

Change Declaration
EUROPE in TRANSITION

THE NEW IN THE WORLD

The new - the transformation - usually comes unexpectedly. This also applies to the events that are currently troubling us most in Europe: Covid-19 and the aggression of the Russian Federation against its neighbour Ukraine. Historically, neither pandemics nor wars are new. Nevertheless, we are surprised to be confronted with it again and directly.

THE PANDEMIC

The founding fathers of the European Union and subsequent generations did not consider it necessary to communitize health policy and thus prepare it for combating pandemics. And yet it was necessary to react quickly and together. This was only achieved with difficulty; the commonality was strongest in combating the economic consequences. And it has also shown how important research, development and production of vital goods, such as vaccines and medicines, are within the EU and its member states' own sphere of influence.

But thinking and acting in a more European way does not mean forgetting about the global whole. Viruses do not respect borders, and global supply chains have not generally become obsolete. Much more attention must be paid to how replacements for scarce goods can be quickly procured in the event of a crisis. The diversification of resources and production locations is therefore more necessary than ever. Europe needs a new balance between globalization and sovereignty.

THE WAR

The pandemic had barely seemed to be under control when Russia invaded Ukraine on February 24, 2022. According to the Russian nationalist narrative, it was a “necessary” war against a “Nazi regime” in Kiev and against an “aggressive” West that is expanding its sphere of influence and at the same time is “dilapidated” and “effeminate.” The new of this war is the old of imperial rule and the fight for zones of influence, the conquest of land and resources to expand and secure state (and personal) rule.

THE CHALLENGE

The new and old aspects of this war are causing enormous suffering. Politically, however, there is strong international solidarity with the victims, unity of the geopolitical West towards Russia and, beyond that, the urgency of the energy transition that has been talked about for years. Furthermore, Europe feels compelled to arm itself to ward off military aggression from Moscow. This ties up enormous resources and affects social measures against inflation as well as the necessary funds for reconstruction in Ukraine.

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Peace, energy, water supply and food security are global tasks; they affect every country on earth. Therefore, Europe must also think globally. The consequences of Covid-19 and war have contributed to rising inequality and poverty worldwide. Above all, food security is a task that falls to the richer regions - also because it is the poor regions that suffer most from climate changes - caused primarily by the rich industrialized countries.

THE CHANGE

A joint effort to initiate social transformation is as urgently needed as financial resources. It's about more sustainable forms of energy and new technologies, a rethink, the development and expansion of a circular economy, the recycling and reuse of valuable materials. This change is necessary, but it must be supported by people. Therefore it is also a social task.

Increased EU-wide and cooperative research and development as well as an energy transition including a circular economy supported by all those involved can contribute to social transformation. This can only succeed if politics and civil society define the necessary measures in dialogue and support the socially disadvantaged in times of particular stress.

THE FUTURE

People occasionally approach the new and unknown with interest, but usually with more skepticism than the familiar and old habits. Subjective attitudes often have a stronger influence on opinion-forming and action-guiding than objective facts. For the required change, i.e. for implementing the desired and necessary new things, it takes more effort than continuing on an old, well-worn, perhaps ultimately risky course with the familiar.

Now it is important to take courage and make the change possible, to give up resistance to scientific findings. But resistance to new things must not be broken by force - at least not in Europe, and not in a democratic society. Existential measures to preserve the basis of life for future generations can only be implemented by pluralistic opinion and will formation.

Fresach, June 4, 2022 | Denk.Raum.Fresach
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