



EUROPEAN CULTURAL PARLIAMENT

Berlin Symposium
18-19 September 2021

“Has the Corona virus infected the European Soul?”

ICD Berlin

September 18th, 2021

Introduction: Karl-Erik Norman (ECP Secretary General)

Welcome to the first meeting after 23 months.

A European Soul? A theme close to the tradition of the ECP. Many of our 18 sessions have dealt with various aspects of this concept. European values, democracy, human rights, tolerance, cohesion, etc.

Before Europeans started to talk about a Soul the Russians had “Russkaya dushá”, the Russian Soul, on the agenda at least since the 1840ies.

Stefan Zweig described the concept “a European ” in his famous book “*The world of yesterday. Memoirs of a European*”.

The European has a very long history to give a nation or region a soul

Stefan Zweig wrote crucially that understanding together means Europeans do need a soul.

EUFORIA, years around 2004 – 2007. Ten new members and a lot of optimism for the future. In this spirit the ECP started its work.

First Crisis: Old European, new European invasion in Iraq

Second Crisis: Brexit

Third Crisis: COVID-19 Impact for the artists, institutions, etc

Art & Culture have been particularly hard hit. Brutal consequences for individual artists and cultural institutions.



Opening address: Pär Stenbäck (ECP President)]

The beginning of ECP, no funds, and a cultural agenda not political driven.

European ideas.

How I see the world situation; it is estimated that half a billion people have fallen below the poverty line and that eight hundred million are chronically malnourished.

International institutions as WHO and others.

Is a risk to humanity and the world community.

There is a risk that humanity and the world community are entering a period of dwindling cooperation, new border barriers and reduced coordination to combat global scourge.

Pandemic show the deeper cooperation and trust in international institutions

Majority of the states can't live without cooperation.

Role the European Union

Role of china and USA

Economics, military support

Egypt is an example

Today we have enormous project in South Central Asia

The challenges are China-the best friend for Europe?

State formations such as China and India are other examples of units that have been gradually welded together.

The influence of China

For many politicians is a good example

We live in democracy; how resist the cultural repression

Followed by Open Discussion:

Intervention of Peter Hanke from Denmark

Europe remains the best place to live, democratic power

What influence we can build, more than China and the USA.

Par

European borders being open could be a model

World is not ready for this evolution

Regulated migration

Need international trade about migration

Jacob Dahl Rendtorff (Denmark)

Interdependence between states



Cosmopolitan could be, especially in pandemic
What kind of cooperation?
If we look the European soul, Stefan Zweig
Respect for difference and take a responsibility of the world

Par

Which is the role of the political elite, economical elite (other way)
Citizen in the other way
Step by step and moderate

Karl-Erik

Cosmopolitan and common values
Live motive, many things we have to combine
Role of the nation

Laura Kolbe

Notion of soul
What is the future of Europe?
Elite, businessman, politicians
How do you see the role of the elite and social classes?

Giuntautas Mazeikis on problems and challenges for the European Capital of Culture 2022 – Kaunas, Lithuania

- Problems and challenges for the European capital of culture - Lithuania (Kaunas)
- Participatory culture and cultural outreach of small communities
- Slabodka yeshiva
- Capitals of culture are funded by municipalities and their values differ from the wider EU; for example, who the capitals of culture are representing
- What does it mean to be a cultural capital of Europe
 - EU commission - doesn't give money, just gives a title
 - Government side - they invest the money and try to control the cultural values of a place
 - Municipality - wants to use culture to represent the city - gives part of the finances
- Methods of Kaunas as a cultural capital of Europe
 - Involved in the network of European networks of culture



- Work to involve volunteers into cultural organizational work, and not just heads of small government
- Movements against Kaunas events such as the “Families movement” - clashes between different movements (eg. Pride movement and hatred groups)
- How to involve the issue of migrants into the cultural capital - it’s a question of dignity

Erna Hennicot-Schoepges, former Minister of Culture, Luxemburg, on the crisis for Arts & Culture in Europe

- After the Schengen agreements in 1985 it became evident that open borders were the greatest achievement of the EU.
- The same happened for transports with masks and vaccines, which allowed others to cross the borders.
- Cultural actors are among the most vulnerable group in the economy.
- The multilateral cooperation, with strengthening of isolation trends will slow down the recovery of the cultural sector.
- As a conclusion, beyond the difficulties we have to face, we have to take the opportunity to tackle the problem at its roots. As long as culture is seen as leisure and distraction, cultural policies are difficult to advocate when the economic situation is dismantled. During the Pandemic the lock out from many opportunities left people face to face with their own potential.



Online: Tuuli Lähdesmäki, Finland, on “The effects of mobility restrictions on the notions of Europe”

- Focus on a broad study of people’s notions of Europe - 1731 individuals from 27 European nationalities to find their opinions
- Spoke about values, diversity, borders and cross-border experiences, mobility - values that the EU is promoting as its core values
- Responses often characterized Europe as culturally diverse, manifested through cultural exchanges in Europe and peoples’ experiences while traveling throughout Europe
- Identified mobility and cultural diversity as central to the research
 - Cultural diversity was viewed as preventing an emergence of a European ID (mainly by participants between 36-65)



- But on the other hand, it was viewed as a core element of EU ID shaped by peoples transnational experiences as mobility (mainly young people under 35 and older people over 66)
- Impacts of covid-19 on Europeans' notions of Europe
 - Blocked mobility and ability to experience transnational cultural experiences
 - Curbed mobility, especially for young people

Anna Chistoserdova, Belarus, on the situation in her country

Difficult situation of Belarus, for political reasons.
 The government did not recognize Covid-19 as a pandemic
 Any hope?
 For now, no positive signals



Judith McKimm, Austria, on “The Pandemic and the Increase of a Polarized Society”

A big change in our daily lives was exhibited by the fact that as a consequence of the pandemic digital tools suddenly became essential not only for communication, study and work, but also for disseminating and accessing information about the virus itself.
 Now more than ever we are witness to the fact that discourse has become extremely polarized and highly emotionally charged.
 History shows us that in times of crisis, collective fear, and frustration, people feel a very human need to find simple and quick solutions to complex problems and therefore often try to find someone to blame.
 The question we must ask ourselves is, *where is this coming from?*



Hybrid: Francois Carbon, Luxemburg, and James Ketterer, USA (online) on continuation of the Transatlantic Dialogue Project, TAD

The Transatlantic Dialogue conference series on global citizens, held in Luxembourg since 2008, explores the significance of culture / liberal education for fostering global citizenship from both US and European perspectives. For the future a forum for European personalities

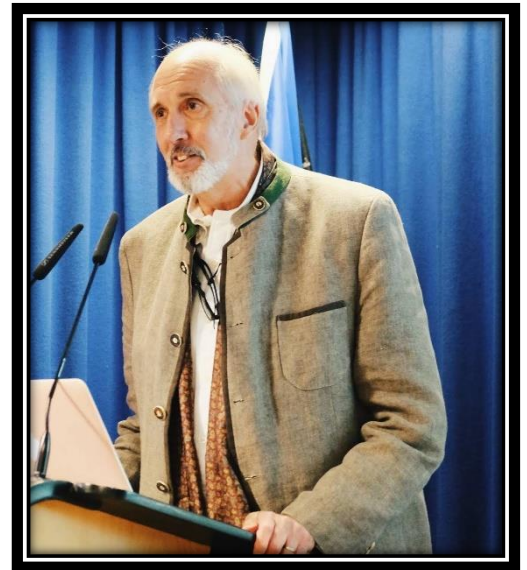
Together with the “European Cultural Parliament”, a forum for European personalities in the fields of arts, culture and letters for dialogue, discussions and debate about crucial and burning issues of importance for European co-operation, European democracy and European culture the idea raised up to create an ‘External Relations’ Task force group in the very informal tradition which has always been ECP’s modus operandi and based on the belief that the European idea symbolizes a balance between respect for the diversity of cultures in Europe and cross-cultural tolerance and understanding.

The Parliament stands for common values, cultural identity and diversity as well as tolerance and will promote bridge building with other cultures.

To this end the “ECP” proposes to offer a ‘new’ platform for regular debate on crucial issues between independent artists, writers, musicians, historians, philosophers, educators, designers, architects, politicians, diplomats and other creative thinkers from all countries, a transpacific meeting place, where important ideas and initiatives are born.

Pär intervention

Dialogue between Europe and other countries especially United States



Online: Titus Leber, Austria, on ECP relations with the African Union

African past, not to lose the next generation

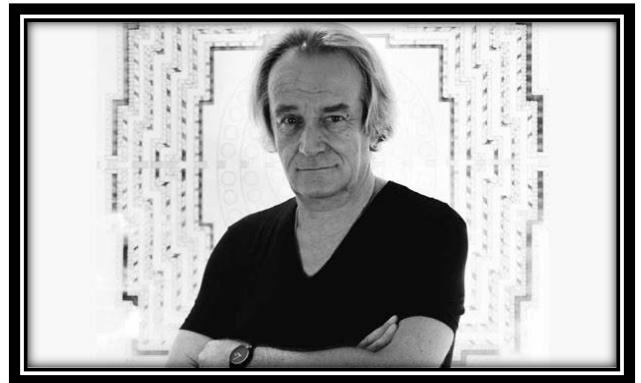
Project museum Africa, and encyclopedia Africa

Two of the key fields of the Agenda 2063 have been defined as “The African Museum”, referring to the ensemble of activities aiming at preserving Africa's cultural heritage, and “Encyclopedia Africa” as a knowledge base on all matters related to African civilizations.

Narrative of Africa is beginning to be told, the old histories of Africa

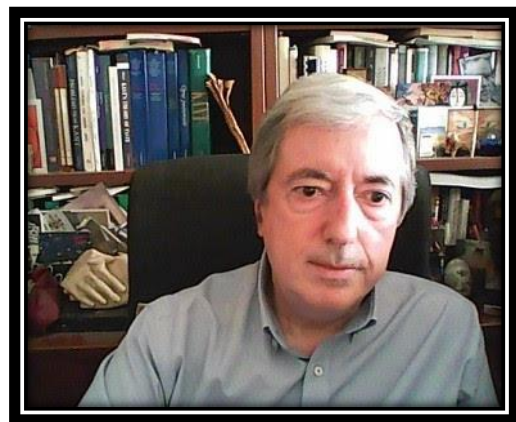
An important role in the relation between Europe and Africa, our closest neighbor, has been played by the evolution of the Covid 19 pandemic with its apparently extremely low infection rates on the African continent.

As a result of all this, travelling to and from Africa has been largely hampered.



Online: Stelios Virvidakis, Greece, on “Ethical issues /challenges/dilemmas related to the pandemic”

- Irrational beliefs about vaccines
- Divides between elites and common people - availability of vaccines
- Role of philosophical reflection
- Dilemmas one
 - Pursuit of herd immunity vs the respect for human rights and protection of human rights and the vulnerable
 - Economy vs health of citizens
 - Common good vs respect for individual freedoms
- Dilemma two
 - Anti-vaccine movement
 - Extreme left and right wing groups, and religious groups
- Opportunities that come from the pandemic?



**Online: Massimo dell Utri, Italy, with his contribution, titled:
"No more than usual"**

- The democratic structure of the EU countries managed to stand fairly firm
- The European soul
 - Cradle of western civilization and include social norms, ethical values and customs and habits
 - The EU soul has partially been affected by covid
 - Increase of conspiracy theories, obscurantism (similar aspects such as Naziism, fascism) that cropped up in the past - they are not new aspects
- On the other hand, some elements reinforced the EU soul
 - Social and political discussion managed to stay at a reasonable level
 - Health systems remained good
 - Reinforced the belief that the welfare state is a good thing
 - Joining of the national governments to fight against a common enemy
 - Skeptics understood the importance of the EU



Steve Austen, Netherlands, on Europe and Identity

Where I can put the energy

How can I create a new personal identity?

Probably these people all conservative nationalist

What we have to do with culture and arts

The group convention to talk about strongly European identity

The artists as citizen (book)



Gabriele Zaidyte, Lithuania, on future projects

East partners
Political agenda
Lithuania, Armenia, Georgia
She is working in Ukraine

East partners, in international relations
No relationships in official level
Lithuania has very famous producer



Efva Lilja, Sweden, on “Artists as Facilitators of Change”

Used the body, arm, dance, and painted.
Learning process doing solo

Artists as Facilitators of Change, project
During the pandemic Identify a change
Access to art
Freedom of speech
What language we used
Influence society through art
Thinking outside the box
Independent artist
We are in different position of power
Art creates art, emotional and intellectuals
In terms of language.

Role of art in our culture is undertaken as community as a society
How to finance? Look at the farmers, car industry, the approach what is represented
Research in Scientifics and humanistic areas
Vocabulary controls an agenda?
Impact vocabulary used the politicians
When they speak negative
Approach negatives to citizen
Art is all
We can't do many things without art



Luis Tavares Pereira, Portugal

Idea focus

What happened to our city center?

People stay and work home, and what happened with bar, restaurants,

With the increase of the home office culture what happened to them, because human contact is fundamental.

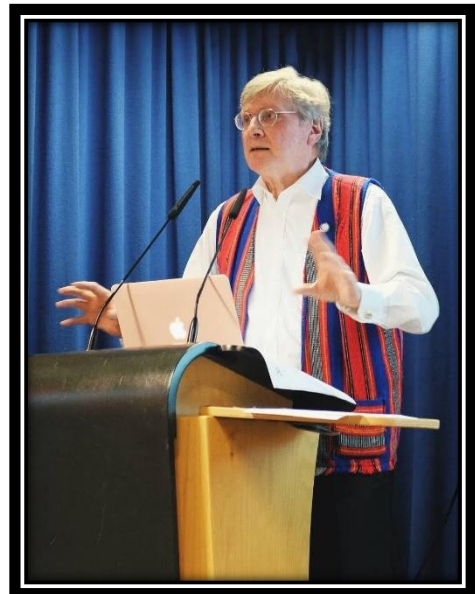
Some companies are changing plane



Observer: Christian Kirsch, Germany, on the International Delphic Council and the European Delphiade

Mr. Kirsch described his interesting backstory as a student of art, handicrafts, and history, and later a financial advisor. He later was inspired to create the Delphic Games as a way to unite art and people all over the world together. The Games occur locally and internationally every four years. The Delphic Games is an evaluation of arts as a promotion of peace and unification throughout the globe.

A description of the Delphic Games was followed by a 2 minutes video.



Karen Humle, Denmark (Violin performance)

Ms. Humle performed an improvised violin piece by which she asked the audience to express words in regards to what they made of the previous presentations. Audience members stated their specific words, and she performed improvised pieces that accompanied their reactions. The performance was riveting, powerful, and extremely intimate. Video of the performance needs to be accessed through her personally. She can be contacted at karenhumble@gmail.com.



September 18th, 2021

Online: Marie-Louise von Plessen, Germany/France on «Le malade imaginaire: Who is the doctor and who is the patient? Cancel culture affecting cultural identities infected by Corona

- Effects of lockdown on culture, work activities
- Cancel culture and woke culture movement has restricted interaction
- Positive effects of vaccination on bringing back cultural activities, but part of the human touch has been lost
- We must set new values using the media



Peter Hanke, Denmark

Rehabilitate the Elite
Roaring 20s?
Enlighten Europe

Big time the workers
We represent the cultural elite, we have responsibility
Noblesse Oblige with strange future and courage
Connected the idea (yesterday) artists as a citizen



Laura Kolbe, Finland “Winners and losers? Europe’s new order after the pandemic in the light of historic experience”

- Covid opened up a new relationship to cities and urban areas
 - Cities benefit from the crisis sooner or later because new opportunities and platforms are created
 - Looking at how past plagues created problems for the elites of Europe
 - The responsibility of the educated elite
- The Garden City Concept
 - How to mix the benefits of the town and those of the countryside
- What came out of previous crises in Europe?
 - Reinvention of the city and its basic structures
 - Public buildings, parks were recreated to accommodate the new rising upper class
- Megacities - post corona future cities?
 - Not as simple as bigger = better
 - Urban development has somewhat stalled in Europe and is happening in other places
 - Importance of resilience - reform - revolution - reform for the European soul
 - Need for greenery, ecological thinking, artistic need to create pressure on those who create the future of cities



Online: Lyudmila Nurse, UK, on “The Covid generation”

- Accounts of time are situation within social interactions, environments, landscapes and ongoing biographies
- For some, time has flown by during lockdowns, but for others it felt like an eternity
- Daily routines changed drastically, and many reclaimed and reconnected with their homes and worked to create more livable spaces that reconnected their presents with their pasts
 - Homes became multifunctional spaces
- Changes of communication, both the modes we used and well as the language we used to describe the situation we were in



- Access to education for the covid generations
 - Unequal access to educational resources through distance and home learning
 - Sources of education inequalities - parental occupation, migrational background, sex, spatial segregation
- Building blocks of the future
 - Lost and found connections to culture, heritage, places where people lives
 - Books, films, music
 - Forgotten episodes and people - people remembered the things they wanted to do
 - Treasured moments in lives

Kelly Haggerty, ECP Future Generation, on the Mentor program & Nicolae Viorel Burcea, on the Status of the ECP Future Generation

Ms. Haggerty gave a presentation by which she outlined the Mentorship program of three ECP Future Generation artists and their ECP mentors. She focused on their art and separate videos of their work. Afterwards, Mr. Burcea discussed the state of affairs of the current ECP Future Generation. He outlined the difficulty in maintaining a strong executive board that was sustainable for long term success for the ECP-FG, the difficulty in developing more concrete annual meetings for the ECP-FG artists, and the difficulty in utilizing the parent association in giving access to the younger members for promotion, mentorship, and communication between the organization. He called for a further reassessment of the group and a better alignment of goals and participation between the two groups.



Final discussion and possible conclusions, including possible future ECP session.

Notice!

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All presentations are uploaded to a public google drive accessible to all members. Please feel free to utilize the PowerPoints/pdfs of individual speakers in order to have a better and more in-depth understanding of the topics discussed at the conference.

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