shaffer (*Cervantes Chair*); Heinrich Rohrer (*Christopher Columbus Chair*); Mstislav Rostropovich (*Dante Alighieri Chair*); Ursula Lehr (*Marie Curie Chair*); Edoardo Vesentini (*Moliere Chair*); Gaston Thorn (*Lorenzo the Magnificent Chair*); Gilbert Trausch (*Arias Montano Chair*); Gustaaf Janssens (*Erasmus Chair*); Manuel Fernández Álvarez (*Paul Henri Spaak Chair*); Marcelino Oreja (*Saint Benedict Chair*); Abram de Swaan (*Freud Chair*); Joaquim Veríssimo Serrão (*Kant Chair*); Antonio López García (*Sillón Marcus Tullius Cicero Chair*); Ilya Prigogine (*J.S. Bach Chair*); Cardenal Franz König (*Damião de Góis Chair*); Hans Küng (*Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart Chair*); Margarita Salas Falgueras (*Isabella the Catholic Chair*); Alain Tourain (*Antonio Lucio Vivaldi Chair*); Susana Sandomé Ferge (*John Maynard Keynes Chair*); Willem Frederik Duisenberg (*Diego Velázquez Chair*); Bronislaw Geremek (*Ludwig van Beethoven Chair*); Peter Piot (*Socrates Chair*); Antonio Tabucchi (*Luis Vaz de Camões Chair*); Maria João Pires (*Anna Frank Chair*); Edgar Morin (*Jean Monnet Chair*); Paul Preston (*Marcel Proust Chair*); Valentín Fuster Carulla (*Moshé ben Maymon (Maimónides) Chair*).

This Declaration has also counted with the collaboration of the following persons: Felipe González Marquez, Mikhail Gorbachev, Wilfried Martens, Jorge Sampaio, Juan Carlos Rodríguez Ibarra, Miguel Ángel Moratinos Cuyaubé, Alejandro Cercas Alonso, Jürgen Elvert, Mercedes Samaniego Boneu, Castor Díaz Barrado, Florencio Vicente Castro, Jesús Baigorri Jalón, Pollux Hernández, José Ovejero, José María Rodríguez Guzmán, Segundo Piriz Duran, José Antonio Cordón García, Antonio Ventura Díaz Díaz, Luis Ángel Ruiz de Gopegui, Miguel Ángel Martín Ramos, Maria Romo García y la Red Europea de Alumni de Yuste.



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The EU has come far in achieving two of its historic objectives: ensuring peace and guaranteeing human rights. A third one is still pending: establishing social justice. This mission can not be fulfilled by the separate nation states. It requires an all-European commitment.

That is why we hope that the generations of our children and grandchildren will continue to build a civil and a social Europe along the lines of legality, liberty and democracy, in a spirit of openness, solidarity, and generosity. Europe has not been achieved yet, its future amidst the other peoples of the world is still open, and the promise is not yet fulfilled.