



Values in Europe – Ideals and Realities

OpenForum Prague (September 19-21, 2008)

Background of the debate

In values there is neither right nor wrong. First of all, they are a matter of personal conviction which needs to be respected unconditionally. Nevertheless, any society is based on a rather firm set of norms and values in order to function properly. This holds true for societies in Europe as well. Some argue that despite recent debates among historians, politicians and journalists it is still rather unclear if there is a European set of values that goes beyond the Western concept of personal freedom and responsibility, human dignity and solidarity, active civil society and market economy, democracy and the rule of law. Others insist that for the future of European integration Europe's common foundation as a community of values has to be considered a priority issue.

The preservation of a "European way of life" based on values is in any case not certain today, as is its importance as such. With global responsibilities ever more increasing it might easily be that from the former economic club Europe develops into a political community active abroad but passive at home. Shouldn't we try to establish a community of European societies which welcomes clashes on personal convictions, just in order to create and recreate diversity?

We therefore ask citizens and activists what specific set of normative orientations they conceptualize and experience as European. Our aim is to understand the appropriate field of the values debate: as a guideline for Europe's global activities, as a firm ground for a fully-developed democratic political community, or as a matter of personal identity.



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Phase 1 - Opening discussion:

Center for Economic Research and Graduate Education of Charles University (CERGE-EI), Politických vězňů 7, 111 21 Praha 1

Friday, 19 September 2008

- 18:00 Latest Arrival of Participants
- 19:00 Opening of “OpenForum 5 (Prague)”
Welcome by project partners
- 19:10 Panel discussion on the topic: “Defending values for a European 21st century?”
Speakers: *Alexander Tomský* (Publicist), *Frank Burgdörfer* (President of Citizens of Europe e. V.), *Jan Vaska* (Charles University); Moderation: *Eva Palatová* (European Values)
- 20:30 Reception
- 21:10 Short film screening from “My Europe 2008” festival

Phase 2 - Workshop:

Hotel Prokopka, Prokopova 9, 130 00 Praha 3

Saturday, 20 September 2008

- 09:00-11:00: Round 1: “What could be the normative bricks of ‘European identity’?”
- 11:00-11:15: Coffee Break
- 11:15-13:15: Round 2: “What relevance do values have for life in Europe?”
- 13:15-14:15: Lunch
- 14:15-16:45: Individual free time (incl. option for exploring the city)
- 16:45-17:00: Coffee Break
- 17:00-19:00: Round 3: “Political Implications of a community of values in Europe”
- 20:00 Dinner

Phase 3 - Special closing event:

Sunday, 21 September 2008

- 09:00-13:00 Special closing event: Activities at an exhibition in the Hradčany castle district
- 13:00 Departure