



# The Peaceful Times

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Why do we still violate human rights in the 21st century?

Human rights are the rights that every person is entitled to simply by the virtue of being human. Human rights are decisions we make on a daily basis and they were discussed since the ancient times but throughout years the concept of human rights has changed a lot. In any time of history we needed human rights because they give us a moral vision of human nature and human dignity. If we feel annoyed with something we have the right to speak free. That's the thing about human rights, when they are being respected they go almost unnoticed. We often take our human rights for granted because they are based on principles that are dignity, equality and respect. The reality has shown that violence, poverty and intolerance around the world results in daily violation of human dignity. That is why human rights are protected by both national and international awareness of human rights violations. But is this enough? Do we live in a society where every single person's human rights are respected?

The answer is no. Even in the rich and developed countries nobody can say that they have reached perfection in giving to their people the human rights they deserve, because violations exist in every part of the world. In some countries people face discrimination based on their gender, religion, sexual preference, race or age. And in other countries people face even "crimes against humanity, including genocide, torture, slavery, rape, enforced sterilization or medical experimentation and starvation. Unfortunately human rights abuse is present every where around the world where human rights are denied and people are imprisoned even for what they think or believe. Civilians are targeted at times of war. Children are forced to fight. Rape is used as a weapon. That is why it is important not to take our human rights for granted, because we often stand up only when our rights are being abused and we don't take a look to what happens to each other. The violation of human rights still happens because most of the governments only provide human rights in paper in their legislation while the reality is very different. What we need to do is to raise our voices, not suffer in silence and let others disrespect our primary human rights. There are a lot of organizations that help us with these problems, from how to stand up for yourself, to how to act in that type of situations. Also we shouldn't be passive or just observe and let discrimination or violations of someone's rights to be our everyday life without helping the victim. We shouldn't allow that kind of behavior towards individuals to be considered as normal. We should stand up for each other's rights as well as for ours because sometimes all you need is a push to help you fight against injustice.

atheism Allah Orthodox Agnostic Judaism Belief koran

— Adela Methasani, Lea Vrhovnik and Ivona Saveska

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## Tips for living in another country

by MADALINA SIMION

We all felt misunderstood or marginalized at some points in our lives, even in our own society. While it is true that a foreign country makes that even more difficult, the benefits of such an adventure are worth it. And I'm telling you that from my personal experience. I would like to share that with you in order to make your integration easier, but also in order to highlight the fact that if you have such an opportunity, go for it, because it will transform you in a new person.

Do your homework! Before you decide to live in another country research it thoroughly. This way you will, first of all, have a solid base for a good decision. Choose a place where you believe you could happily live in. If you don't get to choose the foreign country research is even more important. Learning about the habits, the cultural roots, traditions, religion, education, even politic and economic situation is essential for a newcomer. Try to learn the local language or at least show that you are interested in it and in the local culture. Research enables you not to offend someone without even knowing it. Also, understanding the way people think will help you to better integrate, by creating more and meaningful friendships.

Reach out to people! Try to get as involved as possible in all sorts of events: parties, cultural days, sports, concerts, and educational fairs. You could sign up as a volunteer for an NGO. It is a great way of making friends and giving even more sense to living in the new country. Don't be shy! Everyone will be excited to meet someone from a new culture! But also, don't be disappointed if someone refuses to befriend you. Some people are still scared and unprepared, or just not so open minded to accept foreigners. Don't take things personally. Whatever you do there are still going to be some people who will marginalize you. In some cases they might offend you, either intentionally or not. But these will be the exceptions, I promise! Some of my

best friends are international friends and I can tell you it's a great experience. Also, a local person could come in handy, while trying to learn about the local culture and habits.

Adaptation vs. Individualization (the cultural shock). One of my dilemmas while living abroad was to what extent should I manifest my own culture, and to what extent should I adapt. Of course, culture defines you, so you should not abandon it, because of social pressure. Don't forget / ignore your cultural heritage. It is one valuable asset and it makes you more interesting. Just be very careful to practice it in a polite and respectful manner. Create a mindset of tolerance and openness to the new culture.

Accept the differences! Although initially you will be excited about the new place there might be some things that will bother you after a while. You will remember how everything was easier and familiar at home. My advice is: don't panic. Take it as a challenge to play by the new rules and accept the little imperfections. It will make you and everybody else happier.

Appreciate your experience to the fullest! Not everyone has the chance to live in another country and enlarge their horizons by discovering a different culture. Such an experience is rewarding and helps you become a better person. Living in a new country can be amazing or it could be awful, but in the end it all depends on your attitude!

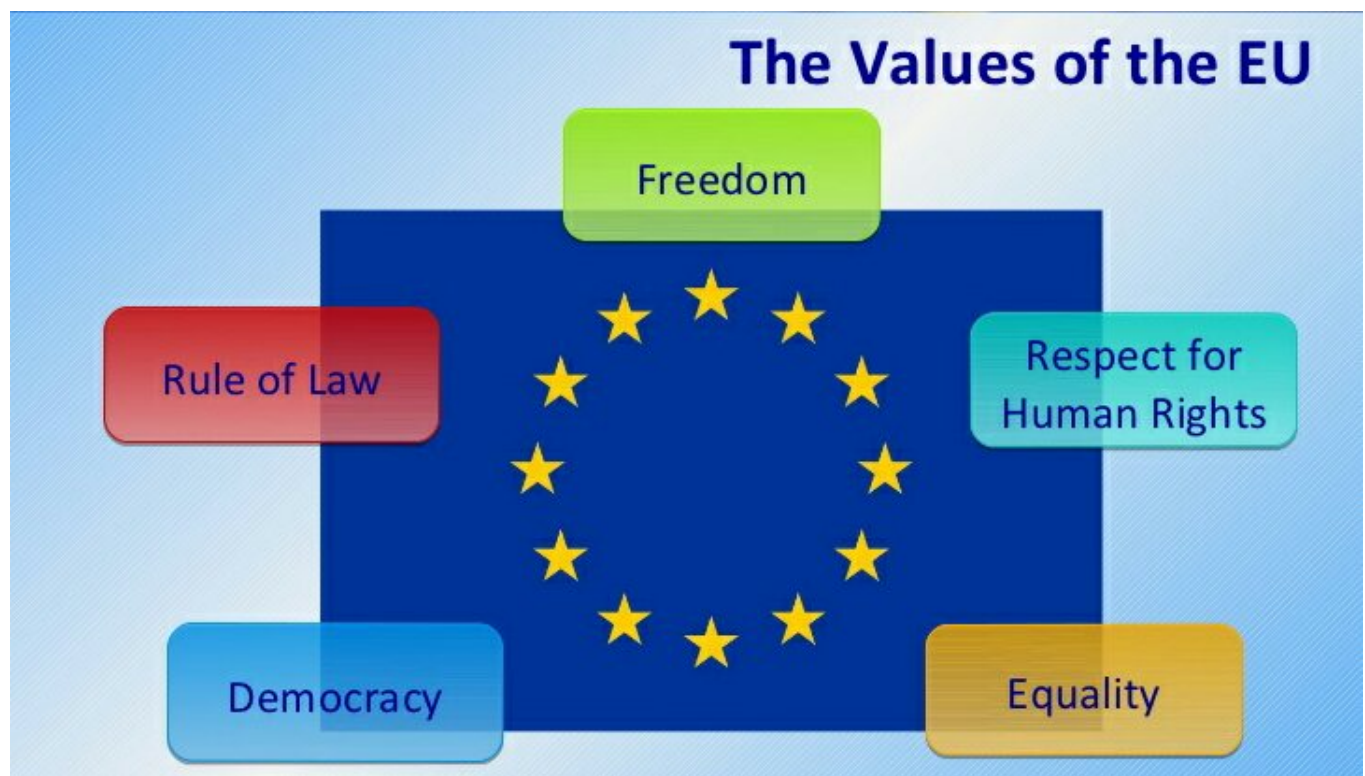
## What are the European Union values?

by PETRA CAJKOVA AND ANNA SIEDLECKA

These values are something that each country, which is a member of the European Union has to follow. The Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, liberty, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. The EU values are counted in Treaty of Lisbon. They play a critical part in the selection of new EU members. Human rights are independent of any re-

ligion, so they are universal for each person. The values are appreciating diversity. They see diversity like a new value and they emphasize it in official language of European Union (all languages of countries in EU are official language), they are also searching general things in the countries in European Union. These values are common to the Member States. Moreover, the societies of Member States are characterized by pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men. In comparison with other continents, it is much easier to see what are the typical European values, on which the main aim of European union was based on. Since 1951 the countries of Europe are trying to establish integration, cooperation and make a union of policies of each of the countries to ensure the free movement of people, goods and capitals, enact legalization in justice and home affairs. European union is unique because it is cooperation of countries with different history, religion, lan-

guages. The countries with different living and economical conditions follow common values of European union in their own way. Democracy is the first value mentioned in Denmark as is individual freedom in Austria. In Italy, these first two values- respect for human life and human rights are followed by them as the most important values. The rule of law is very widely mentioned in Slovenia. Peace as the most important value is followed in Germany, Luxembourg, Malta and Greece. Respect for human rights is identified mainly by Ireland, Bulgaria and Romania. Cyprus is following the respect for human life in second place after respect for human rights. It is very important to mention partner countries of EU and their point of view on the most followed values. In Serbia as the first value is considered democracy. Turkey is known as an exception on following mostly religion than respect for human rights and human life. The rule of law is followed by Montenegro, Iceland and Croatia.



*An interesting caption to this drab picture...*

UE democracy, how it works and how it protects us

by SILVIA ALESSI

It is assumed that European Union's origins go back to the promulgation of the Treaty of Maastricht. Actually, that was just the consolidation of a series of phases begun half one century earlier. It was 1950 when the former French minister of foreign affairs, J.N.R. Schuman, thanks to his historical speech, laid foundation about what we know, nowadays, as European Union. Such revolutionary project - a Federacy, initially - dealt with a plan of permanent cooperation among those European countries that were suffering from the devastating consequences of Second World War aimed at recovering and, above all, preventing another appalling international conflict from outbreak. Economical integration was carried out by sharing the production and the trade of coal and steel, as first. From European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) afterward, integration has turned into a peace - keeping guarantee in Europe since, when there are policies in common, war is inconvenient. Secondly, integra-

tion gradually expanded so as to include not merely commercial issues but even cultural, humanitarian and social ones. Furthermore, in 1995 Schengen Agreement was effective. The objective of a borderless Europe endowed with free goods, capitals, service and people movement was eventually fulfilled. European Citizenship (introduced by the Treaty of EU) is acquired by birth. Accordingly, UE citizens are entitled to take advantage of a wide range of rights: that is unquestionably a new, peculiar sort of democratic citizenship, in terms of top - down institutional relations. Common policies system led to decision - making rules into the Union, which take into account the needs of the member states as a whole as well as the voice of the single citizens. I am referring to the vote proceedings in force in EU governance, which gradually changed from unanimity to qualified pondering voting majority (except from those policies such as foreign affairs and security, PESC, which still adopt unanimity method), based on the population of each country. QVM gives more stability by reducing the likelihood of paralyzing the processes and, moreover, protects the smallest, less influential countries through

the blocking minority option. However, the most successful achievement for democracy in European Union is the universal and direct suffrage election of the Parliament, which took place in 1979 for the very first time. Thus every European has been given the right to choose his/her representatives. In the last decades several organs representing the local communities and their demands, such as committees, were born. EU Commission is claimed to be the most appropriate medium for lobbies and civil society's concerns due to its role of legislative initiative. Democracy is, according to UE main charters and daily institutional procedures, a core element for legitimacy. It is generally asserted by the experience that exists a logical connection between democracy and legitimacy as this one springs from a feeling of belonging which only a reliable democracy is able to convey. In conclusion, democracy is a fundamental value in European Union, which works through an open, often direct, representation of interests, national delegations and the absence of police checks along the internal boundaries. These are the most important institutes granting protection to us in a democratic way.

# Religions in the world



Allah  
Catholics  
Church  
Koran  
Protestant

Christians  
Belief  
God  
Muslims  
Buddhism

Faith  
Atheism  
Agnostic  
Orthodox  
Judaism

Hinduism

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