

The results of the Citizens' dialogue

Fresach Museum square, 6th June 2019

*** *The 7 values that make Europe strong.*

Diversity: cultural, religious, linguistic and educational.

Peace: To have, to convey and to preserve. Live a peace model.

Freedom: of expression, speech, press, movement, travel, work and settlement are fundamental values.

Democracy: humanity, understanding and balance of interests.

Human rights: strengthening minority rights, equality, social security.

Tolerance: acceptance and respect, but no tolerance of extreme positions.

Openness: new ideas, new thoughts, new technologies.

*** *Was constitutes the identity of Europe.*

Inside:

- The interaction of nations and states to face and solve challenges together at the negotiating table (never war again).
- Practiced compromise and confidence-building measures to save peace and stability.
- The constant pursuit of social balance and justice.

Outward:

- Decades of experience in the integration process and in multilateral cooperation.
- Active ability to cooperate and trust building to ensure peace.
- Security and stability as a role model for other regions of the world.

*** *What Europe needs in the future*

- Introduction of European citizenship
- Careful use of natural resources
- More participation and collaborative work across borders
- Broadening of exchange programs (e.g. Erasmus for pupils, teachers, apprentices)
- Deepening of regional, city and community partnerships
- More active hospitality to get to know other perspectives better
- Promote language skills to better understand others

Summarized by Margarethe Prinz-Büchl
und Roland Gruber, 6th Juni 2019

HOME FOREIGN EARTH EUROPE AND ITS REGIONS

The Strange

Europe lives from its diversity - including that of its regions. The European unification process is therefore not about equalizing and not about uniformity, but about maintaining and promoting diversity. Defending the common political, economic and ecological interests of our continent also serves to preserve regional diversity. Without the development and unfolding of the regions, Europe cannot have a prosperous future.

Contradicting the common Europe and the regions shows myopia and simplicity.

Both the diverse regions of our continent and a unifying Europe are opposed to exaggerated nationalism, but also against blind and destructive globalization. Regions with European consciousness can show and give citizens - apart from nostalgia and museumization - solidarity and livelihoods. This requires openness to scientific knowledge and creative ideas - also from other regions of our world.

Seize new opportunities

There are certainly global and, above all, technological developments that endanger the survival of the regions. These forces often destroy the demographic balance, particularly in rural areas. Mostly, however, it is the better educated and young people who leave the rural regions and move to the cities. At the same time, care facilities and social services are being thinned out or difficult to finance. The strong emigration from some regions is a paramount demographic problem.

Changes as such cannot be stopped, but they do not have to be accepted without resistance. Modern means of communication can even enable new life in these rural regions. New educational institutions and job opportunities for young people can persuade some to stay in the regions or to return. The market alone cannot do this. The public sector must take action and expand its investments. Only an adequate network of public infrastructure and services in addition to private investments create new attractiveness.

Competition of ideas and regions

In this context, the European Union also has to rethink. Unlimited competition must not be the top priority, but the sustainable development of Europe as a whole and especially of the peripheral regions. If so, then there is a need to compete for ideas that come from different regions and are then put into practice there.

Priority for quality and sustainability

The growing interest of young people in sustainable development and the increasing protests against the neglect of ecological issues by current politics are the chance for a trend reversal. The recent elections have sent a clear signal. Now is the time to act.

Europe as a whole must seize the opportunity to step up progressive environmental policies and bring them into all policy areas. But cities and rural regions must also develop ideas on how they can promote sustainability and implement them in politics. Local resources and opportunities must be used. Quality has to take priority over mass production, especially in food production, but also in tourism.

Make something foreign your own

Many regions have developed a special relationship with culture in general and art in particular over the centuries. It is important to maintain the regionally colored culture, but also to promote new elements and dimensions. Culture cannot develop through narrow-mindedness and isolation, but always requires new contacts, challenges and suggestions. In this way, European and global can be brought to bear locally and regionally. This allows "foreign" things to become their own. In this sense, regions should also work together across national borders.

Local and regional orientation as well as the emphasis on one's own qualities do not contradict the use of new technologies – especially digitalization. Stagnation in the regions does not contribute to their development and survival. Regions can only develop a new attraction if the technological and economic changes are used to awaken and promote the creative potential. And only if the regions radiate new attractiveness can they – again – offer people a home.

Regions can reinvent Europe

In this sense, regions can also make a significant contribution to reinventing Europe. No continent has brought more misfortune to itself and the world than Europe, and no continent can find a better way out of the global ecological crisis today. Europe's regions can prepare this path and will certainly enrich it with new, concrete ideas.

Dr. Hannes Swoboda, President of the Kuratorium
Fresach, 6th June 2019