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**„Europe and the Age of Culture“**

1. Ladies and Gentlemen. Are we living in the age of culture? Technical inventions are bringing people closer to each other, at a much quicker pace! - We can travel in Europe without passport! - A Visual and Audial Revolution is giving us completely new instruments for seeing, hearing and feeling the Arts! – New Ballet, Music composition and Visual Arts Cultures have been born! – Futurism is in the air! - Theatres are rethinking their Stage Productions! - Authors are writing a New type of Novels! - A completely new way of treating Mental Diseases has been invented and tested! – Fantastic Discoveries have been made in physics and other sciences! – All this is wonderful, isn´t it? This is really **the Age of Culture!**

1. But our Peace is threatened by many crises! - The old Regime in China has fallen! - The old Regime in Russia seems to be threatened! – And the Question is how long will the Poor accept the increasing Power of the Rich? - - - Are you smelling a rat?
2. Yes, I am speaking about 1914 – not 2014!!
3. Dear friends - *“The Age of Culture” –* the title of a book by the Canadian Paul Schafer. It has attracted some positive attention this year, not least from UNESCO. But I tend to put a big “?” after the title. Is this really the age of Culture? Isn´t our Culture suffering **both** from neo-nationalism and extremism **and** from the Financial Crisis **and** from the consequences of the Digital World???
4. So, let us talk today about some **Challenges** for European Arts and Culture!
5. First of all: An Important starting point: We **have** a **European Model for Arts and Culture** – **Public sector** responsibility: Education – Health – AND CULTURE are Human Basic Needs! State and municipalities must support culture – of course at arm-length distance - and think long-term! All Citizens should be given the chance – as producers or consumers - to experience the extra dimension of Life Quality which Arts and Culture offer. Both traditional institutions and free groups should be supported and encouraged.
6. USA and many other countries – different tradition – NO MINISTRY OF CULTURE Private, philanthropic supporters (the little blue-haired ladies…) or sponsors are in charge, but run the risk: Only “mainstream arts”, no “difficult music”. No room for experiment, provocation, being “uncomfortable” for Establishment. The Australian Opera House – Carmen!
7. But back to the Challenges for European Culture: First: The political **populists** are abusing European “Cultural Diversity” and European history to promote their own Nationalistic agenda. And some religious **extremists** do not want any Arts or Music at all. “Imitating Gods voice”...
8. Second: ECONOMIC CRISIS – has Effect on Cultural budgets: Reduced in UK – Netherlands – Italy – Portugal – Greece – Spain – and in some “new EU countries with rather wild versions of Capitalism and Market Economy” Quote Michal Hvoretcki!
9. In a crisis Artists get insecure. A **playwright** might write a play for 3 rather than 8 persons and a **Composer** a work for a chamber orchestra rather than a full symphony orchestra. This may provoke a vicious circle of sinking quality. Actors, artists and musicians are working as waiters or cleaning personal to earn their daily bread…
10. And at the same time **editorial staff**, including Literature and Music critics, have to leave the big news papers and journals, as part of budget cuts in a tough market. Those reviewers - I admit, they are sometimes hated by artists or authors - have always helped us to somehow distinguish between high **Quality** and - trash. The same tendencies in Public Service Radio and Television. - Paus
11. Now to the third challenge: The **digital world**, incl. E-books, Streaming through Spotify and others, Youtube and enormous downloading possibilities, opens fantastic perspectives to getting A**ccess** to Arts and Culture. But it also threatens authors, musicians and other artists. Not only Copyright, but also the laws of a global digital economy are sometimes too brutal to face... How can artists survive?
12. Yes, there **is** digital Arts, I know some excellent digital artists. But most real Arts, just like Athletics and Football, is **analogue, not digital**. There are No shortcuts, shouldn´t be any. Training, training, training! Best **quality** wins in the long run. Hard work and discipline leading to artistic excellence. Verdi: Voce, voce, voce! E.G. Opera without microphones! Fair competition!
13. Now let´s talk about POLITICS. - - - We are living in the post-modern world, they say. This is not only a term in arts or architecture. It means also post-industrialized, post-egalitarian, post-ideological, post-secular, well, even post-political!
14. My point: In a globalized, neoliberal world The Market and the lobbyists have more power and the democratically elected **Politicians have less power than before**. And *within* politics the Minister of Culture is often a rather weak politician, so: cuts… These cuts have serious effects! - - - Can **private money** be an alternative? No!!! They can contribute to certain projects. But generally speaking, in Europe philanthropy and sponsoring can only provide max 10 % of necessary funds. - - - Shall artists become **Entrepreneurs**?? Well some perhaps, but most artists simply want to be – Artists! And **only politically** responsible persons can make it possible for people to visit museums free of charge or can strongly subsidize a concert- or theatre ticket. **Only politicians** can do something about the growing inequalities between the few Rich and the many poor! **Only politicians** can give arts and culture back to the people, including the very youngest generation!
15. **The good news:** THE BASTIONS OF CULTURE IN EUROPE: Usual suspects: **France** – Culture keeps a strong position, in spite of a 2-4 % cut. Now decentralizing. **Germany** – steadily Increasing Cultural Budget, federally and regionally – Increasing Audiences / Visitors. BRD has 78 full year/full repertoire **opera** **houses** and one third of world full-time classic **orchestra musicians.** Deutscher Kulturrat – “The whistle blower of Arts”. **Scandinavia** – increasing budgets – **Finland** has a conscious strategy, Sweden has good intentions and we will see what the new Government can do. Free entrance to museums is a good start! And the attitude of Umeå 2014 is also very promising.
16. I have a German favourite word. “**BILDUNG”!** which means – Education in Arts and the Humanities + broad knowledge in history - starting from early age. The artists and the audience of tomorrow must start training early. The Ears and eyes and hands and mouths. Learning Music and Arts should be like learning to read or mathematics! It must start at school, even in nursery school! If we do that, if we give EVERYBODY, with whatever family background or access to the arts, such a start in life, we might be entering **the Age of Culture! - - -**
17. Ladies and Gentlemen, we hear so many complaints about Europe, not least from the rightwing populists. But I submit to you: **WE CAN BE PROUD OF EUROPE!** Europe´s Common History and Cultural Heritage, not least the intangible heritage eritage– EU built upon the ruins of the two WWs. Europeans chose Cooperation instead of war. Peaceful solutions. EU is attractive to neighbours – look at Ukraine and the Balkan States! And European Culture is admired overseas. We all love the European model “Unity in Diversity”, don´t we, but Members of our ECP also believe in - a “European Soul”.
18. Our Hero is **Melina Mercouri!** ECoC. 1985. From Athens to Umeå! A beautiful idea. Her brother Spyros Mercouris!
19. Now is there a **European Culture? Yes!** From William Shakespeare to Patrick Modiano, from Bach to Bono! From Leonardo to Gerhard Richter. From Platon to Habermas.**European Film** vs American Film: Szabo: “Hollywood: Winners/ Europe: Loosers or seekers”
20. And in particular: The **European Values**: Democracy – Human Rights – Freedom of Expression – Rule of Law, without death penalty – Gender equality – Freedom of sexual orientation - Secular politics, separated from religion - Childrens´ Rights, including prohibition of corporal punishment (almost only Europeans have ratified)
21. - - - - So, there is **A European Soul!** The ECP, which I founded 13 years ago, is based on these values. The only Pan-European, interdisciplinary forum for cultural personalities. **Ethical and aesthetic values** should be the core of European cooperation! Artists and cultural personalities must play a stronger role in the European Project, balancing the role of Eurocrats... 160 outstanding INDIVIDUAL ARTISTS (not organisations!) from 43 European countries. About 45 per cent women. Have met in Bruges – Graz – Genoa – Lisbon – Turku – Sibiu – Liverpool – Gothenburg – Athens – Pécs – Berlin – Edinburgh – Pristina. Next year in Barcelona.
22. ECP: We discuss broad **themes** like Quality, intercultural dialogue, Democracy, Populism, Gender Equality, Creativity and at our latest session even the cultural consequences of the Ukraine-Russia conflict. And we take resolutions for Freedom and against Censorship in Russia or Turkey. And projects are born. Small projects or bigger projects... always across borders and across artistic disciplines. E.g. *Nomadic University, Love Difference, The Strategic Role of Culture*. The latest: Our ECP Youth Network- - - - I refer to some information on the desk .
23. So, what about the FUTURE of Arts and Culture? Events and Entertainment ? Yes. Also! Commercial music and film will survive without public support. I know, my son - events - - - But the future of Great Arts? That is the challenge. Without early training and education: quality – originality – the noble art of being provocative and uncomfortable – may disappear... The sublime dimensions of classical music may disappear! And we run the risk to be hit by Tsunamis of - Trash! Europe could raise the ambition: **Culture could be our Future.** Why do you think thousands of Asian and American students come to Europe to develop their skills in Arts and music? Because **Culture is the great comparative advantage of Europe! THE CHAMPIONS LEAGUE is European – not only in football but also in Arts and Culture!**
24. This is a challenge for the new EU Commission and the new EU Parliament. But: Failures of the EU so far: The very small cultural budget, but also: The lack of Cultural representatives in the EU offices/embassies abroad! The EU misses chance of executing **Cultural Diplomacy** on behalf of Europe in other parts of the world. CD has become increasingly important and Europe has so much to offer. We Europeans have a lot to be proud of!
25. But CD may also mean tough negotiations. Arts should not be measured only according to its economic contribution. I have to issue a Warning: TTIP! Not only an environmental issue. The European Cultural Model is at stake. We need **“L´Exception Culturelle”,** to avoid a de facto Monopoly of giants like Google, Warner, Apple or Disney! **European Culture and Cultures are worth defending!**
26. The coming decades could become **the European Age of Culture** if European politicians can reconquer the initiative from the Market and take their responsibility for the Arts and the Training in Arts.
27. Paul Schaffer at the end of his book: “*A life in Arts and Culture, a spiritually or humanity oriented life will be necessary in order to make it possible for us to tread more lightly on the land. This is because a much better balance will be realized between people´s material and non-material requirements... No challenge is greater in this respect than the need to come to grips with the relentless march of human numbers – the 7,2 billion – compared to the finte carrying capacity of the earth.”*

Some demographers are worried about the “aging Europe” and low fertility rate of European women. I do not agree! Our European demographic development is an **Achievement**, due to the pioneer work of women some 50-100 years ago, making it possible for young women to decide over their own lives, including the number o family members and making life for each individual child better.

1. As you understood from my opening today I am an admirer of the”Golden Age”, just before the disaster of the 1st World War. All these fantastic people – Stravinski – Schönberg – Oscar Wilde – Picasso – Marie Curie - Freud – and others changed the world of Arts and science. They were not instruments for any commercial agenda. They just created, out of curiosity and passion. And they seemed to be aware that more EQUALITY was called for on earth...
2. If we **do** take well care of our young people and the next generation, so that everybody can open their ears and eyes and hands and mouths to Arts and Culture, Europe will continue to play in the Champions League of Culture and we may – again – have a real European **Age of Culture!**

Thank you!