



FOR New Narrative Europe

THE MIND AND BODY OF EUROPE

As artists, intellectuals and scientists, and first and foremost as citizens, it is our responsibility to join the debate on the future of Europe, especially now, when so much is at stake. Confidence in Europe needs to be regained. In light of the current global trends, the values of human dignity and democracy must be reaffirmed. Populist and nationalist narratives must not prevail.

The Mind and Body of Europe is our response to the call of the European Parliament and of the President of the European Commission to draft a new narrative for Europe for all citizens. This document is not a point of arrival. Rather it is a catalyst that we hope will trigger more contributions to the debate.

We believe that for there to be a true and well-functioning political body in Europe, an understanding of what Europe as a “state of mind” stands for is vital. We also know that a narrative tying Europe’s distant and recent past to the present and providing a vision for the future is equally essential.

Europe is a state of mind formed and fostered by its spiritual, philosophical, artistic and scientific inheritance, and driven by the lessons of history. It must also now become a genuine and effective political body that has the ability and sensibility to rise to all the challenges and difficulties that European citizens are facing today and will face tomorrow. From youth unemployment to climate change, from immigration to data security, the list is long, and the urgency is even greater.

Europe is a state of mind that goes beyond a grouping of Nation States, an internal market and the geographical contours of a continent. Europe is a moral and political responsibility, which must be carried out, not only by institutions and politicians, but by each and every European. Europe is a source of inspiration from the past, it is emancipation in the present, and an aspiration towards a sustainable future. Europe is an identity, an idea, an ideal.

Europe is a state of mind shared by citizens across the continent. The students, researchers, scholars, artists, professionals and politicians who live, study, work, think and journey across national borders, do so in order to deepen and expand their knowledge, unleash their creativity, and widen their opportunities. They retrace and revive the routes of the men and women who since Antiquity, and increasingly during the Renaissance and the Enlightenment, developed for Europe a shared grammar of music and art, a common body of science and philosophy, an astonishing richness of literature and a flourishing network of trade.

Europe is a state of mind shared by the men and women who, with the force of their beliefs both religious and secular, have always provided light in the darkest hours of European history and have generated new communities of spirit and labour. Over the centuries, individuals have joined together to take part in civic, political and social movements that have defended the rights of those without power, of the marginal, of the outcasts and of those who define themselves as different.

Europe is a state of mind rooted in its shared values of peace, freedom, democracy and rule of law. Today, vigilance is required to continuously reaffirm and build upon those fundamental values and principles that, from the outset, have been deeply embedded in the "raison d'être" of Europe. They need to be reactivated and made relevant for the European citizens of today and tomorrow and protected from internal and external pressures.

Europe is a state of mind that also exists beyond its borders. Multitudes of people are attracted to Europe by its common values and principles. They are encouraged by Europe's achievements and solidarity. At the same time, Europe should never forget that its prosperity in modern times was often tied to colonial conquest and was, therefore, attained at the cost of those from other continents.

EUROPE'S EVOLVING NARRATIVE

Europe's history has been marked by splendours and miseries. Its Jewish, Greco-Roman and Christian foundations were always confronted with the beliefs of other religions and systems of government. Europe's state of mind matured and found a balance only in the modern era and after terrible disasters in the 20th century, leading to the idea of unity in diversity.

In the century spanning from 1914-2014, three fundamental trials and transformations occurred.

• AN END TO WAR

The European integration project was born like a phoenix out of the ashes of World War I and World War II. 100 years ago, Europe lost its soul on the battlefields and in the trenches. Later, it damned itself within the concentration camps and the totalitarian systems associated with extreme nationalism, anti-Semitism, the abolition of democracy and rule of law, the sacrifice of individual freedom and the suppression of civil society. But, since the end of World War II, the ideal of a Europe united by the principle of mutual respect and the values of freedom and democracy has brought redemption. Europe's soul was restored. Today the European integration process stands against all forms of war.

• THE FALL OF THE IRON CURTAIN

1989 marked a new era for Europe. The mobilization of energy, passion and resistance against communist regimes and their obtuse ideology, developed over the years across Central and Eastern Europe. In the years that followed 1989, the value of democracy was reinstated and the free market became a reality across Europe. The establishment of the free circulation of people, goods, services and ideas was an extraordinary victory over mindsets that sought to impose a single vision on reality and raise barriers. The transformation from a polarized Europe to a multi-polar Europe led to a new era of interconnectedness and interaction amongst people and countries. It was the European Union that provided the visionary framework and the sense of purpose that was necessary in responding to the tremendous challenge of reunifying Europe. Europe began to beat as one, its many arteries found a heart.

• THE BURST OF THE BUBBLE

2008 marked the beginning of the economic crisis, which led to the loss of millions of jobs and the rise of unemployment to levels unimaginable in European countries. The dominant narrative of the time, with its belief in the self-regulatory capacity of markets and its celebration of profit-seeking speculation, collided dramatically with reality. The systems of economic and financial control had to take a dramatic turn and were suddenly forced to assume responsibility. The European Union took action to accelerate this shift towards stronger political governance of the financial systems. This now needs to be complemented by stronger insistence on civil governance informed by the joint paradigms of participatory democracy and sustainability, which point to a new horizon of hope, solidarity and responsibility for all Europeans.

At a time when culture is perceived as optional rather than essential, it has become difficult to tell each other the simplest of stories let alone articulate compelling narratives about the values that underpin our society. Yet, now is the moment for compelling narratives rather than simple number crunching.

THE RENAISSANCE MEETS COSMOPOLITANISM

Europe needs a societal paradigm shift – in fact, nothing short of a "New Renaissance". The term invokes the memory of the revolutions in thought that were sparked in the 15th and 16th centuries. This was a time when society, art and science, shook the established order and laid the groundwork for the current age of the Knowledge Society. Europe has the resources to be at the forefront of this age. It also needs to be positioned as the world champion of sustainable living and to be a driving and inspirational force both in setting and implementing a global agenda for sustainable development. This must be achieved by caring not only for biodiversity but also for cultural diversity and pluralism.

Without disregarding the significance of economic and financial legislation, an urgent realignment of emphasis within the European political body is needed and Europe must acknowledge that culture is a major source of nourishment and supply for Europe's social and political body.

- **Europe as a political body** needs the sciences – natural, technical and social – to find innovative responses to the intensity and extent of energy use; to encourage the use of renewable energy; to develop or rediscover medicines, therapies and ways of life that will improve humanity's well-being. Technology needs to become an empowering extension of creativity and society.
- **Europe as a political body** needs the arts to generate new and radical forms of imagination that will educate its sensibility. Modern art was originally a European phenomenon, which took great inspiration from other non-European cultures. It linked artistic movements across the continent that shared an overall affinity for differences and desire for emancipation.
- **Europe as a political body** needs to recognize the value of cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible. Looking back, Europe's heritage was forged not only across generations, but also across communities and territories. Cultural heritage reveals what it has meant to be a European throughout time. It is a powerful instrument that provides a sense of belonging amongst and between European citizens.

To trigger this potential, **Europe as a political body** needs to develop a new cosmopolitanism for its citizens that includes dynamic and creative urban environments and healthy competition between cities. European cities should become more than urban centres; they should strive to become capitals of culture, increasing the quality of life of all Europeans. Why not begin to imagine Europe as one great mega-city interconnected by means of transportation and communication?

Europe as a political body must deploy fully its “soft power” not only across the continent, but also beyond its borders to make it a respectful and respected international partner, promoting a new global model of society based on ethical, aesthetic and sustainable values.

For this new political body to take shape, Europe needs a strong collective commitment:

- Europe needs brave, imaginative and enlightened political leaders who speak and understand the language of Europe as a political body, animated and energized by culture.
- Europe also needs artists and scientists, educators and journalists, historians and sociologists, entrepreneurs and civil servants who are prepared to move beyond the comfort of their autonomy to take on new responsibilities towards Europe as a political body.
- Finally, Europe needs citizens to raise their voices and to take part in the European public space of debate by sharing their stories and concerns. These narratives will tell the story of what it means to be a European in the 21st century.

As artists, intellectuals and scientists, it is our mission to offer a narrative from our perspective that we are confident will stimulate the debate on the future of Europe. Renaissance and cosmopolitanism are two cultural ideals we look to and consider vital as part of the Europe of today and tomorrow.

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