

"Old" Europe's Values

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The attacks perpetrated in the United States on 11 September 2001 were an act of international terrorism and a crime against all humanity. They are a challenge to the international community as a whole. The response should be deliberate, just, and humane. 11 September forces us in the 'West', including the mothers and fathers of the EU Constitutional Treaty, which is in the making, to reflect on and ensure the innermost mechanisms that hold our societies together. It is one more reason for us to think about what we owe to our globe and how the future should be shaped.

By forging a war "coalition of the willing" against Iraq and putting aside the UN as *quantité négligeable*, U.S. policy does not observe moral principles and demonstrate leadership qualities this nation is capable of manifesting. Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld's remark that it was only "Old Europe" that opposed the U.S. plan to attack Iraq produced a sharp reaction from France and Germany. With Graham E. Fuller one may ask who really represents the "old" thinking here?



Prof. Holtz is Vice-President of the German and of the European Association of Former MPs. He was Chair of the German Bundestag committee on development cooperation, 1974-1994, and of the Council of Europe's parliamentary committee on economic affairs and development, 1992-1995.

About one hundred former members of parliament met in Rome on 30 November 2002 to discuss "Common European Values". They represented the European Association of Former Members of Parliament of the Member States of the Council of Europe or the European Union and its 13 national associations of former MPs. They adopted "The Declaration of Rome" which was forwarded, among others, to President Giscard d'Estaing and the German members of the European Convention. The most important and striking parts are presented in the following.

The EU Constitutional Treaty should reflect the common European values that shape our societies and politics and enable the European Union to be built on sound foundations. Very often, the roots of European values are hidden behind the imprecise term "spiritual and moral heritage" (cf. Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU). There are many historic roots: Greco-Roman and Celtic civilizations, the Judaism, Christianity and its evolutions, the contribution of the Arab culture in the Middle Ages, humanism, the Reformation, and the Age of Enlightenment, political and social evolutions and revolutions throughout Europe, contemporary social movements for emancipation and participation.

The point is, for the very first time, to make a synthesis of all the experiences of the European continent, which have sometimes taken a heavy toll in civil and human terms. Wars, dictatorships and the barbarism and atrocities caused by aggressive nationalism in Europe led the Europeans to undertake a commitment as democrats: to guarantee peace, fight against dictatorship, curb exaggerated nationalism and ensure respect for international law.

The community with shared values includes a group of values both universal and European. One could classify them as democratic, social, economic, ecological, cultural and ethical values, aiming to reconcile public and individual interests.

On top of those values is human dignity: it is the noblest value, the central value in democracy. It is based on a perception of man as an individual, integrating naturally in social life. It highlights the essential value that is liberty, and which applies to acts of life and the development of social life, and gave birth to law, the rule of law, and the system of secular and democratic government of society. Certain fundamentalist concepts deny political pluralism and equal rights for women and men. Their followers wish to apply their notions to the socio-political sphere. The former MPs denounce such attempts, which contradict common European values and democracy. On the other hand, they issued a heartfelt appeal for tolerance, humanism and intercultural dialogue. >>>

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The former MPs are convinced that the common values on which the European Union should be built are: dignity of the human person, equality between men and women, liberty and responsibility, democracy and the rule of law, solidarity and social justice, protection of nature, tolerance, respect of minorities and of cultural diversities as well as peace and cooperation between peoples. Among the values that characterise the political identity of Europe, the Declaration mentions: the European social model, the common cultural heritage enhanced by its diversity, the construction of an increasingly close-knit political, economic, monetary and social union, a system of protection of human rights (under the umbrella of the Council of Europe) that is unique in the world, the promotion of peace and the pre-eminence of law in international relations.

To be able to unite all Europeans around the pillars that constitute these values, it is necessary to continue the unification process in Europe and to strengthen the role of parliaments and to give a greater say to the European Parliament in particular. All should be done to avoid a new split in Europe: between the EU and the others. That's why a better cooperation between the EU and the Greater Europe, for which the Council of Europe with its 45 member states stands, is required.

Condemn anti-values

The former parliamentarians deplore the fact that some of the values or democratic principles like the pluralism of the media are in danger or even not respected in Europe. They condemn anti-values such as racism, xenophobia, chauvinism, anti-Semitism, religious fanaticism, violence and machismo. These phenomena are not exclusively European, even if they exist in extreme forms in various regions of Europe. All the European institutions and all individuals are urged to fight against these anti-values. The best guarantee for driving back them is education in democratic values and the fight against poverty, social exclusion and unemployment. They call for a European Charter for genuine democracy, for parliamentary codes of conduct and the recognition of an active civil society and its non-governmental organisations as an important and indispensable element in pluralist and participatory democracy to strengthen the participation of citizens in political life.

As pointed out in the Rome Declaration the evolution of the world in every field imposes the construction of an integrated Europe, which is more influential at world level than the sum of its component parts. That is particularly the case for seeking and maintaining peace, the political and peaceful solution of international conflicts, scientific policy, defence policy and development cooperation. All institutions must cooperate resolutely and with respect for law in facing up to terrorism, political violence and organized crime, which constitute the most serious crimes in terms of harm to the freedom and peaceful life of citizens.

On the international plane, certain countries are tending to by-pass the international institutions charged with finding peaceful solutions to international conflicts. This attitude constitutes a genuine threat to our common values, argue the former MPs. They are convinced that a more unified Europe will be in a position to face up to the challenges of globalization, not only in the economic and social, but also in the political and legal fields. In their view it is necessary to promote the globalization of democratic values and a social and ecological market economy where sustainable human development and the rights of future generations form the reference point in a worldwide policy that offers a decent life to all human beings, both for present and future generations. The specific European values can provide impetus, and serve as a source of inspiration to a global society that respects the basic requirements of human civilization as well as a balanced sharing of prosperity.

A thorough analysis of the Rome Declaration could lead to the assumption that it is the U. S. that stands for "old" values, and that France and Germany represent "New Europe" - or even "the coming world". → **KOMMUNIKATION GLOBAL** ■

Donald Rumsfeld
U.S. Defence Secretary



"Germany has been a problem, and France has been a problem," said Rumsfeld, a former NATO ambassador. "But you look at vast numbers of other countries in Europe. They're not with France and Germany on this, they're with the United States."

Germany and France represent "old Europe," and NATO's expansion in recent years means "the center of gravity is shifting to the east," Rumsfeld said.

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