

A CHARTA OF EUROPEAN IDENTITY

I. EUROPE AS A COMMUNITY OF DESTINY

Europe is a community of destiny

The process of European civilisation set in motion by us and our forebears has led to a stage in our development in which we are all dependent on one another.

We can accept this common destiny, or we can shape it.

The maintenance of peace, the conservation of the environment, and the means to enable people to live their lives with dignity all demand common policies. Unifying Europe is our response to past suffering and the challenge of history.

All Europeans are called upon to work responsibly together to build a peaceful European order.

II. EUROPE AS A COMMUNITY OF VALUES

Europe is above all a community of values.

The aim of European unification is to realize, test, develop and safeguard these values. They are rooted in common legal principles acknowledging the freedom of the individual and social responsibility. Fundamental European values are based on tolerance humanity and fraternity. Building on its historical roots in classical antiquity and Christianity, Europe further developed these values during the course of the Renaissance, the Humanist movement, and the Enlightenment, which led in turn to the development of democracy, the recognition of fundamental and human rights. and the rule of law. The great currents of culture and art, scientific discoveries and their application for the general good, and the critical analysis of accepted views and perceptions have all had the effect that we can now live and work together in peace, liberty and free from want. Europe has spread these values throughout the world. Thus our Continent became the mother of revolutions in the modern world.

Europe has repeatedly called these values into question and offended against them. After an age of unrestrained nationalism, imperialism and totalitarianism, Europeans worked to

establish freedom, justice and democracy as the principles for international relations, thereby opening the way to a free and peaceful future, though until recently the division of our Continent made it impossible for all European countries to take part.

The diversity in European development and the need for our common future to take a creative form both demand that our international order should be federal in structure, thereby stimulating a sense of common purpose and an awareness of a shared European identity. European identity requires the free exchange of persons and ideas, and finds its expression in the common protection of our values. The 1950 Convention for Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, the EC Charter of Fundamental Social Rights of 1989. and the creation of European Union citizenship constitute important steps in this direction. For the citizens, democracy in the European Union must become a living reality.

III.

EUROPE AS A COMMUNITY OF LIFE

In order for the European Union to become a citizens' Europe it must develop into a tangible, living community.

To that end, citizens must be given the chance to participate more fully in the process of European unification. The democratic and federal structures must therefore be strengthened and individual decision-making procedures and policies made more transparent. All citizens must be informed of important proposals for reforms at an early stage, and be involved in the public debate.

For this the European Union needs a clear and easily-understandable constitution which unambiguously sets out the rights and duties of both citizens and member states, which accurately describes the responsibilities and functions of the institutions, and which enables everyone to adopt Europe's fundamental values as their own.

A cultural and education policy fostering European identity is necessary for the Union and its member states. While drawing attention to our common roots and values, as well as to Europe's diversity, the aims must be to develop a spirit of tolerance towards other people and cultures, to convince all citizens of the European idea, and to enable them to play their part in the process of European unification. Mutual understanding between European citizens must be fostered by introducing foreign language learning even in pre-school years.

A unified Europe implies further developing European citizenship to the point at which all citizens in all member states have the same rights and duties.

IV.

EUROPE AS AN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMUNITY:

ECONOMY, SOCIAL POLICY, ENVIRONMENT

After two terrible world wars, the opportunity for a fundamentally new form of politics was grasped in Europe.

The first step was when six countries founded the European Coal and Steel Community in which basic industries important for the conduct of war were placed under a common authority. From this beginning came the European Economic Community, and eventually the European Union, in a process which led to peace between the member states and a higher standard of living than any previous Generation in Europe had experienced.

The division of Europe, however, remained an open sore till at last the system which had dominated the East for half a century collapsed, partly as a result of its own inner contradictions but also because it permitted neither a free economy nor individual responsibility or enterprise.

The driving force behind European unification was economic, though at the same time it has become clear that achievement in this field alone is insufficient for the development of a European identity. Despite economic success, something is obviously missing at present. Trade and industry exist to serve the people, so the social objectives of the economy must be identifiable.

An exemplary social community is an essential aspect of European identity and would lead - for reasons of solidarity - to funds, resources and prosperity being shared between all parts of Europe, the most urgent goal for the European Union being to eliminate unemployment.

The system of taxation must be transparent, easy to understand, and fairly balanced within the Union.

Protecting the environment and conserving natural resources, and thereby safeguarding our common habitation, has become central to Europe's responsibilities. Europe - where the industrial revolution began - must set an example in its environmental policies and initiate worldwide joint action to ensure that our planet remains a fit place for our children to inhabit.

V.

EUROPE AS A COMMUNITY OF RESPONSIBILITY

In today's world, in which we have all become interdependent, the European Union carries a particular responsibility.

Our continent has close economic ties with many regions of the world. Conflicts and crises whether within or beyond our continent threaten all European states and citizens alike. Only through cooperation, solidarity and unity Europe can effectively help to solve world problems. Discord in European policies would be irresponsible and can only lead to chaos.

Global responsibility has various dimensions. It means responsible cooperation in conflict prevention and mediation within the scope of the common foreign and security policy. However, this also includes conducting trade and ecological negotiations with other regions of the world in a fair and helpful manner.

In accordance with its values and its policy of peaceful integration, the European Union should set an example, in particular in relation to upholding human rights and the protection of minorities. By this means, Europe can remain true to its own heritage.

It is in the European Union's own interest to open the door to those central and south-eastern European states which declare themselves in favour of a united Europe and its values, and to support their application for membership. In the United Nations, the European Union must speak with one voice and be prepared to undertake a greater degree of responsibility for the peaceful development of the world.

VI.

TOWARDS A EUROPEAN IDENTITY

In accordance with these aims, and on the basis of practical and credible policies, we hold the following items to be essential to the growth, within the framework of the European Union, of a European identity:

- a succinct and easily understandable constitution of the European Union setting out its federal structure. a binding catalogue of common fundamental and human rights, and guaranteed social rights. The constitution would be presented to the citizens for ratification,
- further extension of citizenship rights;
- a common economic, social and environmental policy whose overall aim must be to provide work for all and to protect our planet against further environmental pollution;

- a common cultural and education policy to foster a sense of European identity in the European Union and its member states. promoting unity in diversity and common values for all citizens.
- Being a European is not a question of birth, but of education;
- the promotion of multi-lingualism. All Europeans should learn foreign languages as early as possible. European citizens must be able to understand each other;
- a declaration of the political goals to which the European Union aspires. Without damaging its many-sided heritage the European Union must follow common policies in world affairs.

Freedom, peace, the dignity of mankind, equality and social justice are our greatest goods. To protect and further develop these aims, Europe needs a morally acceptable political structure and policies which strengthen the sense of common purpose while establishing the credibility of the European Union and making its citizens proud to be Europeans. When that point has been reached, then a stronger, more European identity will also exist.

To the birth of the Charter:

In a speech to the European Parliament on March 8th, 1994, the poet Václav Havel, President of the Czech Republic, indicated the need for a Charter of European Identity. The idea was taken up by Europa-Union Deutschland which, at its 40th Congress held in Bremen on 5.11.94, decided to undertake the work of producing such a Charter. For this purpose a working group met on 17-19 February in Cursdorf (Thuringia) with the task of drawing up the first draft. After the publication of this draft in the Europäische Zeitung and the public presentation of the text at a symposium held in the House of Deputies, Berlin, on May 6th, 1995, wide-ranging discussions took place inside Europa-Union, in which the European Federation for Education and Science and members of the European Union of Journalists were also involved. During this process more than 500 draft amendments were submitted. The working group then held a second meeting in Bonn on September 9th, 1995, to study these suggestions and work on their second draft of the Charter.

This draft was then debated once again at the 41st Congress of Europa-Union Deutschland in Lübeck. October 27-28th, 1995, and passed on October 28th, 1995, with only two votes against.

This Charter - which discusses Europe under the headings of its destiny, values, living standards, economic and social policies, and responsibilities - aims to stimulate a wide-ranging debate of these issues in order that we may achieve a Union which is closer to its citizens, committed to common policies " *based on solidarity, credible, and capable of making its citizens proud to be Europeans*" .

Václav Havel

About European Identity

The European Union is based on a large set of values, with roots in antiquity and in Christianity which over 2.000 years evolved into what we recognize today as the foundations of modern democracy, the rule of law, and civil society. This set of values has its own clear moral foundation and its obvious metaphysical roots, regardless of whether modern man admits it or not. Thus it cannot be said that the European Union lacks its own spirit from which all the concrete principles on which it is founded grow. It appears, though, that this spirit is rather difficult to see. It seems too hidden behind the mountains of systemic, technical, administrative, economic, monetary and other measures that contain it. And thus, in the end, many people might be left with the understandable impression that the European Union - to put it a bit crudely - is no more than endless arguments over how many carrots can be exported from somewhere, who sets the amount, who checks it and who eventually, punishes the delinquents who contravenes the regulations. That is why it seems to me that perhaps the most important task facing the European Union today is coming up with a new and genuinely clear reflection on what might be called European identity, a new and genuinely clear articulation of European responsibility, an intensified interest in the very meaning of European integration in all its wider implications for the contemporary world, and the recreation of its ethos or, if you like, its charisma.

Simply reading the Maastricht Treaty, despite its historical importance, will hardly win enthusiastic supporters for the European Union. Nor will it win patriots, people who will genuinely experience this complex organism as their native land or their home, or as one aspect of their home. If this great administrative work, which obviously should simplify life for all Europeans, is to hold together and stand various tests of time, then it must be visibly bonded by more than a set of rules and regulations ...

I would welcome it, for instance, if the European Union were to establish a charter of its own that would clearly define the ideas on which it is founded, its meaning and the values it intends to embody.. If the citizens of Europe understand that this is not just an anonymous bureaucratic monster that wants to limit or even deny their autonomy, but simply a new type of human community that actually broadens their freedom significantly, then the European Union need not fear for its future... "

(Extract from the speech made by the President of the Czech Republic to the European Parliament in Strasbourg on March 8th, 1994)

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