

Global Citizen

HUMAN RIGHTS
IN TODAY'S
WORLD



Living in an-

EU
VALUES?

ISSUE # 1—DECEMBER 2015

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Letter from the editor:

Dear readers,

On behalf of our team, I welcome all to our first issue of "Global Citizen".

This issue is specially dedicated to all the participants of "Are we Equal" Youth Exchange, that took place in Cyprus 10-18 December 2015.

Our magazine's goal is to introduce special news for all global citizens around the world...and we hope that is an "appetizer" for what will come next...

Enjoy it !!!!

Regards,

Elena Vanger

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To EU or not to EU?

Regardless of where you live, the European Union not only affects your life, but may also transform it. By learning how Europe works, a new world will open up to you and discover new jobs you never heard of. The European Union has a large, yet often unnoticed, impact on many aspects of everybody's life.

What are the European values?

It is quite clear from a quick look at this strip of vision that the EU sees itself as a community of value. Historically speaking, the three most important values on which the EU was founded, in which the EU has tried to promote beyond its borders, have been respect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law.

I would however argue that at minimum from the point of view of the EU, if you try to define these three values, I would say that from the point of view from the EU, democracy stands for representative democracy, a system of governance where elected officials draw their legitimacy and authority from free and regular elections. Regarding the rule of law, one may say that, from the point of view of the EU, it stands for a set of legal principles such as the principle of legality, legal certainty, or access to independent and impartial courts. Finally, but not least, by respect for human rights, the E.U. understands legal guarantees and remedies, with a view of insuring respect for individual civil and political rights, but also economic and social rights.

EU's expansionism

The larger the EU becomes, the more important it is for the people who live in it to realise that their union has been built on common values. In its nearly 60 years of

history, the union has achieved nothing more magnificent than enlargement, which has helped to spread democracy, stability, security and prosperity across most of the continent. Enlargement is not only good for the countries that have joined the union, but also for those already in it. Economically, enlargement creates a bigger market and allows more economic specialisation therefore encouraging economic growth. Strategically, it gives the union more weight in the world.

I hope the EU keeps its doors open, and one day embraces Ukraine, Moldova, Armenia and Georgia when those countries are ready. But enlargement does bring problems, which we are beginning to see. First, the political culture of some of the new members leaves much to be desired. However, the governance of these countries is more likely to improve if they are inside the union than outside.

United in diversity

Second, the union now contains countries that are geographically distant from one another, and which have experienced very different histories. To some extent geography determines interests. Historical experience also shapes perceptions of national self-interest. Thus in a broader union it may become harder for the member-states to forge common policies and approaches. The peoples at one end of the European continent may feel very different to those at the other end. When Ukraine experienced its "orange revolution" in 2004 and later Euromaidan in 2014 following by an armed conflict in the Eastern part of the country those in Poland and the Baltic states felt directly involved. Spaniards, so much further away and more focused on north Africa, did not.

Benefits

Some federalists would argue that enlargement is already turning the EU into little more than an "Anglo-Saxon" free trade area, with weak political institutions. It is true that few of the 27 governments favour the traditional federalist agenda of building an ever-closer union through the creation of strong supranational institutions. Perhaps Belgians and Luxembourgers think that way, as do some Germans, Italians and Dutch.

But these days most European countries see the union less as a noble cause that requires emotional commitment, and more as a tool that helps national governments to deliver benefits - a single market, action against global warming, influence over the European neighbourhood - that no single country can achieve on its own.

I think there are such things as European values, rather than simply western or universal values. Most European values are the same as those held by people in many other parts of the world. Europeans values are more social. The Berlin declaration mentions solidarity as a European principle. European values are also more secular and liberal. Europeans tend to support the idea of a rules-based system of global governance, and strong international institutions.

Objections

Apparently, along with its benefits the EU has disadvantages. Many people see the EU as an economic union with a pragmatic agenda focused on gaining

financial benefits in favour of its members even not always to each of them. People may say that the English have more in common with Australia than they do with Croats. I think there is also a strong feeling of loss of control which bothers a lot of people. People say that there are too many differences to unify Europe into a single identity. How many people consider themselves "Europeans" first and foremost? Nevertheless I presume, that with nearly 60th birthday, The European Union should congratulate itself on its achievements, such as enlargement and the common currency - the euro - thus be proud of its values which are in their essence universal for every human being.

By Oleg Chankotadze



Human Rights in to-

Nowadays we often hear the phrase *human rights*. We hear about their promotion in some new national policy, or perhaps about their violations through the media. But what are they exactly? Are they legally binding? Do they apply to all of us?

Let's go back to the beginning (at least the beginning of human rights as we know them today in the west.. for the notion of rights for all has been long coming!)

After all the atrocities of the second world war, in December of 1948, the United Nations gave birth to the Universal Declaration of HR. This declaration had 30 articles and was the first of its kind in that it did not speak of a particular country, but rather of humans universally, thereby extending these rights to any human at birth.

Since the declaration did not bind any states to adhere to it, several conventions have been created over the years which once signed by individual states were legally binding: ie the states vowed they will safeguard these rights in their states, and that if they didn't, legal action could be taken against them. This is very important to keep in mind when understanding Human Rights in that one may appreciate that it is the states obligation to make sure your human rights are being protected!

By Rachael Tedesco Triccas

The only problem was and still is that states may actually decide to leave specific parts out of their signed convention... therefore minimizing the entirety of the convention. For example, The Convention about the Elimination of Discrimination against Women although promotes the same notions, does not give the same rights to all women in all ratified states. In this sense then, the idea of universal human rights has already started to diffuse, even among the states which have signed (let alone among those who have no yet signed!)

What is our responsibility as individuals then?

1- Get informed – How can you know how to protect yourself if you don't know your rights? It will only take a few minutes to read through a summary of the articles, to have an idea!

2- We are all alike in dignity – Understand that these human rights do not only give you protections, but also obligations to act in certain ways towards others.

3- Recognize the value of your rights! – Most may take many of their human rights for granted, but many of the freedoms are not enjoyed by all. Make full use of your rights, and use them for the promotion of the rights of those whose voices are muted by their governments. Don't underestimate signing a petition or sharing certain campaigns through your social media! You can help to make a difference!



How to: Live abroad

In order to make your life easier and avoid facing unnecessary problems while living abroad we interviewed two persons who have experience of living in other countries for continuous period of time.

Marios Efthymiou. Was born in South Africa, currently lives in Cyprus.

- Moved to USA because of criminal violence thriving in South Africa;
- Has been working in America for two years;
- Had not faced any major problem in US except lack of certain types of food;
- Had never felt himself as a foreigner in US. The only measure he was judged by were knowledge, skills and competences;
- People going for other countries have to consider two important aspects: cost of living in foreign country and to be ready to accept local customs, traditions and way of life.
- Don't try to impose your culture into a country you just moved to!



Froso Christofides. Was born and currently lives in Cyprus.

- Went for studying to UK and then to the Netherlands;
- Has been living in UK for 3 years and 2,5 in the Netherlands;
- Faced problems in renting apartment in the Netherlands. Landlord did not believe that a student had enough money to pay for rent;
- Enjoyed time in UK and the Netherlands. Especially in the Netherlands people are very welcoming and warm to foreign students. Did not experience any cultural shock;
- People going abroad are advised to socialize with local friends and do not get closed only in national communities. Be open to a new society and ready to accept it's rules.

By Shota Todua



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