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A Reader:

Overview of the virtual A Soul for Europe 2016 Pre-Conference

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Recurrent topics:

1. Europe „from the bottom-up“
2. What to do? Do something!
3. Reframing the EU – institutional changes
4. The responsibility of the cities and regions
5. Culture – source of power

1. Europe „from the bottom-up“

There is a need for counterweights, for positions of authority that—by law—cannot lead into actual governing. We need outstanding thinkers, scientists, and artists who will, after round-table consultations, take a position on issues in such a way that they will be interesting to public opinion. [...] As well as the *elected* and the *appointed*, the *invited* should be given a significant role on the stage of European decision-making (György **Konrád**)

Institutions and mechanisms of the EU work from the top down and threaten to turn Europeans into passive beneficiaries or into persons simply affected by European politics. [...]

In Great Britain, political speculators couldn't resist the temptation to pit one half of a deeply dis-United Kingdom against the other and to plough into a referendum on EU membership—*top-down*. [...] if anything, this boils down to plebiscitary coercion when you force questions of such complexity and existential importance into a Yes-No vote without any qualified majority, the repercussions of which [...] stretching far beyond the area of responsibility of those eligible to vote. (Bernhard **Schneider**)

If we don't get our act together and develop Europe bottom-up, someone is going to do it top-down. (Rupert Graf **Strachwitz**).

People find common ground more easily than states. (György **Konrád**)

The soul of Europe is its many million citizens. (Dieter **Kosslick**)

[...] the great gesture needed right now is to put responsibilities into other hands! Not only responsibilities, but also budgets! Let youth organisations run with the European idea and give them funds to do it. Let football clubs accept their part in the European idea. Let museums and festivals (of the arts, of music, of films, of architecture, of literature, of operas) show their audience that their future is under a European roof. [...] The European project is embedded in a million small institutions and details. Let them shine! (Wim **Wenders**)

[...] "reanimated nations" are incapable to withstand the global pressure. They will cave in and will not protect their citizens from a global onslaught, while Europe can do this under its friendly roof! (Wim **Wenders**)

I've witnessed at first-hand the importance of the Digital Single Market and the significant opportunities it brings in helping people and communities to develop the skills and competences which are increasingly essential to any nation seeking a successful 21st century future. (Lord **Putnam**)

[...] what the French sociologist Pierre Rosanvallon [...] dubbed "the lie on which the European Union was built"[...] that the EU is a union of states and of citizens. (Ulrike **Guérot**)

We need a Europe whose citizens don't operate as consumers, but as jointly responsible producers of the European project. So that Europeans see and accept this project as their own, it needs to be returned to them. No one can then be confused by the Europeans only seeing the bigger picture of Europe from their own specific national, regional and local perspectives. (Bernhard **Schneider**)

Civil society alone can shape the notion of a European *demos*. By definition, this will be ultranational and will entail complex arrangements of mixed loyalties to family and friends, segments of civil society, and multiple governmental structures. (Rupert Graf **Strachwitz**)

The fact that this bottom-up process would be supported and sponsored "from above" [...] should not should keep us from doing it. (Manfred **Gentz**)

We would like to be able to live in a society where experimentation, creation and utopia are held up as values in the service of our citizens and the political imagination. A model in which we would dare to invest more in education, in art and in research. A model in which we might have the courage to test new paradigms for reducing inequality, participatory democracy or housing policy. (Frédéric **Meseeuw**)

[...] civil society and individual citizens are beginning to rethink Europe. (Rupert Graf **Strachwitz**)

Europe's great opportunity lies not in its socio-cultural unity and homogeneity but in facilitating cultural diversity. (Doris **Pack**)

I'm convinced it's the split between the young and old that's likely to prove the most serious. [...] Once you add the new and highly visible generational split created by Brexit, the situation has the potential to become very, very serious. (Lord **Puttnam**).

The Task: Building Europe from the Bottom Up (Bernhard **Schneider**)

Civil society initiatives have become more effective than governments (Erhard **Busek**)

Let us defend Europe together (Martin **Rennert**)

2. What to do? Do something!

My own conclusion is to be as concrete as possible: both historically, when remembering the north-south dichotomy, which influences the intra-EU conflicts up to this day, and in terms of political perspective, when Europe's promise to support the development of the African continent, which was given in the 1950 Schuman Declaration, has never been lived up to. Now, in view of millions of Africans bunking down on the South coast of the Mediterranean and already on the go, it got more urgent than ever. *[translation by ASfE]* (Wolf **Lepenies**)

Civil society has to exert more influence and promote social responsibility and participatory behaviour. Europe needs to again be a continent of acceptance, of respect and of discourse. (Klaus-Dieter **Lehmann**)

The fact is that Europe's soul can be found in its understanding of being different, in its totality of personal will. Here, however, a force is required through which all of this will is kept in balance, is reconciled with others and is inspired. (István **Szabó**)

Unfortunately, the European exchange programmes [...] have not produced any pan-European personalities, which there have been a few of in the past [...] Schuman, Churchill, Spaak, de Gaulle, Brandt *[translation by ASfE]* (Jörn **Sack**)

[...] aggressiveness against 'the others' [...] is a danger, not only for the European Union but for democracy. (Erhard **Busek**)

[...] a political and economic system that no longer works for a majority: a broken economy in a broken democracy. [...] As every day goes by, it becomes clearer than ever that only a pan-European mutiny will set the course straight. (Lorenzo **Marsili**)

Jean Monnet did not start with culture nor probably say he would if starting again. But he did shake up the status quo and offer a radical new approach. It's time for a renewal of radicalism. (Steve **Green**)

More than ever, Europe has to become the Europeans' cause. (**A Soul for Europe**)

And who, for example, actually takes young people seriously—many of whom are highly qualified yet still unemployed? These are people for whom we must work to defend a life lived amidst peace and freedom of thought. We must speak *with* them; not in a preachy or reproving way on the blessings of agricultural subsidies, but instead with the passion and courage to engage in a differentiated view of a world resonating with hate-speech slogans. (Martin **Rennert**)

Civil society has begun to fight, but it must be encouraged to move even further. (Erhard **Busek**)

Right now, what citizens desperately need is something to believe in. (Frédéric **Meseeuw**)

What do you want from life, dear Europeans? What do you want for your own world and for the lives of your children? What steps are necessary to achieve this? These are the questions all Europeans must ask themselves. And if the answers have something to do with Europe, then the European project will get the time it needs to develop a strong soul. (Florian **Hoffmann**)

Whenever in history sovereign citizens have embarked together on a political project, they have founded a republic based on that principle of political equality. (Ulrike **Guérot**)

The governments of the Member States [...] should draft a pan-European curriculum, which would complement the national and regional curricula. [...] by establishing a new subject of “European studies”, entailing all [...] aspects from culture to politics. [...]“Education is key”—not only for everyone’s personal future, but as well for the future of Europe. (Jo **Leinen**)

3. Reframing the EU – institutional changes

The twenty-year debate and the negotiations around the Pact of Amsterdam suggest that the **EU Urban Agenda is by no means a sure-fire success**. The implementation of the EU Urban Agenda will determine if it becomes a successful model for future multi-level governance collaborations between cities, EU Member States and EU institutions. (Hella **Dunger-Löper**)

Should we not take this (pseudo) religious fanaticism that expresses itself through terror as a reason for us in the EU, in the member states, but also in the European states outside of the EU, to reflect on core elements of our so versatile European culture? (Manfred **Gentz**)

The Congress [of Europe] should take over, becoming an umbrella body [...]. Its authority should come from a College of five institutions, each representing a different aspect of democratic reality—the first, a directly elected Assembly for which candidates could only state their political views and expertise, not their country or political party; the second, a College of Cities and Local Authorities; the third, a College of Regional Assemblies (those with cultural identity but not UN status); the fourth, a Conference of Nation States; and the fifth, a Parliament of Universities. (Simon **Mundy**)

The response to the UK’s Leave vote should be a Congress of Europe institutionalizing a Europe whole and free. This pan-European union would be built with new internal mechanisms to distribute responsibilities among all levels of government. (Cornelius **Adebahr**)

To put it openly and in broad terms: civil society in various countries has recently achieved more than its respective governments, in terms of handling the current crises. (Erhard **Busek**)

It’s no coincidence that again and again minor and major protagonists from the worlds of art and culture are involved in the creation of an inquisitive, searching and free Europe, be that now or (unknowingly) 500 years ago. (Dieter **Kosslick**)

[...] re-starting the European Union from the basis of culture [...] would [...] gain an explosive strength. It would become a mission, a political task. At that point, the insignificance of the EU Commissioner of Culture would become a disgrace. (Volker **Hassemer**)

A nation state is not the only frame for a democracy. It is what the EU’s founding fathers had in mind in postwar Europe: a real post-national democracy (Ulrike **Guérot**)

Flexible integration should no longer be the last resort if all countries cannot agree; rather, it would become the organizing principle of a Europe that aims for an ever-closer union without prescribing a particular way of uniform, simultaneous integration.

It’s time for a pan-European union that encompasses all of the continent’s sovereign countries at different levels of integration. [...]

Higher levels of integration would include the monetary integration of the eurozone, political-internal integration based on the Schengen passport-free area, and, possibly, new (and much-needed) security and defense integration. These higher echelons of integration begin with their current memberships and a clearly defined set of accession rules for aspirant countries. However, entering them represents an enhancement of a country’s membership status rather than an enlargement of the union as a whole. [...]

Offering explicit levels of membership rather than the current implicit variations would enable all member states to choose a degree of integration that better fits their preferences. (Cornelius **Adebahr**)

Let's start putting Europe into the hands of its users and not leave it up to politicians or governments! They have fucked it up too much to now be in charge to fix it. Of course, they need to be involved. (Wim **Wenders**)

[...] we need to do more than just oil the wheels of the EU machine; we need to replace entire components within the system. (Hannes **Swoboda**)

I mention this not to say that they could replace the Parliament, but only to note that there is space for them as well. As well as the *elected* and the *appointed*, the *invited* should be given a significant role on the stage of European decision-making so that public opinion will be able to follow the dialogue between politicians and independent intellectuals with greater engagement. (György **Konrád**)

Let the EU do its business, but do away with the notion of a “ever closer union and to start building the real Europe afresh...”, as Jean Monnet suggested, starting with culture rather than with the economy (Rupert Graf **Strachwitz**)

Member States and the European Council are called upon to promote the citizens' Europe by relying on their cities and regions as European players in their own right. (Bernhard **Schneider**)

We intend to draft proposals for intensified co-operative and joint efforts of politics and civil society in the cities and regions of Europe. (**A Soul for Europe**)

[...] to centralize power even more [...] looks like an act of defiance. (Klaus-Dieter **Lehmann**)

The issue is not about “more” or “less” Europe. It is about strengthening some European competences and relinquishing other responsibilities. (Hannes **Swoboda**)

Urban Agenda for the EU: It comes down to implementation (Hella **Dunger-Löper**)

[...] the fact is: Europeans, and especially a great part of contemporary European youth, are already living in a European network—socially, but certainly culturally. (Wim **Wenders**)

4. The responsibility of cities and regions

Opportunities and challenges of EU policies converge in urban areas. Economic growth is generated in cities, jobs are created, social cohesion is practiced, the digital transformation is experienced and not least of all, cities possess significant potential in the field of climate protection and energy policy. (Hella **Dunger-Löper**)

Long before any nation state emerged, cities, city-states and regions produced the political culture of Europe, its public spaces, its judiciary, financial systems and trade, its languages and dialects, its sciences and cuisine. (Bernhard **Schneider**)

[...] the Member States' decision not to incorporate the EU Urban Agenda in the EU-presidencies work-programs provoke concerns regarding the importance of the EU Urban Agenda. The Member States were obviously too concerned to lose influence on cities with the new governance model from the EU Urban Agenda. (Hella **Dunger-Löper**).

Culture is a key asset for the EU Urban Agenda (Philippe **Eyraud**)

Member States could [...] use the cultural potential of their cities as a competition asset to gain more influence on the European process. Which will be the first government to realize this and consequently develop its own urban agenda? (Bernhard **Schneider**)

The concept of citizen harks back to the Latin *civis*, a member of the *civitas*, a political community that is not necessarily tied to a particular territory. (Steve **Austen**)

[...] the link from 'citizen' respectively 'citizenship' to 'city' and the latin 'civitas'. What we nowadays call culture means 'civilisation' [...]. The civitas contributes the diversity of civilization to the European unification process. (Bernhard **Schneider**)

Perhaps the ideal city would be characterised by its capacity to permit every possible form of human activity without the presence of any one of them making another impossible. (Steve **Austen**)

Opportunities and challenges of EU policies converge in urban areas. (Hella **Dunger-Löper**)

It is what the EU's founding fathers had in mind in postwar Europe: a real post-national democracy, with the autochthon, or tribal, European regions—Catalonia, Scotland, Moravia, Bavaria, Auvergne, Silesia or Brabant—as constitutional holders (Ulrike **Guérot**)

[...] focusing on peripheral regions, where cultural initiatives are needed to improve the quality of life and foster openness and curiosity. Measures conceived with these goals in mind can help protect and strengthen the social fabric under threat of being torn apart. (Hannes **Swoboda**)

[...] culture is more than just a marketing tool. [...] It can be illustrated in [...] the 2018 European Capital of Culture hosted in Leeuwarden (the Netherlands) where citizens are participating in an integrated approach to address poverty reduction, education and employment. (Philippe **Eyraud**)

5. Culture – source of power

[...] people tend to listen more to local institutions, like to their city or their region, or have a more positive reaction to churches [...], or to their football clubs (for whom Europe is the gold standard), or to their cultural institutions, like museums or festivals, or to their favourite airlines, or to bloggers or to websites or to social networks. (Wim **Wenders**)

There is a growing conviction that Europe's political, economic and social integration cannot be successful in the long term unless Europe grasps that it is a cultural community. The awareness of the cultural dimension must be heightened—this is the message now being sent out in speeches on Europe everywhere, notwithstanding all the differences between the European countries and nations, whose diversity is the real characteristic of their unity. [...] Certainly, without culture, life might well be easier, more comfortable and less problematical—but it would also be infinitely poorer! (Doris **Pack**)

Only by means of their obstinacy do art and culture make sense for our common interests as a whole. Indeed, this is the reason why the affable catchphrase "unity in diversity" is so much more complicated and exhausting than it seems upon first glance. (Volker **Hassemer**)

And since it's impossible to look into the soul of each and every person, an ingenious catalyst and filter called Culture helps to us get to know, understand and above all bring together Europe with all its languages, passions, peculiarities, faults, corners, scents, pitfalls, subtleties and feuds. Unimaginable is a Europe without printing presses, books, libraries, museums, concert halls, churches and cinemas. Culture, much like education and science, is more equipped today as a "soft power" than anything else to help our civil society to learn and maintain responsibility, define values and discover empathy and soulfulness. (Dieter **Kosslick**)

When citizens have common cultural aims, even if the cultures themselves are different, the decentralised cross-fertilising of ideas becomes a way for active citizens to develop a common Europe while keeping their own sense of who they are intact. [...]

It is thus logical for the public space in Europe to be increasingly full of initiatives from (young) European citizens who point to the 'value community' that must form the core of every society at local, regional, national or international level. (Steve **Austen**)

In the reawakening of Europe's soul, it is not talented citizens who are missing, but the spirit of calm and wise, long-term thinkers who have a sense for and understanding of the real questions, the decisions and suggestions which bring together rather than separate the different souls of Europe. Because without this, Europe's soul will

degenerate, fly off and Europe will slide down until nothing remains but a great big museum in which Japanese, Chinese and American tourists can take photos of famous ruins, from the Acropolis to Auschwitz. (István **Szabó**)

Regardless of its precise shape, the European Union's credibility is anchored in the vicissitudes of its cultural physiognomy. The spectrum of cultural faces in their diverse historical contexts must be reflected in the EU just as much as a vision of our continent's future in a globally networked world. (Hannes **Swoboda**)

The future of European society will largely depend also on making culture one of our prime concerns. (Arne **Lietz**)

[...] people find common ground more easily than states. Europe's great innovation is cultural pluralism, a tendency that runs parallel to the spread of the philosophy of human rights, based on an obligation to respect the individual.

What makes Europe special is its balance between the universal and the particular, the general and the unique, the common and the individual. (György **Konrád**)

The soul of the European Union will only then be reborn, only then become the soul of us all, once the European Union can provide a real, achievable future vision which takes differences into consideration. (István **Szabó**)

Can culture change the exclusivity nature of religions and help their followers, especially of the "majority" religions in a given area, be actively integrated with newcomers?

Can cultural funding organisations not only support projects with newcomers but also with the majority populations to accept those newcomers? Integration is a two-way process.

Will the European Year of Cultural Heritage in 2018 provide a cover for more exclusivity based on religion? (Steve **Green**)

[...] the Bulgarian Europe, the French, the Swedish, the Cypriot, the Dutch, the Sicilian, the Hanseatic, etc [...] The EU needs all of them, all of these different versions, to be European, otherwise it will remain fragmented. (Bernhard **Schneider**)

Inclusion of citizens' aspirations in ALL fields of policy changes the paradigm from economic to cultural notions. (Steve **Austen**)

[...] put the different cultures and the non-simultaneity of Europe into focus. [...]

We, as the cultural sector, must take major countermeasures and demonstrate that the cultures have to stick together and that we have a shared responsibility for a European cultural region—not a national, but a community responsibility. Then I can see hope! (Klaus-Dieter **Lehmann**)

Culture: Europe's valuable heritage (Arne **Lietz**)

Culture does not know manmade borders. It has been "European" long before the "European integration" started after the Second World War with the European Coal and Steel Community in 1952. (Jo **Leinen**)

Europe's great opportunity in the coming years does not lie in its socio-cultural unity and homogeneity but in facilitating cultural diversity. (Doris **Pack**)

As Jacques Delors put it in October 2010, on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of German unification: it is necessary to give Europe a soul. By no means did he mean this in a spiritual way; he was concerned with empathy and compassion (Erhard **Busek**)

In the same way that libraries are "spaces of discovery", cinemas, concert halls, galleries and museums are also spaces in which our society can find its bearings through art. To this end, ongoing and greater support of cultural networks, events, rooms, venues, market places and discussion forums is necessary because: In what is now a very digital global community, you can be heard, seen and read, but are you understood? Culture helps us understand the world. And that's what keeps us together. (Dieter **Kosslick**)