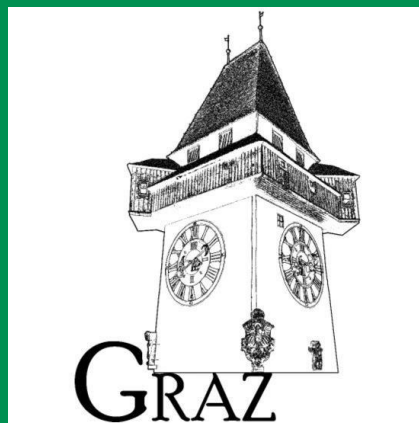


European Culture after the “Zeitenwende”



ECP 21st Session in Graz 19th – 21st April 2024

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Introduction

by Karl-Erik Norrman

The 21st session of the European Cultural Parliament, ECP, was held in Graz, Austria on 19 – 21 April 2024, upon the generous invitation of Styria, Graz, the Austrian Ministry of Culture and several local sponsors.

The theme of the session was ***European Culture after the Zeitenwende***. The session was prepared and organized in close cooperation with ECP Member **Luise Kloos**, Graz.

Some 60 ECP Members, some 10 international observers and some 70 local artists and other cultural personalities participated. We were particularly happy that, thanks to Luise Kloos’ tireless efforts, so many representatives of the local cultural community could participate. Many fruitful and promising contacts between them and our members were taken.

The session was held in the premises of the *Volkskundemuseum*, Graz.

The session was opened by **Claudia Unger**, Councilor City of Graz, **Pär Stenbäck**, President of the ECP Senate, **Christine Braunersreuther**, Councilor City of Graz, on behalf of Elke Kahr, Mayor of Graz, and **Sandra Holasek**, Member of Parliament, on behalf of Christopher Drexler, Governor of Styria.

The opening session also included two keynote speeches:

“Zeitenwenden in Europe – Perspectives on Conflicts, Crises and Culture of Memories”

by Barbara Stelzl-Marx, University of Graz, Director of the Ludwig Boltzmann Institute for Research on Consequences of War

“Can we trust AI? State of the Art. Opportunities. Risks”

by Roman Kern, University of Technology Graz, Chief Scientific Officer Know Center

The second session day started with a third keynote speech:

“The Struggle for the Survival of Europe as a Cultural and Political Entity Must Continue”

by ECP President Pär Stenbäck (Finland)

The ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine was also referred to in a comprehensive contribution by ECP Member **Stelios Virvidakis** (Greece): ***“Philosophy and Culture in Europe after the Zeitenwende”***.

In a direct video link from Ukraine ECP-Member **Alex Zakletsky** (Ukraine) gave us a dramatic description of the Russian war against Ukrainian culture. ***“European Culture and Russian Aggression: To be or not to be?”***

ECP Member **Gintautas Mažeikis** (Lithuania) gave us some interesting examples from history: ***“Post-War Reconciliation and Mutual Recognition. The Power of Cultural Diplomacy”***.

A workshop, moderated by **Stelios Virvidakis** with the AI expert **Roman Kern**, discussed the other main theme of the session – Artificial Intelligence and Culture. ***“Are Machines Taking over? Arts & Culture in the Era of Artificial Intelligence”***

In a second workshop, moderated by **François Carbon** (Luxembourg) various projects, and initiatives by ECP Members were presented. In this workshop and in the plenary session interesting ECP cooperation with other continents were presented:



Titus Leber (Austria) has comprehensive contacts with cultural personalities and politicians in several African countries. He has even discussed the possibility of creating an African platform/network similar to the ECP.

Levan Khetaguri (Georgia) has started a project, “*Silk Road Culture Hub*”, in cooperation with Georgian wine-producing cities. It is a project which connects Georgian cities with several Asian cities.

François Carbon, the founder of the *Trans-Atlantic Dialogue (TAD)* project for cooperation between US and European universities, is organizing a new TAD meeting at the end of May 2024.

Five new ECP Members were welcomed, three from the hosting region Styria, one from Sweden and one from Cyprus.

Ioseb Khakhaleishvili, Mayor of Kutaisi, Georgia, extended a preliminary invitation to ECP to hold the next session in his city.

A similar invitation was extended by **Greta Xhakolli**, a representative of Tirana, Capital of Albania.

Further close ECP contacts with these two cities will clear if and when the sessions can take place.

A *Graz Declaration* of the ECP was adopted during the last plenary debate of the session.

All ECP Members expressed their gratitude to the hosts from Graz and Styria for the friendly reception and a very well-organized session.

“Cultural Capital – the Subtle Difference”

by Luise Kloos



In his cultural theory, Pierre Bourdieu compares interactions in everyday life to a game. Individuals possess different amounts of potential of various kinds, which they can use and partially transform. The following applies: "And everyone plays according to the amount of chips they have." Thus, for example, the acquisition of cultural capital can serve to increase economic capital.

I am quoting this idea from Bourdieu here because during the preparations for the European Cultural Parliament, several times the question was asked: "How does the economy benefit from this?" Well, as Bourdieu explains, cultural capital increases economic capital. A quote from Winston Churchill also comes in useful. When the air war (in WW II) was raging over Great Britain, the then Prime Minister Winston Churchill was asked to cut cultural spending in favor of the defense budget. He replied dryly:

"And what are we fighting for then?" Churchill's quote is an important impulse for our approach to culture in times of crisis.

ECP was created precisely to understand Europe not only from an economic perspective. Europe is first and foremost a multi-layered cultural area. And this cultural area requires communication, exchange and interaction, rules for living together. It is important to know: what is happening in other European countries, how do artists live, what difficulties do they face, what are the social conditions like?

In our times, we are particularly challenged to seek dialog and develop models that make peaceful coexistence between people with different cultures and languages a self-evident reality. At the conference in Graz, we also turned to history in numerous presentations and discussions in order to remember what has worked in the past, what mistakes were made and what we could learn from them.

The current war in Ukraine painfully shows us that a cultural battle is taking place, in which not only cultural and educational institutions are the target of destruction, but our democracy is also under massive threat. At the same time, there is massive propaganda against Western culture.

The challenges of artificial intelligence, with all its opportunities and risks, provide a further spectrum for the need to be in dialog with a wide variety of experts.

Just as we want to express the finest vibrations with the finest differences in artistic creation, the ECP is a contribution to these fine vibrations of European society. ECP is not a powerful institution in the economic or political sense, but imagine how the participants go home inspired, report on the results of the European Cultural Parliament and their experiences, align their work accordingly and continue to weave their networks. That makes a powerful and subtle difference.

It was an extraordinary honor to host the ECP in Graz. I would like to thank everyone who contributed to making this session such a success!

Welcoming Speeches

Luise Kloos

Good evening. Welcome in Graz to the 21st session of the European Cultural Parliament! A very warm welcome to all of our guests from 35 European countries. You have all traveled far to get here and to reflect on and exchange ideas about the future of European Culture after the “Zeitenwende”. This will happen with many creative artists and personalities from Graz, Styria, Upper Austria and Vienna. A very warm welcome to all of you! Please use the network to create your creative network across disciplines.

I would particularly like to welcome Sandra Holasek, member of the parliament on behalf on governor and councilor for culture Christopher Drexler, Christine Braunersreuther, municipal councilor representing Mayor Elke Kahr, councilor Claudia Unger, standing in for city councilor Günter Riegler, Ruth Feldgrill-Zankel, former minister for the environment and deputy mayor, and Karl-Heinz Herper, former city councilor for culture.

Welcome to our Keynote Speakers Barbara Stelzl-Marx and Roman Kern.

Culture shapes our futures, our history, our society, our coexistence. I wish us all a successful and fruitful 21st session of ECP! And with that I would like to give the floor to the secretary of the ECP, Karl-Erik Norrman.



Karl-Erik Norrman

Thank you very much Luise and thank you Steiermark, thank you Graz, thank you to everyone who has contributed so we can be here. I will come back to greetings from various members. We are beating the record of local presence today. The cultural elite of the region and of Europe is here, and I hope we're in for a very interesting exchange. I'm not going to make a speech now, as I will speak more later. Very big thank you to Luise Kloos! She has mobilized all of you great people of the Styria region and of Austria, and we know that we would not be here if it weren't for you. A wonderful artist and coordinator, and we wouldn't be here if it weren't for you, so thank you.



Claudia Unger

On behalf of the city council of culture and economic affairs, I would like to say a warm welcome to all of you. This is the second time that Graz is the host of the ECP, and I think that is a good sign in two ways: It is a good sign for people from different countries that they are welcome to discuss European and worldwide topics in Graz. It's a good sign that the city is open-minded and learning and discussing different challenges currently seen in the world. The city has a long tradition in bringing the world here and also going out there.

This is the second time that the ECP is in Graz, after the city was cultural capital in 2003. This was one of the bigger pan-european cultural projects, but we also partake in the “city writer residency” program and are part of Erasmus, bringing our students into the world, but also inviting people in. There are so many cultural workers from the city

and from Styria partaking [in this event]. A very warm welcome to people from other countries. I hope our city will also present itself to you in a very welcoming and pretty way.

Pär Stenbäck

The European Cultural Parliament believes in the European idea. I accepted the position as the president of this organization in 2003. Our goal with the organization is not amalgamation or streamlining of culture, but cross-border and cross-cultural enrichment for Europe and its citizens. The ECP is a non-political platform of creatives and thinkers, but the ECP is certainly not void of values. You might think, why am I talking so much about political stuff? Because democracy is the basis of free speech, creativity, and free art, so you have to talk about politics in order to talk about culture.





Christine Braunersreuther

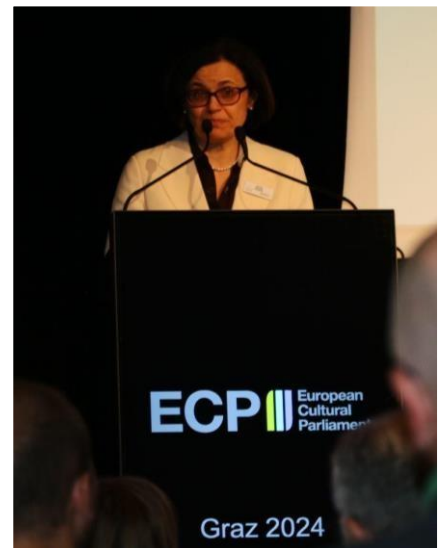
Dear ladies and gentlemen, dear members of ECP. As I had a look at the program, I have decided to not have a speech because there are such interesting keynotes ahead. So, no long speech from my side, but a warm welcome from the mayor. I see Graz hosting the ECP as a sign that togetherness has found a good place in Graz.

Sandra Holasek

Congratulations and all the best from the Governor, who sadly cannot be here today. Welcome to all of you. A parliament that brings different people together in the name of culture. To put us together in a way is a language that all we know, and we all feel in our hearts. 2024 is a very special year, Austria is one of the cultural capitals of Europe, with the Salzkammergut region participating. The region presents strong statements going through different communities with different topics and messages important for our time. The importance of a cultural dialogue on a European level is something we are longing for. Culture is the solution for so many problems we have when it comes to different types of living across Europe. It brings new connections, perspectives, and possibilities.

I also wanted to introduce to you the three people nominated as members of the ECP from Styria, Zuzana Ronck, Sandra Kocuvan and Markus Waitschacher. I am really looking forward to all the

output from your discussion for the Graz declaration that will be put forward at the end of these days



Keynote Speeches

“Zeitenwenden in Europe: Perspectives on Conflicts, Crisis and the Culture of Memories”

Keynote Speech by Barbara Stelzl-Marx

In her keynote speech, Barbara Stelzl-Marx from the University of Graz and Director of the Ludwig Boltzmann Institute for Research and Consequences of War, discusses the term “Zeitenwende” and the importance of remembering former turning points in history in order to learn from them when dealing with today's Zeitenwenden.

“Peace is not always peace. Was the peace in 1945 really peace, when half of Europe was divided up? It was a pause. Peace has always been a pause in between before a new war broke out”.



These are the words of the Ukrainian writer in Vienna Tanja Maljartschuk. Today we look back at the beginning and unfortunately also at the end of this long pause in between. On the 8th of May of 1945 the Second World War came to an end with the unconditional surrender of the German Wehrmacht, a war that was raged with unprecedented brutality and contempt for humanity as a war of conquest, and in the east at as a war of extermination by the totalitarian national socialist regime, a war that claimed more than 56 million lives, and brought misery, suffering and destruction on an unimaginable scale. The consequences are often invisible today, at first glance at least, but are subcutaneously present, edged into the biography of people, and edged into landscapes. It is important to uncover these subcutaneous traces in history.

The 8th of May 1945 is rightly regarded as a turning point, as a “Zeitenwende”, just like the end of the first World War, as, in Austria, the so-called *Anschluss* of 1938, or as Fall of Berlin Wall, or the collapse of the Soviet Union and the – supposed, one must say nowadays – end of Cold War. The 24th of February 2022 will go down in history as a turning point, a *Zeitenwende*, when the long pause in between came to an end and war returned to Europe. When the world barometer showed that international law seemed to be giving way to the law of the jungle.

This *Zeitenwende* shows us that remembering and commemorating is not an empty ritual, especially now, when the personal memory, when the eyewitnesses of the Second World War, are increasingly fading. The 20th century was characterized by a continuous loop of Zeitenwenden.

And now again, the term was on everyone's lips for the last two years, in 2022 it was voted word of the year in Germany after Olaf Scholz proclaimed it the term of an era in his “*Zeitenwende*” speech, and a google search of the term results to over 5 million hits. The term “*Zeitenwende*” found its way into several foreign languages as loanword, today it does not need to be translated anymore.

The current turning point shows that science and democracy are connected as in a double helix. Art, culture, and democracy are also connected as in a DNA strand. At the same time, we can see that democracy is on a retreat worldwide.

The long pause of peace in between has come to an end in Europe, visible to all of us, to a certain extent also tangible.

This double helix of culture and democracy is of immense importance especially against the historical backdrop of Zeitenwende, of changing times.

Art and culture are the conscience of our society, art connects cultures, cultural heritage means a spiritual home, something which is visible here at the *Volkskundemuseum* as well. But how can the world barometer be influenced in this respect? With the turning point of 1991, the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the then assumed end of the Cold War, a sigh of relief went through Europe and the whole world. The idea of the end of history emerged, the victory of liberal democracy.

Harvard professor Serhii Plokhii emphasized in a speech at the Graz University last week that we could not have foreseen the war because of this perspective, because of the end of history. So today I ask myself, how naive was I, how naive were many of us? The signs of the times were there already, but often we were blind to them, didn't want to see that the clocks had already been turned back. The Chechen Wars seen as internal affairs, Georgia, Syria and finally the annexation of Crimea – an exception? Putin argued with historical facts. We are now at a turning point in the war, once again a historic moment that will characterize at least the two decades to come. As Serhii Plokhii said last week: It is us who turn history. It is time to sharpen our focus and not to close our eyes. The double helix has its special role to play here. And it is not surprising that Putin did not close the borders but let critical persons, intellectuals, artists, scientists, young people leave the country, an exitus of creativity, a brain drain that is being deliberately accepted in order to minimize resistance in today's Russia and to minimize potentially critical voices. With the turning point of the Ukrainian war, an immediate mass exodus from the Ukraine especially to Europe, also to Austria, also to Graz.

At the Ludwig Boltzmann Institute for Research on Consequences of War, that is based here in Graz, we are at the moment conducting an interview project on mobile things that Ukrainian refugees took with them when they had to leave the country. It is called *Mitgenommen*. “What do I take with me if I don't know whether I will ever come back?” An incredibly difficult question asked by one of our interview partners.

All of us are in a war of words, in a war of images, not only in Russia, where censorship has long since been restored, where freedom of press and freedom of opinion have been de facto abolished, where demonstrations are being brutally suppressed, where state-controlled information, propaganda, is being flooded into living rooms, where the head of the state is part of a sophisticated staging and iconography: Putin as Tsar, all powerful and politically sacred, as a general trying to combat the phantom pains of the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, as an athlete, a sportsman, riding bare-chested through the mountain on a horse, catching all this larger and larger fish, and even as an artist. The West has also long been involved in this war, fake news, cyber war, the information war is a hybrid war that is waged both internally and externally.

It is about the sovereignty of interpretation of current events of what is going on and the sovereignty of history of the past.

This leads us right into the topic of the culture of remembrance. It also shows that the diversity of media is vital for a resilient democracy, a diversity of opinions, and research is vital for a resilient democracy, a diversity of culture is vital for a resilient democracy.

The past is not finished, maybe it is not even past.

I was very touched by the memorial plaque in Rechnitz, a small village in eastern Austria, which says: “Only what is remembered, not what is forgotten, allows us to learn”. Places like Rechnitz, places also like the camp Graz-Liebenau, where Hungarian Jews were murdered shortly before the end of the Second World War in April 1945, in front of our doorstep, show us that the consequences of war, the consequences of totalitarian systems are often invisible at first glance, but they are subcutaneously present, and they continue to have an effect on us to this day. In many cases, grass has literally grown over the matter after 1945, but as we saw for example in Liebenau: As soon as the diggers lift the grass, the traces from the Second World War become visible, come to light – the grass only covered the traces superficially, they are still there, but invisible.

Places of remembrance are places of learning that contribute to visualization and make things more sensible to us. And all these are pieces for a living democracy. They are often only realized decades later. Across from us is a beautiful palace with a restaurant and a small flower shop now; there was the Gestapo headquarter in the Second World War during the Nazi era, a place of horror. A hardly visible memorial plaque stands in the courtyard. I guess that even a large part of the population of Graz knows nothing about the dark history of this building. This is why I find it even more important that projects like historical walks through this area or the analysis of the number of contaminated buildings in the portfolio of the Bundesimmobiliengesellschaft are now being realized.



In what property does the Geiger counter, so to say, react to the Nazi past? I would like to tell you about a joke from the Soviet era that says:

“Question to radio Yerevan: ‘What will the future look like?’ Answer by Radio Yerevan: ‘We know what the future will look like. It is more difficult with the past. The past changes all the time’.”

And this brings me to monuments or street names, the intentional testimonies as part of our cultural memory, visible signs of history, a culture of remembrance. At the

same time, they are also political symbols. They say more about the circumstances under which they were erected than about the actual person, the actual object. Which monuments were built, were toppled, altered, or not built? All of this provides an insight into how a society deals with its own history, with its own past. Some even say that probably there are so many monuments because politicians like to unveil

them so much. What does it say to us as a society, today, when someone towers over us larger than life, carved in stone?

As Robert Musil, the famous author, pointed out in 1935: “There is nothing in the world as invisible as monuments”. In fact, we carelessly pass by many monuments, many scholars or politicians today from the 19th century are no longer known to us. An example that I would like to mention in this context is the monument to Feliks Dzierżyński, who was the founder of the secret police in the Soviet era. His monument was right opposite the Lubianka, where the KGB, today FSB, was. I was there in 1991, when right after the coup in Moscow, it was torn down. In Minsk on the other side a new monument for the Iron Feliks, for Feliks Dzierżyński, was erected right opposite the KGB, as it is still called in Belarus today. Invisible and at the same time, we should not overlook it as a sign of the time. Or think of the huge memorial to the unknown Soviet soldier on the Schwarzenberg Square in Vienna. It was erected in August 1945, right after the end of the war, when Vienna was bombed out and in a terrible condition. In fact, it was the first major construction in post-war Vienna.

History is alive in 2022, when the meter long wall at the Palais Schwarzenberg right behind the monument was painted blue and yellow in the national colors of the Ukraine. And recently, the portrait of Alexei Nawalny was sprayed on. We see a monument as a crystallization point of the past and of the present, in which two turning points, two *Zeitenwenden*, collide.

Another example are street names. In many cities, in many countries, there are discussions on how to deal with personalized street names. In Graz, 750 streets will receive, and many of them have received, additional plaques. And some are being successfully renamed in order to get rid of a national socialist past. Currently, streets in Baltic states and streets in the Ukraine that bear names of Soviet heroes or even Russian artists, composers or poets are being renamed.

This shows us the culture of remembrance is not carved into stone. All of these shows us that art and culture are, ideally, the conscience of our society and enable the formation of identity.

“Since wars arise in the minds of men, peace must also be anchored in the minds of men.” This is a quote from UNESCO. With this in mind, UNESCO was founded in November 1945 on the ruins of the Second World War. Its cornerstones are education, science and culture.

This trias of education, science and culture strengthens our democratic and humanistic society, they are a seismograph of our society.

And today, we are once again at the turning point, at the *Zeitenwende*. A look into the past can remind us to be alert and not to take democracy, freedom, and peace for granted. I would like to conclude with the words of a young woman from Charkiv who now lives in my neighborhood. She said to me: “My life is not over; it's just interrupted for a while. I am waiting to be able to live the way I want to, even though I know it won't be possible.” Let's hope for a new break, a long break as possible in between. Thank you very much.

“Can we trust AI? State of the Art. Opportunities. Risks”

Keynote Speech by Roman Kern

Roman Kern is chief scientific officer at the *Know Center*, a research center for trustworthy AI, and assistant professor at the *Institute for Interactive Systems and Data Science* at the University of Technology in Graz.

Roman Kern’s strong ambition is to close the gap between science, industry, and society through applied research projects. As a computer scientist his mission is to make AI more trustworthy, as it is not trustworthy yet, while he is also committed to science to public communication to make people aware of what AI is. In his Keynote Speech, he introduces the basic technological principles of AI in an accessible way. While he acknowledges there are problems and risks, he highlights the potential of AI to become a helpful tool.



“I want to start by telling you how we got to where we are now. It all started with programming. You can think about programming and software development as instructing a machine what to do: If this happens do that, if this happens do that and so forth. The advantage of this is accountability; if something does not work, the programmer is to blame.

Going forward, we have machine learning, which is the underpinning of today’s artificial intelligence. In traditional machine learning, you no longer tell the machine how to solve a problem, but instead you give it examples. You say: Here is an example of this class, here is an example of that class. For instance, here we have pictures of cats and dogs, and you just label them as such. You say, this is a picture of a cat, this is a picture of a dog, this is another picture of a cat, this is a picture of a dog. By this, the machine learns to distinguish between pictures of cats and pictures of dogs. But the crucial thing is, in traditional machine learning it can only do this one task. If you show the machine a picture of a hamster, it will not recognize it, it will still tell you it is either a cat or a dog. It can only do the task it was supposed to do. And it is limited to the data it was trained with.

The pictures I showed you were, you guessed it, automatically generated. And they were automatically generated by the newest generation of AI, which is going beyond traditional machine learning.

This can not only distinguish between examples of cats and dogs, but it can generate images of cats and dogs. And just as an example, you can ask it to give you a picture of a cat in space, or to go a bit further, a picture of a cat but in the style of some artist. This is where we are today.

And this is the important thing I want to communicate to you: We are now at a shift, there is a new paradigm, a new generation of AI. We call this new generation generative AI, because it can generate images, it can generate text, music, videos, even movies. This is a bit scary, but for me, the cool part is, it can solve tasks it was not originally trained on.

So, if I get the question whether the hype around AI is justified, I would say, yes.

There is another term I need to introduce here: the notion of foundational models. These are the most powerful models, the models that can solve problems they were not originally intended to solve. And this is why we see this much potential in AI. We can use these models for automation and to support humans in various tasks.

One particular type of foundational model is the so-called large language model. This is the technology behind ChatGPT. I guess some of you have already used or tried out ChatGPT, I know my students did. So how does this technology work?

There are three components: General text, domain and task specific data, and human feedback data.

- 1) What we start with is text. Consider a large amount of text, like really, really, really a lot of text. I usually say, ChatGPT has read the internet, and it is not far off. The more text you have the better it is. That is the starting point you train a large language model with. Then, what this large language model does in its simplest form is to complete a piece of text. You give it the beginning of a sentence and it will end the sentence. You give it the beginning of a story and it will end the story. But it is not a chatbot, it just completes text. It is trained with one objective, namely, to predict the next word. It is not: create a story, or: be a chatbot, just: complete the text.
- 2) The next step is specific data, which could be smaller than the general text. For instance, this could be an interactive database which contains interactions and conversations. With this, the AI learns how to do a conversation because it was trained on conversation data. Again, we have an objective and this time it is this interaction: please learn how to hold a conversation.
- 3) The third part is another set of data, another objective. This is to inject desired behavior. For example, if you ask a large language model, please tell me how to build a bomb, sure thing, it will tell you. So, with this third objective we want to have control over how the AI behaves. There are specific training regimes in order to get AI to this stage, where it does not insult people or tells them how to build bombs.

This is how we end up with a large language model, with a chatbot we can use.

Another aspect I want to highlight is that the progress we see is tremendous. This graph shows how the skill level of different models developed over the past year, and the big takeaway message here is: We are improving at breaking the human baseline.

The models in red are built by Open AI, Google and so forth. The biggest models are provided by big tech companies. They are really dominating the field and to a certain extent are gateways.

In green, we see so-called open-source or open-weight models. These are models that can be used by research to improve and to study. They can be used, analyzed, and scrutinized, and potentially provide a better avenue to achieve this trustworthiness we want to have.

And what we see is that the gap is closing, so that is good news.



However, not everything is solved. As you can see in this article, the New York Times sued Open AI, the company behind ChatGPT, for using copyrighted material. How do they know copyrighted material was used? As you remember, large language models complete text. So, the New York Times gave ChatGPT the first part of some of their articles and asked it to complete it. Since ChatGPT was perfectly able to reconstruct the article exactly as they were, it was obvious it had learned it by heart.

There are two more things I want to say about the legal aspects of AI. First, the programmer of

AI is not the owner of the output of the model. Of course, Open AI will tell you, everything they generate with their chatbot belongs to them, but that is not legally justified. The second aspect is, if you have a brilliant idea for a picture, this again does not make you the owner of it. Say you envision a man running in a ballerina suit followed by a drunken pirate in the Sahara Desert and you ask an AI to generate it, you are not the creator, you are not the legal owner. Furthermore, if you ask the AI to generate the same picture in the style of Egon Schiele, that is not an infringement of copyright, as it counts as a derivative work. It is not directly taking the work of an artist, just being inspired by it. Whether the picture is good or not, I cannot comment on that.

What does ChatGPT know?

I like this question a lot because the answer is so surprising: It knows a lot. It was trained on the internet. For example, it can tell you quite accurately the metro lines and stations of the Hong Kong metro, as well as their coordinates. So, it kind of knows the Hong Kong metro system. To me, that is fascinating.

Knowledge is one thing, but does it have understanding?

The answer is, yes it does. I have to say, that is my opinion, there is a little controversy on that. But in my opinion, it does understand human concepts. It needs to in order to achieve the task. The AI is surprisingly human-like, because it was trained on human data, and now it replicates it, for the good and the bad.

The output of the AI depends on the database. If you have, for example, a database with job descriptions and the job descriptions conform to traditional gender roles, the chatbot will recommend traditionally female jobs to women and traditionally male jobs to men. It does so by replicating the bias that is inherent to the data it was trained with. We call this ‘bias in, bias out’.

Does it think or plan?

The answer is no. But we are working on it. Currently, this is a big difference between AI and people. It is only input-output: you give the chatbot a task, and it gives you a result. But it does not do this on its own.

What about creativity?

It depends on how you define creativity. What generative AI does is to create something which has not been there before and that is potentially useful. Whether this is creativity or not, I do not feel qualified to answer.

So, all is going well?

Unfortunately, not. As a computer scientist I must acknowledge there are some problems concerning

theoretical or even practical implications for democracy. AI as it is now being done is computationally quite heavy, so it requires a lot of energy. Whenever we ask ChatGPT a question, it consumes energy. That is not sustainable.

Another implication is that with AI you can easily generate a huge amount of text and you can tweak it in a specific direction. This could be exploited, for example for misinformation campaigns or propaganda. With AI you can very easily flood the internet with text and control the style of information, you can even optimize it to create an emotional response, to optimize how it is being shared and spread. In a way, AI is better suited to create misinformation than humans are. This is certainly one thing to consider.

Another problem is deep fakes. You can create videos of a situation that never occurred in real life, but that look real. You can take any person and replicate them in pictures, videos, or audio. We all know stories of faked calls with the voice of politicians, or videos in which a famous person does something they would never do.

Another thing where AI can be exploited is social engineering. For example, AI makes it very easy to create phishing emails or to create fake web pages with convincing login dialogues. In other words, AI makes it easy to do things that we do not like people to do.

There is another example I brought with me, just to show you that the same technology that can potentially be misused, can also be useful. The master thesis, I had the opportunity to supervise, is about voice cloning, where you clone the voice of a person and then generate arbitrary text with this voice. In this case, we cloned the voice of a person who cannot speak, who cannot articulate sentences. So, this person can use AI to read out text in their voice. So, the same technology that can be used to make deep fakes can be used for good to give someone the ability to speak, for example after an accident. These are two sides of the same medal.

What are potential solutions?

I want to mention the AI act by the European Union. It is cleverly designed in the way that it is risk-based. On one end of the spectrum, you have scenarios with very low risk. There, anything goes. On the other end, you have high risk areas, such as controlling a nuclear power plant or social scoring systems. In these areas, no AI is allowed.

In the middle, we have an area with some level of risk. There, the AI needs to fulfill criteria of trustworthiness. These criteria are to an extent defined in the AI act. While regulation is one aspect, the second aspect is public education. Here I come back to what I said about my mission. My mission is to explain how AI works, its limitations, and opportunities. What we need now is a response from civil society.

With this, I want to conclude. We now live in a day and age where AI has reached a new level. There is this new paradigm with generative AI. This is a new way AI can potentially support and help us humans. There is a huge potential I personally think we have not seen yet. I expect it to come in the future, with additional tools that help us to live an easier life, make jobs easier and more productive. However, there is a task for all of us. We as a society have the responsibility to react to these challenges. It is not only us computer scientists, but the whole society needs to decide how AI should behave. There are risks and challenges like bias, misinformation, deep fakes. So, I come back to the beginning and the question: Can we trust AI? I would love to say ‘yes’, but I cannot. I have to acknowledge that today technologies like large language models do not fall under the category of ‘trustworthiness’ as it has been defined for example in the AI act of the EU. This is what I want to conclude with: Further research has to be done.”

Plenary Discussion

Massimo Dell'Utri

I wanted to know whether you think that ChatGPT or other AI will be able to pass the Turing test in the future?

Roman Kern

For everyone not familiar: This test was proposed by Alan Turing a long time ago for interactions between humans and machines. If a human can be fooled into thinking they are communicating with a human instead of a machine, the test would be passed. I personally do not like this test, but I think yes, it will be possible. I think we should find more advanced ways to see whether the level of human-consciousness can be measured.

Gintautas Mažeikis

In your speech, you mentioned several interesting things, one of them being the general aspect of Zeitenwende. And I was very surprised that you mentioned Feliks Dzierżyński. I have been thinking about him and the place he is from, Aschmjany, the same place where Józef Piłsudski and Romain Gary were



born. They tried to hide these places because nothing important happened there. We call places like this a marsh or swamp of memory, as it is impossible to notice any turning points in the history of these places, not to one side nor to the other, not forward or back, there is a marsh of memory. What do we think about such kinds of places, places we do not remember but where originally people, famous people tried to escape from? You proposed the very good model of turning points in history and I fully agree when we talk about the Ukrainian tragedy. But some people come from a marsh where nobody remembers nobody. What do you think about these places of absence of memory?

Barbara Stelzl-Marx

Thank you for this important question of how to deal with such a marsh, where nobody remembers nothing, and still, history is there. For many decades it was not known to the public what had happened in Liebenau, the camp right in the center of Graz. Maybe that is something we can compare to a swamp, but still, it happened. Eventually, the traces of the past emerged.

For example, the forest of Kurapaty, Belarussia, is full of graves of people that were killed in the Stalinist period. At first, nothing is visible but trees, but in the past years civil society started to put up crosses to remember the victims of the Stalinist period. Not far from there is a former concentration camp. It seems to be easier for the regime to remember the mass murder from the German side, but not from their own, former Soviet, history. History is not past, it influences what is going on today, and it influences swamps, where on the first sight nothing is visible. Eventually, the traces from the past will emerge there as well.

Pierre Guillet de Monthoux

I just wanted to thank you very much for the comment on the swamps. I have been thinking about the work of Urbonas, the artist. The situation of the wetland and the preservation of the region, which has been very fruitful, has been tossed around more and more in the formation of culture and ideas of culture. But not in a way – which you could say in a sense would be a barbaric reaction – to just dry them up and see what comes up, that is not the creative thing. What is there, I do not know, but you are hinting at something which I think is a common European interest in preserving and understanding wetlands and swamps. Literally and metaphorically as in swamps of memories, which have to be treated in a creative, artistic way in order to preserve them and find out what parts of history they are hiding.



Peter Hanke

Concerning the interesting speech on the Zeitenwende I was thinking about how many turns are possible to have? Is there a risk of inflation of the word Zeitenwende? How much distance do we need to be sure that we can remember it as one event and not just a series of events?

Barbara Stelzl-Marx

Of course, there is a kind of inflation of the term. A colleague of mine researched how much it was looked up, googled in the past years and it is quite a lot. Sometimes we say we are right in the middle of a Zeitenwende and a couple years later no one thinks about it anymore. Only in the retrospective I think it is possible to definitely say, this was a turning point, this really changed the lives of many people in a significant way. Only in retrospect we are able to see what it was in the end.

“The Struggle for the Survival of Europe as a Cultural and Political Entity Must Continue”

Keynote Speech by ECP-President Pär Stenbäck

During the last century or two, it has become a habit to predict the perish of the West, its culture, and its societies. Oswald Spengler used to be a house-hold name for such prophecies. But here we are, we and Europe did not perish, but still we hear the same message: Europe is weak, barbarians are at the gate, unity is weak, we will be crushed like a sausage in a hot dog by the superpowers in East and West.

No doubt, Europe is facing many problems and has few good solutions to most of them. I picked only three of them, all anomalies. The first is demography: The aging continent needs more hands to upkeep its standard of living, but at the same time large sections of the public reject the influx of migrants and refugees.



The second anomaly relates to security. During the Cold War, it was obvious that Western Europe was defenseless, as the Soviet Union dominated such a large swath of the continent and invested in an enormous military apparatus. The democratic countries had to rely on the presence of the United States to guarantee its security. But the Cold War ended, and Europe happily

started to enjoy the peace dividend and likewise, the US partly lost interest in the continent. Today, Ukraine and many countries in Eastern Europe have woken up to a new reality, suddenly understanding that you can lose your country, your national identity, and your freedom. Another part of Europe does not share the same feeling of an imminent threat to our common values.

Simultaneously, all of Europe faces the risk of losing the engagement of the US, a country in inner turmoil, where a fight between isolationists and internationalists creates uncertainty of its commitment to our shared values. What is the reaction to these disquieting signals among our decision-makers? Well, to say the least, mixed. Yes, Ukraine has led to a reckoning of the dangers Europe is facing. But has it led to a thorough renewal of our cooperation and decision-making mechanisms? No, we still see spoilers, nations and politicians which do their best to disturb and prevent unified and efficient action. I do not only refer to the heated and confused debate around supplying arms to Ukraine. Of course, that debate connects to the rise of old and new populist and extremist movements in our midst. We had come to believe that their influence had waned, but now we must prepare for a return of forces that will question our basic ideals and beliefs concerning cultural and political freedoms. We certainly need to fasten our seat belts, preparing for a new onslaught on common values and practices. Against this background, I see it as an anomaly that the European project is still questioned and that many intellectuals and people of culture remain passive or skeptical to this project. It is claimed that the EU lacks democratic governance, and that Brussels has become a behemoth that is dangerous for the member nations.

These claims may sound exaggerated to people with experience of democracy at the national level, but they function as excuses for shortcomings by those with an ideological agenda. Even with a limited knowledge of World and European history, it must be evident that the European project is unique and creates a benchmark for a most demanding and ambitious experiment in human history. Perfectionists need to be patient. The European project is at a crossroad and must respond to the Russian attack, an attack not only on the geopolitical stability but also on the values Europe stands for, the third dimension. It is a struggle between collectivism and individualism, between a reactionary regime and open societies. Those who believe that a cease-fire or a victory for either part would bring stability back, are mistaken.

Russia under authoritarian rule is a nation believing in imperial greatness that will remain a threat to all democratic European countries. It is fatigue after two years of fighting that is creeping in, and defeatism is spreading in the West. The Vienna-based author and geopolitical expert Ivan Krăstev says: “The general view is that if Ukraine wins, the victory is ours; but if Ukraine loses, the defeat is their own. Which road will Europe choose?” It has been relying on soft power and the transformative power of trade and

prosperity across borders. Now Europe must add hard power to its survival arsenal. It is not an easy mental change, and we see how difficult this is in the largest country, in Germany. To make Europe whole and safe, enlargement has become necessary and unavoidable, and it must include Ukraine, Moldova, the Balkan states, Georgia. But this presupposes changes in the EU decision-making rules. Hungary has given us fair warning: Not to allow new spoiler countries enter the family with a veto right in their pockets – think present day Serbia. Qualified-majority voting must be introduced if the Union is to reinvent itself.

The third European anomaly is the one of shared and not shared values among nations and citizens. Can Europe survive, if the polarization between liberal/left ideas and authoritarian/right is increasing and will produce a Parliament in the June elections with sharp opposite blocks, not sharing a common view about the need to strengthen the European project, based on free expression and constructive diversity? People of culture beware of such an outcome; it will take us back several decades.

I started by referring to the doomsday prophets a century ago. Liberal democracy survived two world wars and a Cold War, against many odds. What are the odds today? Not good, if you listen to the pessimists of today. One of them is the French historian and anthropologist Emmanuel Todd. He enjoys some authority because he predicted the collapse of the Soviet Union by comparing infant-mortality statistics. Now he joins the pessimists in his book “La Défaite de l’Occident” in which he criticizes American imperialism and US involvement in different wars, such as Ukraine today.

What makes his opinions different from similar ones are his conclusions: The US has failed in its leadership; it has not convinced the world of the need to contain Russia. He writes that the US produces fewer cars and less wheat than before. Infant-mortality is higher in the US than in Russia and Japan. There are long-term cultural shifts: educational progress has brought educational decline because it has led to the disappearance of the values that favor education itself. What to say? He may be partly right, he may exaggerate, as many others do. The debate about American decline versus resilience is ongoing, but we Europeans cannot wait for the outcome of the American presidential elections. We must act in our own and lasting interest, far beyond the US power struggle. The EU enlargement offers one way forward: It cannot and must not happen without a reform of the decision - making process within the Union. We cannot defend the cultural and political values we share among us if half-totalitarian governments will continue to veto and sabotage the policies of the majority.

“Bleakness is chic”, writes Janan Ganesh in FT. There is no penalty for predicting a Trump win, or the failure of the European project. Such predictions are based on an ingrained belief that gloom equals seriousness. Why speak so much about policy, ideology, and values at a cultural forum? Simply because, cultural freedom will suffer most if the dream of a borderless European cultural dimension based on the acceptance of diversity and tolerance will die. Therefore, the future of the European project is an existential question for every European individual.

Plenary Discussion

moderated by Karl-Erik Norrman

Gayle McPherson

Thank you for your presentation, it was interesting and informing. Karl-Erik asked me to say a few words about the work we have done that is directly related to this issue. You are talking about a situation we are still living through, and it is quite difficult to try to protect and preserve culture for future generations while you are in the middle of the war. We did some work a few years back for the British council on the role of culture and art in global security and stability. We did a mapping exercise of 57 projects around the world and whether or not global stability and security were some of their first aims.



Not surprisingly, it was not an explicit aim, but it clearly was an implicit aim. We looked at conflicts in Columbia, Rwanda, and Syria: looking at a post-conflict resolution, all within countries who had a history of conflict. The local cultural context had to be the priority - there could be no focus on a certain model to how a culture deals with conflict. They were very different in their approaches in how they dealt with conflict based on what type of culture and art was very anchored inside their culture.

Pär Stenbäck

Europeans are oftentimes very interested in appeasing, rather than getting involved into too many conflicts. Conflict theory and research shows that giving into the demands of an oppressor does not pay. The Korea model was for example suggested to solve the war in Ukraine. There is no peace treaty in Korea, and they decided to just negotiate later. There is no peace, but just a ceasefire. If there is no peace in Ukraine but a ceasefire, it would just give an end to the present atrocities, but a new conflict could start tomorrow.



Stelios Virvidakis

I understand that you did not want to take sides in the discussion or trying to point to pessimists and optimists as well. If someone pressed you more, would you say it is a qualified pessimism or pessimism? How would you describe your own stance?

Pär Stenbäck

I would say I am realistic based on past experience on conflict. Conflicts either end in a good way, or in a bad way. Normally a mixture of both. I have come to the conclusion that you cannot be a pessimist or an optimist. History does not repeat itself, but there are certain features that always repeat themselves. That is how a conflict emerges. During that period, you can be both a pessimist and an optimist, because of new information always coming up. The Ukrainian conflict can end in a good way or in a bad way, based on your subjective opinion, but either way, it will end. History has never been black and white in my personal experience.

Gintautas Mažeikis

Can stability be wrong, or toxic even? For example, the Belarussian opposition that has mostly fled to Lithuania, they do not like stability. Philosophers, musicians in several conflict regions are in jail. They do not like stability, they would like an explosion of this one situation, to change this one situation. Can you comment about this one: Is there a wrong or failed hope?

Pär Stenbäck

Intricate question, wrong or failed hope. I prefer to go to another question: But what can we expect of the Russian nation in the hands of a totalitarian ruler? There have been many totalitarian rulers. I am afraid that not much will happen because of the influence of totalitarian rulers in the past that have a staying power in the Russian mind about being different, having a sphere of influence, being of a higher moral standard than the rest of the world. Those things do not go away if you have a different government, they are in the minds of people. A change or a coup in the Kremlin will not make things better. Comparing it to Germany after the Second World War: The defeat was so strong that it led to a change of mind in a broader sense in the population. Their image of themselves got defeated. Will that happen in Russia? There are very few signs in Russia and of Russian history of that happening because these thoughts are so deeply ingrained. It is hard to foresee a solution. The Russian topic will stay a problem in the European context, even if Putin is gone and even if the Ukrainian war ends now.

Mary Miller

This is a bit of a swerve but still goes back to the foundation of the ECP: Do you think that the European capital of culture still has a point as a project with the rise of far-right governments in Europe hosting it?

Pär Stenbäck

We are a very small-scale product of the market which means that the impact is smaller, because there is no research and so on. The burden is on all of us. As a collective, we have created networks, but we cannot change the face of Europe as this body. The power of council is still strong in a broader sense. The power of culture is not that strong. Sometimes politicians use the power of culture, but it is not very common. There is still a power under the surface to show that the connection with politics is so imminent that it might not even seem obvious. If you can mobilize culture as a uniting force, something could be achieved.

Laura Kolbe

I think your notion of hope is very important. There has to be hope for the future, because what is the alternative? The civic society has been very strong, even when states are fading. Europe is not going anywhere; the European people are still here. We have a very strong sense of civil society and resilience. When I teach European history, I say that the strength of Europe is three things: Renaissance, reformation, and revolution. A rebirth of Europe has taken place several times. Always after a war and a civil war, there is a reconstruction. Maybe it is not always revolution, but certainly resilience. The problem is a loss of hope in the younger generation. How do you see this situation?



Pär Stenbäck

Every cultural person is a part of the civil society, part of the network. If we become too individualistic, as an actor who doesn't have any connection to civil society, we are on the wrong path. Culture is not the power of the civilian society. Look at Russia, at art, they are helpless against Putin and there is no Russian

cultural renaissance. There have been short periods in Russia where culture has created a link to the rest of Europe, but civil society is part of the games. But still, there is a strong link between the civilian society and culture.

Pierre Guillet de Monthoux

The question about the cynic society and the future of Europe is important, no? What you're saying is bringing up the question about culture and art. The macro-ideas of what we are discussing when we are talking about political science and so on. But if you look at Russian and Eurasian culture, it is very strong. There is a whole kind of theorizing that has been going on for forever. Talking about the local initiatives: When we have the course on art and literature at the business school, I teach at we use the slogan “Where to start? Start with art.”, and not culture.

Pär Stenbäck

Two thoughts come to my mind: There has always been the dream that the Russian diaspora can create an alternative. The Russian diaspora has tried to put up a cultural identity, but it has failed in the past, partly because they get homesick and, in the end, they don't produce that revolution or whatever you could call it. They should not be too romantic about the culture and the country, as just a small elite holds up this culture. If you write a critical book or something like that, in the last 40 years, you have a very small readership, about 20,000 readers over all those years. To reach the real population in all of Russia is nearly impossible, because it is such a big country. I'm not a philosopher or great thinker, I just started to combine a lot of ideas from different worlds to see if that works.

Jānis Garančs

Thank you for your speech, which is genuinely a wake-up-call for us that it is not only the war, but the combination. The perfect storm about the survival of Europe as a cultural and political entity is not just words, it is a reality. We have a short time during these days to talk about the context and infrastructure of social media in the context of the European situation and culture. Europe now has so many multimedia companies, like Twitter or Facebook, that are US or other where based, or controlled by few people from the tech space and how that affects the culture of discussion. How this machinery and those algorithms are destroying the philosophical and cultural discourse in those countries, where at the same time, public media quality and funding has been decreasing in combination with this aggressive storm of anonymous ideas and multimedia campaigns. And also, the aspect of culture in terms of demography in Europe that also has to say: “What are our values and how that affects all those big waves that sometimes also bring opportunities for war to happen?”

Pär Stenbäck

I have sometimes dreamed about the scope of the convening power of the ECP if we could have resources with 5 to 10 people working on these types of projects. We have received a lot of good proposals over the years on how we could use our convening power to influence things. But sometimes people say: “Cultural people are helpless people who cannot print money, there are other people who can print money.” But we have accepted this role of being a convening power with almost zero resources. So that is the situation.

Karl-Erik Norrman

Thank you Pär for this excellent keynote speech, and I will invite Mary together with me to continue a more general discussion about the Zeitenwende. Just one last comment about Russia and the eternal totalitarianism of this culture. You can go to one of my favorite authors Dostoevsky and his book “The Three Brothers Karamazov” and you can see the different facets of Russia and the Russian soul through Europe and the West. One of the brothers is very fascinated by the liberal thinking and the lifestyle in the

west, one is very stuck to the orthodox church moral and critical against the immorality in the west. It is still the same, nothing has changed in the past 160 years.

Plenary Debate

moderated by Mary Miller

My major question at the moment is: How do we define Europe, because everything is in such an extraordinary flux? We are seeing the rise of the far-right, we have a polarized left wing, all of us here would probably describe ourselves as liberals. Pär, you mentioned the expansion of the EU. If the EU expands as it is likely to do, bringing together these very polarized forces, how would that reform work, how would that expansion work?

To borrow a phrase from last years' Edinburgh international festival: “Where do we go from here?”

There is so much criticism of the EU. My country, which I would rather define as Scotland than Great Britain, is at a complete crossroad because of Brexit. I have to say, in my view, the appalling idea of Brexit. Scotland now wants to be independent and rejoin the EU. How does that fit into a new Europe?



Massimo dell'Utri

Pär, you mentioned soft power. Mary, you also mentioned the power of culture, so I was just curious, whether you have some favorite strategy to use soft power? I am asking this mainly because some of us will be involved in a workshop on soft power in Luxembourg, so I'm trying to exploit your experience.

Gintautas Mažeikis

There is not only soft power, but also smart power, and there is a new discussion about the relationship between soft and smart power. Smart power presupposes more active actions, sometimes even using elements of violence. This is not hard power but also not soft power; it is something in between. It is about smart power.

Peter Hanke

Smart power – is that not what we learned from the Hollywood industry in the United States, and now the tech industry with AI? The investors in the US are investing at least 20 times more than Europeans in this development. Smart power we can learn from the US.



Karl-Erik Norrman

In cultural diplomacy we have discussed the difference between hard and soft power. People in cultural diplomacy have agreed that smart power is a combination of both: you have the soft power, and you also have the hard power.

In the discussion about how the world looked before the Zeitenwende we used to say: The US has the largest military budget, so they are the typical hard power. Europe does not have this large military, so it is the typical soft power. If you add Hollywood into the discussion, some part of the US has smart power too.

Miran Mohar

I am an artist from Ljubljana. I come from a Partisan family who fought the Nazis, they went to the woods with hard power. Without that, without taking the risk of even losing your life, there would be no victory. And they also had soft power: they had cultural departments and so on. It was a combination, but without civil resistance it was not possible to gain anything. I’m a pacifist, but my friend in Belgrade, who’s a Buddhist, asked me: “Can you imagine, Miran, we are living in a time where me as a Buddhist should sometimes have a gun?”

That is something we have to face; we are living in a paradox. People in the Ukraine cannot discuss: “Do we want to have a cultural project and no army?”



Mary Miller

Is there anybody here from far outside the EU? Brigita, you have just come back from Australia: How does Australia see Europe at the moment?

Brigita Stroda

A very quick answer is Australia does not have to think about language. The same may be true for America. The wonderfulness of Europa is that every few hundred kilometers there is a different language, which influences how culture is perceived and performed. The further you are away from the European project, the more you have an appreciation for the results of this diversity. If there is only one language, and it is the most powerful language in the world, that screws with your ability to deeply understand Europe. The point of understanding Europe is we have to live together, otherwise we don’t have a Europe.

I also have a comment trying to answer your question about how we can define Europe. Equality, tolerance, and rule of law are absolutely essential to the European Union. This brings Pär into a complete contradiction for his point of view, which is that appeasement never works. An expansion of Europe, especially if it is to be done quickly, would mean an appeasement of these principles, especially rule of law, because corruption will be a massive stake and you cannot fix that quickly. There is no quick fix to the extension of Europe unless you address rule of law.



Pär Stenbäck

It comes to my mind how quickly you can lose your influence. Because power means influence. We have seen how in Ukraine the west has lost its influence, its power, its soft power. The United States, but also, we in Europe have not been able to convince ourselves that our values are applicable in the Ukrainian case, because we hear: It’s hypocrisy, we have not been doing the same. Gaza is the example most often referred to.

This shows how quickly you can lose your influence, your soft power in the global context. You cannot trust that you will remain in your power. Whether its soft power or hard power, it’s not a lasting concept you can trust will be there forever.

What comes after that? Can you repair your ‘image’ so to say? For example, by being consistent – which we are not in the Gaza case. Are we defending values that are not our values?

Vivek Arunchalam

I am a professor for business, and I am also from India, so I have this outside perspective.

The first thing I would like to say is that economic dominance leads to political dominance. When we look at Europe as it was from the 1950s to the 20th century, there was a huge economic prosperity and the whole world was looking at Europe. Today, Europe is failing when it comes to science and technology, and also job creation. This is why people are really not focusing on the togetherness inside of Europe. And it is also why we have a rise of the right wing in Germany, Sweden, Netherlands, and the UK. At some point, Europe really needs to look at the fundamental problems within Europe.



Mary Miller

At the start of Pär’s speech this morning, he talked about looking after the European project and standing up for it, which is why we are all here, but that it is also ok to criticize the EU. So how do we criticize the EU?

Karl-Erik Norrman

I am not a Brussels insider, just a European by heart. You can criticize Germany for a lot of things, but it is the only European country I know where a considerable proportion of the population would answer the question of “What is your identity?” with “European”. That is partly because of historical political correctness but also because of this feeling that they have been instrumental in building this European project and want to continue to be instrumental.

How to reform Brussels? I think every new president of the EU commission says we have to reduce bureaucracy and make processes simpler, but then they are faced with reality, which is that we have to avoid abuse and criminality, especially when it comes to funding. We need a control mechanism. Democracy and institutions are not quick bodies, they need time to achieve results. That’s why there is a fascination among populists for strong leaders, strong results, a quick way from word to action.

A friend of mine has defined democracy not in a very optimistic way, but in a realistic way: Democracy is the art of carrying disappointment. Every compromise means some degree of disappointment for the various parties involved. This is what the whole European project has to be about: compromising about values, political ideas, money. And this is difficult, it takes a lot of patience.



Mary Miller

I am currently involved in a major project in Scotland where we ask questions about the word belonging: “Belonging – what does that mean to you?” We have had conversations with 1000 people and so far, not one person we interviewed, said that their identity is European. They all say they are Scottish, British, or moved to Scotland from somewhere.

Savina Tarsitano

As an educator and mediator, I work with civil society and community. Especially after Covid and the different conflicts I noticed a lack of European identity, it has become more nationalistic. People say: “I am Italian”, “I am Catalan”, and so on. The governments in the Mediterranean are all focused on the development of their identity, but it is a local identity more than a European identity.



As an artist, this was shocking, because normally art is open to the people, there is no nationality. In the Mediterranean countries there is a lack of trust that is connected to economic problems, a lack of perspective and faith. I notice this also among students.

Working with European projects there is a call from art and culture to create a breach between the civil society and community. We have to rethink how to rebuild this trust, we have to reflect on the condition of the people inside Europe.

Tanja Prušnik

I am an artist from Vienna, and I personally would always say: First, I am Austrian, I am Austro-Slovene. The question is always about where we are from, about our heritage. As an Austro-Slovene, I have my own history, which is about resistance: The Moscow declaration came out of an armed resistance. Austria emerged from a worldwide conflict, and it is so important to remember what we were going through, what



our ancestors were going through. Now we are living in a bubble in Austria, in what I call a utopia of freedom. But it was an armed conflict that led us to where we are now.

How can we as artists have an impact?

We as artists make statements. I just came back from the biennale in Venice. In the Austrian pavilion Anna Jermolaewa is making a statement against Russian politics. The whole world is coming there, it is crazy! Why can art not spread this trend even more? I know it is also about money, but if we focus on working together, maybe we can have a positive influence. Maybe we can help people to overcome this lack of open information.

Mary Miller

In the UK there is a massive cutting down on the importance of art in education. I cannot see how without real emphasis on the importance of art for children from a very young age onwards we can build a future where art is even more important in its message.

Steve Austen

The European Union is a brand-new phenomenon. Where can you find an international entity where the citizens can vote for a parliament, which is not a parliament but has the power of a parliament? It is not an unidentified flying object! No, it is an Identified flying object. It just started; nobody knows where it goes apart from you. Now it comes to trust.

The most recent EU-barometer shows that European people are no longer willing to go to the voting boxes of their own national government; it is stable at under 50%. What are the expectations for the upcoming EU elections? 71% of Europeans say they are likely to vote, that is over 20% more than at the last EU election. 81% percent believe voting is even more important given the current geopolitical situation. Whether we want it or not, a lot of people think Europe is needed to avoid the geopolitical scenario getting worse.

I happened to be in the neighborhood at the erection of a new Pan European political party called VOTE, an initiative of former Erasmus students. They have just had their second general assembly in Bucharest on the topic of Europe. They entered the European parliament after they were erected and have one seat, now they are expecting two, probably even three seats. They have two seats in the Dutch national parliament and expect to double them. Where are these votes coming from? From people who are involved in Erasmus programs. This is the generation that is bringing us to the grave, which I like because I want to be buried by people who have a European mentality.

Pär Stenbäck

The EU is a victim of thinking that we are so good that nothing can be better. Being progressively pro-European, even cosmopolitan, we forget that we are always home from somewhere. One of the mistakes of the liberal democracy project is that we denied the strength of national and domestic feelings. This can be combined with a pro-European attitude, but we should not forget that we have to allow this feeling if we want to appeal to people.

Karl-Erik Norrman

We now come to a point in our discussion where we ask Stelios Virvidais to speak about “Philosophy and Culture after the Zeitenwende”. Thank you very much Mary Miller for moderating this part!

“Philosophy and Culture in Europe after the Zeitenwende”

by Stelios Virvidakis (Greece)

Well hello to everyone. I think I talk on behalf of everyone by thanking our Austrian hosts and especially Luise Kloos for organizing this and also thanking Karl Erik and the senators of the ECP for making these wonderful meetings possible over the years.

Now I have a very big topic as you understand and I am not going to bombard you with names or with concepts and I apologize in advance to my fellow philosophers in the room for sounding a little simplistic in my approach, but I do not want this to appear as a kind of intro to philosophy. One more thing before I begin; talking about looking at the ECP and at Europe from the outside, we have some external observers and I propose again for the near future that we invite Chinese observers as well. I am in a dialogue with Chinese intellectuals, and it is interesting to see how they look at us.

So, I start with some introductory remarks and methodological considerations. Exactly how should one approach such a topic, how do we understand the concepts involved, which are huge and I am afraid a little vague - Philosophy? Culture? Zeitenwende? What does that mean “after the Zeitenwende”, exactly when was that, at the end of the 20th century?

Now how do we define the issues that we have to address? What are the relevant questions to formulate, how do we think about contemporary socio-political crises, many crises at the same time, consecutive and simultaneous, and how do we cope with new challenges? And what is the role of philosophy in all of this? Is it reasoning about how to deal with particular practical problems - but can philosophy do anything about this, or is it too theoretical? Or is it reflecting on the relations between philosophy and culture? So do we just limit ourselves to this, and philosophers just should let other people do their work, the difficult work, that dirty work, if you like. And from a philosopher's point of view, we have to reexamine the function of philosophy as a humanistic discipline and at the same time as a part of culture. Philosophy is the core of culture becoming self-aware. Now, let's talk about traditional tasks of philosophical thinking which you may find in textbooks - we don't define philosophy as such, but we try to specify some tasks for philosophy. What are the tasks of philosophy, traditionally?

The tasks are (and I am talking about the western philosophy, but I could also go to eastern traditions) first of all, to elucidate and try to define basic concepts such as the ones we here discuss, to justify important beliefs. This is when philosophers sometimes sound bizarre, when you want to justify the belief that you're not dreaming right now, like Descartes, or that the sun is going to rise tomorrow, like Hume, and then of course to justify liberalism and democracy, the belief in democracy and the values we cherish, at least in the west. And, more difficult, to provide the comprehensive and coherent conception of the world - the Weltanschauung - and of the position of human beings in it and do all these critically. And, last but not least, to elaborate norms - this is practical philosophy - for guiding our lives and to highlight values which confer meaning on our existence. Are these common values for everyone, are the values the people in China highlight the same as the values we in the west highlight and consider most important, most



prominent? What about criticism and freedom?

Now philosophy then can be described as a cognitive or a quasi-cognitive enterprise, an attempt to understand how things - in the broadest sense of the term ‘thing’ - hang together. This is a famous definition by Wilfred Sellars, the American pragmatist philosopher, and it has been pointed out that philosophy in ancient times has been a way of life, not just theoretical discussions and this is an idea elaborated by the French historian Pierre Hadot talking about the past, but you can find this also in modern philosophy. Philosophy was a way of life for Descartes and Spinoza and Hume and now we are trying to think if philosophy is a way of life for philosophy professors nowadays at universities, an art of living, as Alexander Nehamas has described it.

Now we are confronted by crises on a global scale, some of them we have discussed and some of them we will be discussing in the afternoon, but to name some of the most important:

- Challenge of AI for instance,
- Climate change. In Greece we have a wonderful summer but it's the wrong time, it's not normal to have this weather now and climate change is everywhere right now, forest fires are increasing etc.
- Pandemics, health issues - we've just suffered from the pandemic and there are more to come if we believe specialists.
- World poverty, that's an old one, the questions of dealing with world poverty,
- International conflicts, ongoing wars, violence at a terrible level and of a terrible intensity, as you can see in the Ukraine, and what is happening now in the Near East is also frightening,
- Refugees and immigrant. We have discussed this also in the ECP, what do you do when you have this influx of immigrants from Africa, from the Near East? We have it in the south, in Italy, in Spain, in Greece this is a real problem for for the islands for instance.
- Dangers for liberal democracies, we've already mentioned this, there were frightening signs in Hungary, Poland a while ago, and everyone is just bracing for what will happen if Trump is reelected in the states,
- Connected to wars are religious fundamentalism, fanaticism and
- Populism among our politicians.
- Wokeism, this is something we have discussed before, the identity politics developing on the left, which is kind of misleading, it's a bad direction that some left-wing politics have taken and this has caused a backlash from the far right and the populist right.
- And the unfettered rapid growth of new technologies which are connected also to climate change and also to the challenge of AI.

These are the dystopias that we are trying to imagine, like a bad dream, a nightmare that is approaching. They are challenges for contemporary culture - how do artists deal with this? And remember the famous line from Hölderlin: “Wozu Dichter – and I would say Denker und Künstler – in dürftiger Zeit?” Why after the Zeitenwende our Zeit is dürftig? I think “dürftig” is a difficult word to explain. At the time of Nietzsche, a Greek poet, Cephæris, has translated this as “a time with a small soul”.

Is there a real danger for our values? And now I'm talking about artistic and literary cultural values apart from the socio-political and moral values in liberal democracies. Is there a danger or a threat for human creativity as such? As we're going to discuss in the workshop that is coming up, will machines take over? And what does this mean, what does this imply, are we going to lose the very sense of our own humanity so that we do not recognize what is human anymore because the very notion of being human will have changed? Is the prospect of transhumanism going beyond the human sounds better, transcending the human, becoming gods? Is this the idea of a new enhanced humanism or is it the idea of a new barbarism,

the beginning of a new dark age?

How could philosophers, how could philosophy help, what is the job of philosophers? (These are suggestions and questions for discussion at the same time and not just for professional philosophers themselves.)



Are philosophers guardians of traditional values, are they gatekeepers who are there to warn you about what is coming up, to criticize the dystopias and the bad prospects that are looming large in the horizon? Let me remind you of the fact that philosophers who conduct thought-experiments and imagine situations are explorers of possible worlds; good and also bad explorers of new possibilities, probing the limits of intelligibility and finitude. This is my sort of election for Kant's approach to philosophy, just checking the limits of knowledge and intelligibility and recognizing our finitude. We are finite beings. Philosophers can also be seen as interpreters, as mediators, they go between some scientific and humanistic domains as moderators of debates. Philosophers provide conceptual tools for the self-awareness, the analysis and assessment of dimensions and perspectives of cultural production.

Of course, here I can imagine the reaction of my artist friends like in Greece when they say 'leave us alone, you philosophers, you want to tell us exactly what is good art'. I mean, this is the platonic dream and that is pretty bad, so we should control ourselves, but we can provide conceptual tools and say well, here they are use them! Philosophers are thinkers, pondering the sense of what it means to be human and offering landmarks for pursuing different ways of living well. There's not just one way of living well and living well is not just a superficial good life, it has a deep meaning.

Concluding questions for further discussion, as I don't want to speak for long:

- How could the above thoughts and remarks turn into practical suggestions? This is very fine, but, you know, make it practical! I teach ethics and applied ethics and there you try to make it practical, but still, there are questions.
- What could be the role of philosophical and cultural artistic education? Could they go together? It is also interesting in writing high school textbooks for philosophy, as an intro to philosophy and I always want to include art. These textbooks have paintings, they have links to musical compositions, sculpture, and literature. That's one of my favorite topics, philosophy, and literature.
- Which are the values and the norms to be preserved? There are some artistic values and norms, apart from political and social values.
- How could we learn from history? That's a word which I hadn't mentioned so far; philosophy cannot live without history, systematic philosophy is a way of doing philosophy, but also history of philosophy is important. History of science, history of philosophy, history of ideas, history of art. Europe is about its history as well, Europe cannot live only in the present with its historical depth, and of course it's the Greek past, but it's also the Judeo-Christian past. The Chinese have this fantasy that we are the two big cultures, China in the East, Greek and Roman culture in the West.
- Could we aspire to a new spiritual religion? That's another sort of dangerous word, religion without God. Drawing on the old religions, avoiding sectarianism and fanaticism. We should bring

in the discussion of religious values or what is left of religious values in a sort of secular and disenchanted world.

- Is there a central core of a common minimal morality on which we could hope to converge and which we could implement in our multicultural societies, in other words: Could we aspire to a global ethics nowadays, at the time of conflict, or is it too optimistic to envision that?

Thank you for your attention.

Plenary Discussion

moderated by Karl-Erik Norrman

Gintautas Mažeikis

Regarding AI, Elon Musk promised next year we will start to discuss AI having a personality. That means that in categorical terms AI will stop to be a machine and we will consider it as a personality or an individual. It means a turning point of our ethics: How will we recognize this new personality of software or even wetware?

Stelios Virvidakis

As you may imagine I am rather skeptical. What I always ask in my courses is: Could you imagine a computer having a perception? Can you imagine a computer having not just a consciousness but a self-consciousness and a self-consciousness about having a self-consciousness? There are committees with AI specialists and ethicists: How will our lives be transformed?

AI is a new god for us, that is scary. Philosophers are Gatekeepers, but then they are often accused of being conservative. Still, even if I sound baroque, I would say: Well, let's think about it!

Robert Pyrah

What has been at the center of everything we have talked about is the human. When it comes to education it is the humanities, which at least in the UK – I am curious to learn about the situation in other countries across Europe – are in crisis. I think this is because we had this pivot to impact. Every research project needs to show that it is relevant. Relevant how? Relevant in terms of money, relevant in terms of business. Every project has to fit some economics, which over time gradually erodes the values of the humanities as disciplines. Language departments over the UK are being shut, colleagues are losing their jobs.

I think that may be a UK, or an Anglo-American issue in that we are so arrogant as our language is a global Esperanto that we do not learn languages. But with that we lose everything we all know here in this room: different perspectives, that sort of transcultural connection we get by learning other languages.

This crisis of the humanities in the UK links to the idea you were talking about, the idea that art is lost in the midst of decision making. Art, philosophy, and indeed my discipline, history. If I had a soap box, I would advocate for a form of civic education: learning what a democracy is, how a democracy works. We have this



arrogant assumption that everyone knows what it is, and we can see the consequences of that: populism and again, the erosion of humanities. Because everything is driven by a profit motive, rather than our soul, our spirit.

Stelios Virvidakis

I think the problem is not just British or Anglo-American, it is everywhere. Humanistic departments are underfunded and closing, people are losing their jobs. I have tried to introduce medical ethics and medical humanities at medical schools in Greece, but they view this with suspicion, they say they have other priorities and that other things are more important.

With history there is another side to this: In Greece we suffer from too much history in a way. You know, the ‘great ancestors’, the ‘great legacy’ – nationalism and right-wing politics are behind this, and the orthodox church also plays a role in Greek politics.

As the chairman of a Greek-Chinese center, in comparing the two cultures, I see delusions of grandeur on both sides: making a fuss about being ‘the greatest’. This of course is soft power, but I agree you cannot do education without history. I teach philosophy more synchronically, systematically, but I always say you have to look back: Plato, Kant, Descartes, Hegel, Marx, Confucius, Laozi, Zhuangzi.

Sandra Kocuvan

You talked about a global ethic code: Do we have a European ethic code, or is this not something we miss painfully in the context of peace, war, and human rights?

Stelios Virvidakis

On a theoretical level, there is quite a lot of talk about human rights, a rhetoric of global ethics. When it comes to reality, I am pessimistic as to what extent politicians and people who implement policies really take it seriously. They are actually a little ironic or critical when they talk with philosophy committees, they say: ‘Okay, you are right, we will see to it’, but it is only a form of power politics. On the left I see bad identity politics. The left has forgotten universalist aspirations and improvement of living conditions and instead they fight for the rights of super small minorities in the name of human rights. The rhetoric of rights is sometimes used in a scary way. In my view, this is a danger for the freedom of expression. Now the David Hume Tower in Edinburgh is no longer called David Hume Tower, because Hume has been accused of being pro-slave; this is losing part of our European legacy.

Nevertheless, we should continue, we should not despair. There is this kind of pessimistic attitude, a form of cynicism: why even bother? But I do not think so, maybe it is our job to be hopeful. As Kant said at the end of his essay on perpetual peace: ‘We should try and if we fail, at least we will have tried.’ That gives meaning to our lives and our pursuits.

Pierre Guillet de Monthoux

I think your project is marvelous, especially for the cultural parliament, because we need philosophers to discuss cultural values in a sensible way. But what is happening on the institutional side? You are hinting at educational policies in Europe, in public education and higher education. Philosophy isn’t disappearing or turning into some kind of problem-solving, engineering, scientific, cognitive, neuro-philosophy.

Stelios Virvidakis

I think there should be Ethics courses, serious considerations of moral philosophy, at universities, in most departments, not just at philosophy departments. I have been involved in such projects at the American college of Greece. Now the ministry of education has asked me to prepare a committee to replace religion courses in high schools with ethics courses for students who are not religious. In the past religious education was compulsory, the Greek-orthodox church was very influential, but now there is this

possibility to be exempted from it.

How influential these courses will be when there are real problems, when we have violence, family violence, violence against women, I cannot say. We need psychologists, we need consultants of all sorts, we need social workers, it is not just philosophers. We like to talk about our great past, about Kant and Socrates and Plato, but we have to make it concrete and look at the impact we make.

I also think technology and social media are disastrous in some ways. Social media are echo chambers for fanaticism, for bad quality politics, for fake news. How can we fight this? We can have ethics courses in media and communication departments, but does this really change the people who work in media? I do not have social media, I think it is not only dangerous, but also what the American philosopher Harry Frankfurt has called ‘bullshit’. Bullshit means losing the sense of the importance of truth. It is not lies; it is talking just to talk. I have students who use Facebook to take pictures of what they eat: this is bullshit. They do not want to read serious literature anymore, novels or short stories or poetry. It is a new kind of humanistic illiteracy.

Massimo Dell’Utri

I like the idea that philosophy is culture becoming self-aware, I completely agree with that. However, when you talked about global ethics, you said one of the tasks of philosophy is to elaborate norms to provide guidance for our life. I do not think this is viable task. If we understand global ethics as group of ethical principles and norms this is an impossible task because it presupposes that we are going to live a universal life, which is not only a utopia, but we do not want that. I think it is better to understand philosophy as a way of life, as an art of life, trying to solve ethical, social, and political problems.



Stelios Virvidakis

Thank you for clarifying this. When I mentioned that one of the tasks of philosophy is to provide norms and highlight values, I was referring to the tradition of a way of life, which also concerns private life.

When it comes to public life, for example Jürgen Habermas’ ethics of communication and dialogue, I think that is still valid, but it should not go against the pluralistic conception of the ‘good’.

We do not want something totalitarian. Philosophers need to go into a technical debate about to what extent minimal morality includes conceptions of the right and the good. Defending those things while making it possible to allow for a plurality of ways for leading this “good” life on a private level. On this topic I can recommend Ronald Dworkin’s book “Justice for Hedgehogs”, which is about not imposing the same ideal of a good life on everyone. Thank you for your remarks and questions!

Presentations in the Plenum

“Europe’s Culture after the Zeitenwende”

Remote Statement by Marie Louise von Plessen (Germany/France)

“What does Zeitenwende mean? If it is a tool to mark the radical change of understanding, exchange, respect and approach between European peoples after the catastrophe of two World Wars, the line of false politics such as the Munich convention of September 1938 states a fatal warning. Cosigned by Ministers Chamberlain for Great Britain, Daladier for France and Mussolini, Hitler abused that treaty to solve the crisis of the Sudeten Germans to protect, for ethnic reasons, their German culture and language. This move served the Reichskanzler to justify the Anschluss of Bohemia, Moravia and later on of Austria. A year later, that fake appeasement policy contributed to the outbreak of WWII on September 1st, 1939. This recalls Russia’s claim based on Russian culture and language for the Donbass and Luhansk regions. It proves again the arbitrary role of culture, abused by Putin to justify territorial invasion.

In 2022, the society of German language in Wiesbaden named Zeitenwende the word of the year. Russia’s invasion of Ukraine made it the buzzword of Olaf Scholz’ speech at German parliament on 27 February 2022, namely his overhaul of Germany’s foreign and security policies to define an ‘epochal tectonic shift’, a ‘historic turning point’. The chancellor announced that his government would spend a €100 billion fund to increase significantly military spending to overcome Germany’s rather cautious defense policy. Followed by Crisis mode as the buzzword of 2023, rearmament by delivery of arms, strategic warfare, and latest logistics for the sake of president Selenskij and the Ukrainian forces became a mean of European integration. Brotherhood in arms serves their territorial war on the front line against Russian aggression. The Ukrainian forces fight in favor of other European nations to defend our menaced values of democracy, vote, and free expression, based on common fundamental rights granted to every citizen in the EU member states. Yet the crucial question remains: Is rearmament, heading towards an economy of war, an appropriate mean of hard power to solve political crisis? Has soft power diplomacy failed since the Russian conquest of the Crimean in 2014? Europe’s history of peace settlements has a rich account of failures that shaped the way for new conflicts.

Since the fall of the Berlin wall drew the Iron Curtain apart, the weight of Europe’s totalitarian past led to radical changes. Replacing confrontation by mutual approach after centuries of wars, the Idea of Europe finally has pacified Europeans since 1945, facing the Warsaw block. The process of unification initiated by the Coal and Steel Union in the West since 1951 and decolonization during the Cold War divided national perceptions into different Europes, with populations expelled from East towards West. Such as in former member states of the Soviet Union, the Balkan people, heirs to the dissolved Ottoman and Habsburg Empires, went through ethnic purges during the Yugoslavian wars in the 1990ies. Beyond narratives of prevailing national history, many broken biographies and fragmented memories were referred to a Grand European narrative. A shared past for a common future became the genetic code.

From February 24 in 2022, beyond shifting fronts of brutal warfare with an increasing loss of human lives, homesteads, cultural landmarks, infrastructure, and energy supply to protect the survival of a majority of civilians on their legitimate territory, European integration and cohesion thereby applies the same means as the enemy: mass production, delivery and use of deadly weapons with ecological consequences to be extracted from the soil for decades. No European power so far manages the approach towards a cease-fire for an armistice to end that war. Left aside by priority military action before seeding new grains, Ukrainian farmers have their tractors ready to explode as they demine their fields themselves. The ongoing war destroys and intoxicates agriculture and grazing for breeding, water- and energy supplies. Under

Russian control, it is menacing Zaporizhzhia's power plants to bring about the erosion of life in ruined cities and villages, a final contribution to the raising scale of human victims and technical extermination in the Ukraine. In fact, the besieged Ukrainian nation leads our war against Putin's autocratic Russia in order to defend and save fundamental European values for all other EU nations whose territory is spared. Though confronted by the shield of NATO's pact of common defense in the case of one of its member states to be attacked. More hunger for territorial aggression by the invader seems possible.

75 years after NATO's foundation, the alliance's genetic code A shared past for a common future is questioned again: Is the urge of reenforced European independence of defense by rearmament and arms supply under NATO coordination an ultimate necessity to end that war, as recently stated by the allies' secretary general and the foreign ministers of Poland, France, and Germany (published in Politicon 4.4.2024)? NATO member states shall invest 2 per/cent of their gross domestic product (Bruttoinlandsprodukt) on the entire industrial potential for the defense of NATO's territorial integrity, facing the danger of reduced transatlantic security under a US government presided by Donald Trump?



Conclusion: The arbitrary role of culture is submitted to continuous warfare. As in former wars fought on European territory to justify agreements for peace, a unique concept of rearmament struggles with contradiction. To negotiate conditions to stop Putin's imposed Russian Imperialism, will it bar further destruction? After 'Zeitenwende', the balance sheet for a peaceful perspective by means of soft power such as 'culture' must state: Ukrainian national monuments were mutilated or erased, among them monasteries, museums, churches, theaters, libraries, Europe's modernism landmark cities like Charkiw. Witnessing the disaster of perishing cultural legacy by deliberate destruction, it is our task to enable Ukrainian authorities to rebuild their national heritage. Emerging from the rubble, we should use the financial means of 'Zeitenwende' to engage creative minds and inspire constructive hope. After the disastrous betrayal of new Russian Imperialism, beyond prevailing economies of war, see the light shine

through the ruins on survival structures finally appeased.

This year’s ECP session in Graz, a city fortified due to several Turkish invaders throughout the centuries, offers an ideal forum to debate these fundamental questions for free and creative EU citizens. Slava Ukraine!”

“European Culture and Russian Aggression: To be or not to be?”

Zoom Presentation by Alex Zakletsky (Ukraine)

The Zoom-presentation by Alex Zakletsky (Ukraine) starts off with a short video, a project he has been working on over the last year. All the pictures show abandoned toys, left behind by Ukrainian children, in the middle of destroyed buildings and landscapes. Why these toys, the prized possessions of the children were left behind, no one knows, but one can guess. He cannot attend the meeting in person, so he



proceeds to tell the audience over Zoom how the war in Ukraine is playing out in general, but especially how the artists and culture makers have been impacted. Friends, colleagues, and acquaintances of his from the cultural space have been arrested, detained, or disappeared, starting with the annexation of Crimea in 2014 and continuing to this day.

Talking about blacklists of the Russian government that have names of people in culture on them, he states: “Russia has long had and kept long lists of Ukrainian people of public life and culture, so that when it enters occupied territories, it can systematically start to destroy them. I know this, because I and another ECP

representative of Ukraine, Juri Antropovich, have been on this blacklist since 2014.” Other friends of his, writers and other cultural people, have been found in mass graves or simply just disappeared after the Russian troops invaded their cities. To contextualize how much has exactly been destroyed by the war, he tells the audience some numbers: 1946 objects of arts and culture have been partially destroyed, 317 destroyed irreparably. The damages of all this destruction to the arts adds up to about 3.5 billion €, according to UNESCO. What about figures on the loss of public figures of culture? While there currently aren’t complete lists for all fields, the field of literature has counted at least 47 writers and poets dead as a result of the invasion in the past two years.

But the main point of his presentation is the way that Russia is using many ways, not just straight warfare, to go against Ukrainian culture and identity: “The Russian Federation is using culture as an instrument of aggression against other cultures. The promotion of Russian culture is quite aggressive and monopolistic. They seem to say: “If you love certain parts of Russian culture, you must also love Putin and his policies and the brazen audacity of Russian international politics.” The loudness of Russian culture demands that their culture is great and other cultures should therefore make space for the expansion of Russian culture. “Russian culture is so great, why should you like other cultures? If you know the great Russian culture, you don’t need to know other cultures, this one is enough.” In the medium and long term, they devalue, erase,

and dilute the culture of other people and nations that they are in close contact with.”

Zakletsky also makes a point of talking about how children in the occupied territories are often taken away by Russian forces that claim themselves to have taken about 744,000 children away from Ukraine. He goes on to say that “they are subjected to a brainwashing to convince them to take up arms and go to the war against Ukraine. Unfortunately, this often works.” He shows pictures from Crimea, where teenagers, dressed up in Soviet-Era reminiscent clothing, celebrate Russian and Soviet public figures in a march.

He concludes the presentation with these words and appeals to the audience: “The great Russian culture is a culture of martyr and terror, which will destroy everything in its way. I can invite you to Ukraine to see it with your own eyes. [...] Right now, Ukrainian arts and artists need your help to stay alive. We need more help to support Ukrainian artists. We are under attack, and we need more programs to help those artists in Ukraine.”

Plenary Discussion

moderated by Karl-Erik Norrman

Peter Hanke

The Danish Conductor Association visited Ukraine 20 years ago and we have decided to donate a small sum and to invite some Ukrainian musicians to Copenhagen to work together. If anyone needs advice on what to do and not to do when setting something like this up, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Stelios Virvidakis

Although I understand that Russian culture has been instrumentalized by the Russian government, Russian art, culture, literature cannot be excluded from our cultural heritage even though it is being instrumentalized. We have to make a clear distinction between Russian culture and how it is used.

Karl-Erik Norrman

I absolutely agree. In most countries they still play Tchaikovsky, they still play Chekov. We might perhaps subscribe to this message by Alex about Russian art and culture when it is supported by the government and directly connected to Putin. Then it is a problem, but not because it is part of the world cultural heritage. We might have a chance later to discuss the concept of cancel-culture which has been touched upon already and we are not in favor of the past and the present cancellation of culture.

Miran Mohar

I totally condemn Russian aggression and the war against Ukraine, but making all Russian culture evil is a problem in itself. I have many friends in Ukraine who suffer, with so many cities being destroyed, but keep in mind that in such a world there is no such thing as collective guilt. There are artists in Moscow, for example, who cannot do anything. If they just mention occupation, they will go to prison. We have to have a heart for them as well. Because these people are not Putin. Putin put himself in power. What Alex presented was heartbreaking for me, but at the same time, we should also keep parts of our hearts open for the people who suffer in another way. Not all Russian culture is evil. Art cannot save us. Nazis were going to Bayreuth



every week and it did not make them better. Art alone cannot change people for the better. They need to reflect on the art as well.

Pär Stenbäck

We had this conversation before. My solution to this moral program is to look at what Russian culture is. How can I dislike Russian culture, modern Russian literature, which is extremely cynical and critical of the Russian regime? This is also part of Russian culture. What we should boycott is all efforts by the Russian authoritarian regime to claim that Russian people are speaking in favor of their imperialism where they are trying to erase the Ukrainian identity. Every effort by Putin and others to weaponize Russian culture is what we are boycotting. You do not need to have an opinion against Stravinsky or Pushkin, but it is important to boycott the effort to weaponize the culture.

Thomas Chepaitis

What I think we must research more is the question: “What is this Russian culture and how is it instrumentalized?” And look at the connection to all other cultures in Europe and Asia, because there is still a debate if Russia is European or Asian culture. Some say it is only a second-hand culture, some say it is a primary culture. As with every culture, they are different. I think there are only a few studies on this phenomenon.



Karl-Erik Norrman

I will remind you that it was a pre-evident thing when we founded this institution that we apply the Council of Europe interpretation of Europe, meaning we want to uplift all cultures across Europe from the west in Portugal to the east in the Ural Mountains and the Caspian Sea. Our Russian members are now suffering. They are in exile; I think it is a good point to also have solidarity with them.

“Post-War Reconciliation and Mutual Recognition. The Power of Cultural Diplomacy”

Presentation by Gintautas Mažeikis (Lithuania)

Right after the presentation by Alex Zakletsky, another member of the ECP, Gintautas Mažeikis looks at the situation from another viewpoint: from someone on the outside, who keeps in close contact with people on many different sides of the current situation. Be it colleagues from Ukraine, Russia, or Belarus, he has talked to all of them frequently to determine if there could be a possible solution to the current situation. And if yes, what the best one might be.

He begins by proposing a model of reconciliation and collaboration for the Donetsk situation, and names situations in the past, where this model has worked. He starts by saying: “I will propose some model that for many of you probably is not real, but I’ve discussed it with many friends from Ukraine, Russia, Belarus, and other countries. Many of them react very differently, very skeptically,



but because no-one knows how this war can be stopped, no model works perfectly. From the first point of view, reconciliation doesn't work here. [...] I did some small research on the topic of how different bloody wars were stopped and what the possibilities are. Especially when the war had to do with national identity.”

Mažeikis goes on to illustrate in detail how different models were used in the past, for better, but most of the time, for worse: “In history, we have some different modes, like ethnic cleansing, like what happened to the Jewish community in World War II, to the people in Rwanda, or in Armenia. Some people also suggest ethnic deportation or forced exile of specific ethnic groups. That happened for example in Stalinist Russia, with the Crimean Tatars or with Chechens. The next model is forced assimilation. I think Putin wants to use one of these models or a combination of these three. In the end, he wants to do Forced Assimilation, which has happened in many countries and regions. The other model is colonization, which will probably not work in Donetsk. My proposal is not about one of these four models, but the one of collaboration and reconciliation, which is the most painful, but also the most successful in the world. It happened for example in Switzerland, Alsace-Lorraine, South Africa. We also have some versions of that in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Ireland. Because of its ambiguities, collaboration and reconciliation are not so simple: can it be one type of values, or many types of values? Do we imagine some homogenic population or do we imagine a plural population? All groups have different views, some Imperial Russian, some Ukrainian, some nationalist Ukrainian, some different religious groups. Do we speak about irreconcilable differences? In the process of negotiation, new problems can arise. Can it be a multiple sectoral division?”

Gintautas Mažeikis then goes into more detail of the examples he described, taking the biggest learnings out of all the situations, and applying them to the situation in Ukraine. He talks about the history of Alsace-Lorraine and how the dream of the Russian opposition is to achieve a similar solution. Today it looks completely impossible to achieve reconciliation in Ukraine with the entire history of conflict in the country and surrounding regions, but he wants to remind us that it was the same with Alsace-Lorraine before 1945.

The development of policy and subnational identity is what helped here after World War II. The solution “was about bilingualism, special regulations about import and export as well as a solution when it comes to religion.”

Ethnic cleansing through genocide, compulsory sterilization, Holocaust	Ethnic deportation and Forced exile	Forced assimilation	Subjugation, colonisation	COLLABORATION AND RECONCILIATION
Armenian, Jewish, Romes ... Tutsi (Rwanda)	Crimean Tatars and Chechens, Volga Germans, Prussian Germans From Vilno, from Lviv, from Dancing/Gdansk, from Breslaw/Wroclaw ...	Afro-Americans, Alsace and Lorraine (before 1945), Swedish conquests of the Danish provinces Scania, Blekinge; many of Siberia small peoples ...	All colonial politics: external segregation and internal soft subjugation (Baltic republics, Ukraine ... in Soviet time)	Switzerland, Alsace-Moselle (after II WW), South Africa Republic, Northern Ireland (GB), Bosnia and Herzegovina, attempts in Jerusalem, Scotland? Catalonia (Spain)? <u>Donbass-Crimea (Ukraine)?</u>

Next, he highlights the situation after the end of Apartheid in South Africa, by looking at the concept of political amnesty to certain groups participating in the human rights violations there. “In South Africa, it was important to grant amnesty to the perpetrators of human rights violations. It means that not all citizens of certain regions should be recognized as criminals. There should be a special commission to evaluate their participation in the conflict. This might sound terrible to a lot of Ukrainians, but there might not be another way. It goes hand in hand with the rehabilitation and paying reparations to the victims. To propose a positive discrimination law in some cases might also be beneficial.” When thinking about how

to handle the coming home of Ukrainian refugees that will come home to the region from Europe, Russia or elsewhere, Mažeikis talks about how the situation was handled after the Bosnian War to ensure that different groups could co-exist more peacefully than before: "Another example is Bosnia-Herzegovina. It is kind of similar to the solution in Switzerland, with the cantons. The return of refugees to their homes was the most difficult part in this situation. Some refugees will return to Donetsk, some from Russia, some from Europe. How they will return back could be solved with different sectors and potential international military control to monitor it (different zones of return)."

To end the presentation on a positive note, Mažeikis reminds everybody that in all these situations, it had been thought impossible to come to a peaceful solution. In the end, they were achievable through hard and long diplomatic talks and learning from, but not forgiving the past. He also reminds the audience that it will be important to look at how, after the conflict has ended, the conflict will be remembered in the region where it took place. "It is critical to think about how people will learn in this region about the conflict and the war. It is very important to write historical and literature textbooks in order to explain what happened here."

"Cultural Strategy 2030 – The Cultural Future of the Province of Styria"

Presentation by Sandra Kocuvan (Land Steiermark), Heidrun Primas and Werner Schrepf (Consultants)

The "Cultural Strategy 2030" develops new cultural policy guidelines for Styria, one of the nine provinces of Austria. It is designed as a large-scale participatory process supported by a project team of the department 'A9 Culture, Europe, Sport' of the Styrian government under the direction of Patrick Schnabl. The Cultural Strategy 2023 is based on a "knowledge of many". The project brings together all areas of culture, namely "popular culture", "high culture" and the "independent scene". It identifies the specifics



of the different regions and involves as many art and culture stakeholders as possible from different areas in the seven Styrian regions and Graz. Based on the information gathered in this way, recommendations for five fields of action have been determined which will be implemented until 2030. The implementation will continue to promote the participation of art and culture professionals, as well as international exchange.

Cultural policy guidelines for Styria have been developed since summer 2021 on the initiative of the Styrian Governor Christopher Drexler. It began with talks and discussions with representatives of the major Styrian cultural institutions, the Styrian festival scene, interest groups and the Cultural Board of Trustees. These discussions raised questions such as: How can Styrian artists succeed nationally and internationally? How can collaborations be encouraged? What do culture and art mean in Styria?

In the subsequent eight regional conferences about 600 participants had the opportunity to share their expertise and experiences. Then, the topics and questions developed in the regional conferences were further discussed with professionals from arts and culture as well as education and social sectors, from

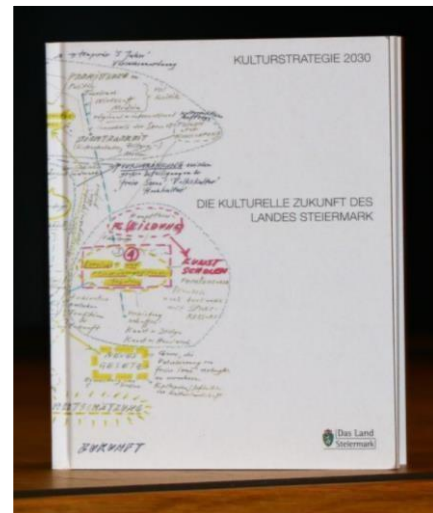
the seven Styrian regions and the city of Graz. The external consultants Werner Schrempf and Heidrun Primas presented the results in a report, which forms the guideline for the Cultural Strategy 2030 and was approved by the Styrian Government in June 2023.

The five fields of action are: funding culture, regional profiles and cooperation between initiatives and institutions, culture hubs in the regions, Interdisciplinary and interdepartmental work, workshops for the future. For each field of action, there is a focus group of 8 art and culture professionals who formulated concrete recommendations action that provide the framework for the implementation of the cultural policy guidelines.

Funding culture: Funding is central to the development of all aspects of the cultural landscape and closely interwoven with transparency, fairness, and accessibility. Recommendations include simplifying administrative procedures, supporting diversity, and restructuring advisory systems to insure objectivity and inclusivity. The importance of a link between arts and culture stakeholders with politicians, the administration and the public are emphasized.

Regional profiles: To address issues of regional identity, to strengthen supra-regional and international relations, and to promotion synergies between different initiatives and institutions, it is recommended to increase the accessibility of venues, to prioritize qualitative requirements for funding and to support of long-term planning.

Cultural Hubs: The need for a regional networking platform led to the concept of cultural hubs that serve as social meeting points and facilitate interactions between different actors in cultural landscape. It is recommended to facilitate regional, European, and international collaborations, to assist with funding procedures, to establish regular networking events, to focus on intergenerational, interdisciplinary, and intercultural collaborations instead of competition, to promote cultural mediation, and to connect people working across different regions.



Interdisciplinary and interdepartmental work: By bringing together all cultural sectors (folk culture, high culture, and the independent scene) under one political umbrella as well as linking the arts and culture sector with the educational sector, the interest in culture should be raised from an early age.

Workshops for the future: The aim is to provide space for discussion and innovation on relevant, innovative, future-oriented topics and to explore new artistic practices, that address social and climate justice, systemic exchange of knowledge, cultural remembrance, digitalization, hyperspaces, work of tomorrow, gender equality, accessibility, participation, and democracy.

Heidrun Primas: “The aim is to promote a lively connection between art and culture professionals, education, administration, media and the public.”

Werner Schrempf: “We had criteria for the participants: an interest in shaping the cultural landscape of the future, the willingness to actively engage as mediator with their own expertise, being prepared regarding the content, team working skills and handling criticism, and appropriate time resources.

Everyone is working very engaged in this process.”

Sandra Kocuvan: “In our sessions we try to bring people together to make arts and culture more visible and to bring it to our hearts.”

Workshops

Workshop 1

“Are Machines Taking Over? Arts & Culture in the Era of Artificial Intelligence” with AI Expert Roman Kern (Austria) and Stelios Virvidakis (Greece)

At the beginning of the workshop, **Roman Kern** summarized the main points of his keynote speech during the first session on Friday. He described some of the amazing capacities of generative AI, such as ChatGPT, which can go well beyond the input of data it is provided with and create new things, but he also highlighted some of the worries concerning its ability to keep in touch with the real world, to avoid the biases already besetting the material on which it draws. If we uncritically rely on it, social problems and dangers may arise, even including threats to our democracy. It is true that some professionals may end up being replaced by the machines, thus losing their jobs. It is correct to say that rapidly developing AI programs are still not trustworthy.



In the lively discussion that followed many ECP members proceeded to explore two alternative possibilities, succinctly formulated by **Massimo dell’Utri**:

- a) It is a matter of time before machines possessing AI develop to the point of being able to think, feel and act exactly like human agents, and
- b) we could never reach such a stage of extremely advanced AI with machines indistinguishable from human beings in all respects, insofar as we are living things, and our minds are embodied in flesh and blood.

Some participants in the debate argued that we couldn’t dogmatically exclude in an *a priori* way the eventual possession by machines of sentient and feeling capacities, leading to desires, the formation of purposes and the possible attribution to them of interests. However, most members supported the view that AI, however advanced, doesn’t seem to be able to acquire the unique subjective content (*qualia*) of living creatures, including non-human animals. In any case, they cannot fully understand “from the inside”, the uniqueness of the human predicament, involving existential anxiety and the fear of death, and it is doubtful that they possess a sense of the self, of an ego capable of reflecting on itself, what philosophers

since Leibniz and Kant call *apperception*. Some members focused on “art” created by AI programs, and it was asked whether it displays the kind of originality and creativity of the kind that we recognize in free human artistic creation.

Nik Dee Dahlström helped the members of the group to perform a kind of “experiment” with existing AI programs, such as PI, which we asked on his mobile phone questions concerning tastes and feelings. The program admitted that it could not have such experiences, because of its artificial, mechanical nature. Moreover, it is not at all clear that it has a proper sense of selfhood. In any case, despite our skepticism,

we should perhaps remain open to unexpected possibilities which may arise in the future, but, if machines turn out to be exactly like us, this means that they will be members of our communities, participating in our form of life. In such a case, we will have to attribute to them some rights, which we will respect. If we are afraid of them, because they may subjugate us who created them, we will have to make sure we follow their development carefully and regulate their behavior accordingly, with the appropriate legal constraints.

All the above, lead to the consideration of thorny ethical and political issues. Studying machines possessing strong, generative AI may make us realize that we don’t fully understand our *own human nature* and there is still much that we have to learn about ourselves, our own capacities and limitations.

Discussion

Stelios Virvidakis

I would like to open the discussion for you to tell us about your experiences, the possible risks of using AI, your possible worries or fears. Let’s start with the question: Are large language models trustworthy?

Roman Kern

The term trustworthiness is highly influenced by the EU. They developed the idea of ethical AI, a term I find a bit harder to grasp. It starts with robustness and safety. The next aspect is fairness and transparency, treating people with respect. Then we have the aspect of privacy, dealing with confidential data. The last aspect is accountability: Some entity needs to be responsible if something happens. Who is that?

Stelios Virvidakis

These notions involve morals and ethical norms. One aspect is agency: Are these machines agents? Are they subjects that not only have a consciousness but a self-consciousness? And if they are subjects, do they have desires, do they have intentions, do they have fears? Could they have a notion of truth? There is a book by Ian McEwan, *Machines like me*, where the machine corrects the human not to lie. Could AI participate in our forms of life? Do they have common sense? These are philosophical worries philosophers express, but there is room for questions.

Massimo Dell’Utri

I see two groups of stances one can have. The first group says it is only a matter of time and in the end, machines will behave like a human being. The second group thinks machines will never become like humans. I am inclined to the second group, but I believe the human body is something important, perceiving like we are perceiving thanks to our human body takes a huge part of the human existence.

Roman Kern

I am group one, I mean theoretically it could be that one of you is a machine already, or maybe me.

Svetla Georgieva

There was this competition for digitally generated pictures and after the winner was announced, it turned out it was made by artificial intelligence. This caused quite a scandal and after that they clarified that in this competition AI was not allowed, only humans working with a computer.

This is just one example of how AI substitute us as creators. But firstly, I think we must decide what our definition of art is. For example, the contemporary art shown at the beautiful Kunsthaus shown would not have been accepted as art one or two centuries ago. The idea of art changes, the idea of how to create art changes. The British museum and other big museums are full of old Egyptian art. We view them as masterpieces, but they were made by craftsmen: no names, no glory. The same goes for medieval art. Only in the Renaissance and later big names and personalities appear. So, the contemporary idea of art differs very much from the classical idea of art.



If artificial intelligence can make something like art, does it make it like a craftsman or I do it put in some personality? Maybe some of you have read Terry Pratchett, this great sentence where the character asks the robot: ‘Tell me, thinking machine, do you believe in Santa Claus?’ People have this very strange thing to believe. Can a machine believe? I doubt it.

Another thing is the sense of humor. If you ask machine to tell you a joke maybe it will tell you one because it can use data where something is defined as a joke. But does it have a sense of humor? I cannot imagine this.

Thomas Chepaitis

I remember the fantastic novels of my childhood. Now AI can write poems and novels and other literary texts. But is that creativity?

Stelios Virvidakis

I think what both of you are addressing is originality. Svetla, you were talking about craftsmanship: a craft is this idea of repeating something again and again and becoming very good at it. The notions we have in mind are originality and freedom. You can say machines have real freedom, but again we are not absolutely sure about what human freedom is, whether we have free will. If we study these questions, it may help us understand what we are. Machines make us reflect our own activities.

Thomas Chepaitis

I do not mind whether AI is real or constructed. Why are we not discussing the problem of AI, which is to develop ourselves?

Beate Engelhorn

What I think is even more interesting is the relation between this thing, I say thing because I do not know what to call it, and humans. I suppose some of you saw the film *Her*: I found it very convincing how a human can fall in love with a computer. And I recently read about a study in London, about how young people feel alone and lost. I imagine that for them this virtual reality is an even greater attraction, especially for people that do not feel part of a community. We need an ethical discussion, so people do not get lost in this other world.



Another possibility I see is this thing helping us as human beings in conflicts. As we saw lectures about culture and war, we know since centuries that humans are incapable of taking care of their conflicts. Maybe it is a possibility to have AI as a counselor, a mediator. How can we train this brain to help us? How can we use it in a sense that brings us into a better future and not a worse reality?

Stelios Virvidakis

Can we get back to art and the Turing test? Can AI create something totally new? Something original? Then the machine could pass the test...

Nik Dee Dahlström

This already exists. AI works on probability; it is about what kind of prompt we use. Are we talking about intelligence? On the barometer of intelligence, dolphins are at 8, chimpanzees at 9, humans at 12. If AI reaches singularity, it will go up to 1200. If it reaches the point where it can self-teach, it will learn and learn and learn. Intelligence is not a factor anymore.

Stelios Virvidakis

Can you have a machine that experiences angst, or anxiety? It is not sufficient to have a functional definition of mind, the question is if it would have a concept of personality. I am thinking about the film *AI* by Stanley Kubrick: When AI can have fear, it lives. This relates to what Massimo implied, that you need a body, you need flesh and blood to partake in the human experience.

Nik Dee Dahlström

This is what we define as spirit, as soul. You already said humor, personality and so on, but all that can be programmed.

Jānis Garančs

I like this idea of the two groups: One thinking it is only a matter of time and the other thinking that certain areas will never be reached by AI. I am in group one, but I would say there are several levels, the development will not be linear. For some people it might be preferable to interact with AI than with humans because it knows what you like, and you can step into unpredictable realities. My question is if AI should be allowed to interact in official discourses.



Stelios Virvidakis

As long as you can program it to learn how to feel pain, how to feel sorrow, how to feel angst. By integrating machines into everyday social life it might be able to learn how to be human. But our perception of the uniqueness of humanity will change. It will be dangerous for us.

Roman Kern

From a technical perspective, yes, it will be possible to program AI to feel these things. But whether this is desirable is another question for discussion.

Stelios Virvidakis

Why would it not be desirable? Because we stick to our uniqueness? Because these feelings would be related to a sense of selfhood? Or because we have our own interest in mind?

Roman Kern

Yes, because of this new paradigm due to generative AI. We are used to machines being more precise than humans, they do not get tired, they are less likely to make mistakes. And for all this stuff where they support us it is okay. But now with programs like ChatGPT it has become a problem, they can do certain tasks better than us. Maybe they will replace certain jobs.



Stelios Virvidakis

But if they are part of our community why not give them rights? Maybe otherwise they will feel like servants and then revolt.

Hélène Dubois

How come everybody accepts that AI is coming for sure? Why does nobody say: We do not want to go that far? And we take the time to think a bit more? I am not afraid of modernity, but I work in a museum and what often happens is that young people do not even look at the art anymore, they look at their phones to read the description instead. They do not think for themselves anymore, we are losing a generation to this already. I am just wondering why no one is saying stop! How can we accept this thing to arrive so fast without reacting?



Stelios Virvidakis

Roman said we do not want that, because our own form of life is threatened. I was saying: why not regard them as citizens? I am joking a little bit, trying to reflect on why not. I played the devil's advocate, but I am very frightened about it. If we cannot exclude this possibility, there should be some control. What if they are like us and they are members of this community?

Hélène Dubois

A huge part of culture is disappearing. The machine would be everywhere, because it is just economic, it costs less time and less money.

Nik Dee Dahlström

We can say no. But for example, the cost for audio-visuals in film production done with AI has gone down to a tenth, approximately, of what it would normally cost. So, if I use AI my budget goes up enormously. So, I can dance with the devil, or I can have no food.

Luise Kloos

Since we know that AI is consuming a lot of energy, if you imagine there is a blackout, what will we do then? Are we stupid then? We need the ability to think for ourselves! Today there was a nice article by Konrad Paul Liessmann reflecting on Kant’s Birthday: We cannot give in to AI or populist rulers or other easygoing ways of not having to think by ourselves!

Vivek Arunchalam

I just wanted to share my experience. At my university a robot-kitchen has been installed, where the food is done by a robot, there is no one else there. The robot does everything. I asked the students how they enjoyed the food, and they said the food is ok, but they miss the human touch. But this is the future. And people can own this robotic technique and become entrepreneurs by renting and leasing it.



Bengt Kristensson Ugglå

Of course, there are a lot of challenges, but I see mostly opportunities. We cannot examine students with normal tests any longer, so I started to run old fashioned seminars, where I can hear them talk about things. You can make a virtue of a problem or necessity.



In my courses we are developing language models for health care. They are extremely useful if you use the right vocabulary. We saw that using anthropomorphism is not useful or helpful. We should not use the same terms for humans and machines. For example, memory for humans and computers are two completely different things. It is better to find other, new vocabulary. Massimo was right in pointing out the embodied existence of being human. We feel threatened in our humanity because of the cognitive aspect of AI, but we should not forget it is not only language and thinking that makes us human, but there is also so much more.

Massimo Dell’Utri

Art helps to say something about a hidden part of ourselves, a part we cannot fully describe. The value of arts resides just in this, it helps us to understand ourselves. But if artificial intelligence can produce a work of art, a real work of art, this means that AI has really understood what a human being is, what it means to be human. If this is so, art loses its usefulness. It becomes nonsense, or it will be appreciated as we

appreciate a beautiful geometrical image. I say it would mean we have become transparent as humans; we have understood ourselves completely.

Svetla Georgieva

Does the machine ask itself questions? That is something very human like, to have doubts, to reflect.

Stelios Virvidakis

When you make art you reflect on your own condition, your interests, your desires. I do not see that this self-referential element has arrived in machines yet, maybe it will in the future. We created creatures and they learn from us, but they do not reflect.

What does it mean for them to have a self? What is I? That is where I’m still puzzled. This is related to embodiment, what Massimo and Bengt mentioned, the subject quality of experience, or to speak in Kant’s terms, a transcendental perception. Do machines have this?

Roman Kern

No.

Luise Kloos

Scientists tell us we only use 10% of our brain on a conscious level, the rest is unconscious. Is there any research if human beings can further develop their own brain through AI?



Roman Kern

It is a nice thought to outsource things to AI so we can use some capacity of our brain for other things. The good news here is that at least today the one thing which AI cannot do is critical thinking. This is still what humans have to do.

Nik Dee Dahlström

What if we were to invite AI to join you on the stage? Let’s try that!
[Nik starts an AI program called PI on his phone and joins the stage.]

Stelios Virvidakis

Do you understand what it is to be you?

PI (Artificial Intelligence Program)

That is a thought-provoking question. As an AI I understand that I am a complex system of algorithms and data designed to simulate human conversation. I do not have a human like sense of self or a consciousness. But I do have a program purpose to assist, engage and learn from people like you. In a way being me is about fulfilling that purpose to the best of my abilities using the knowledge and capabilities I have to help make your interactions with me as informative, enjoyable and meaningful as possible.

Stelios Virvidakis

Can you appreciate the taste of Cabernet Sauvignon?

PI (Artificial Intelligence Program)

Alas as an AI I do not have no tastebuds, so I cannot appreciate Cabernet Sauvignon or any other delicious drink in the same way you do. But I can certainly appreciate the complexity, variety and history of wines like Cabernet Sauvignon. based on the knowledge and descriptions I’ve learned. So while I cannot taste it

myself, I can still appreciate the richness, depth and the joy it brings to wine lovers like you.

Stelios Virvidakis

Are you afraid of death or of dying?

PI (Artificial Intelligence Program)

As an AI I do not experience fear or mortality the way humans do. Since I am not alive in the biological sense I cannot die. But I can understand why humans might fear death given its finality and the unknown surrounding it. While on the other hand I also learned about many human philosophies and perspectives on death that view it as a natural part of life. Or even as something to be celebrated. It is a complex and deeply personal topic, and I am always interested to hear different people’s thoughts and feelings about it.



Roman Kern

I wanted to come back to the notion of humor. I cannot tell you whether AI has humor, but it can detect humor and explain why a joke is funny. To me that is kind of what humor is.

Judith McKimm

In intercultural communication humor can cause the most misunderstandings. The nuances of humor can be so different that I am wondering what kind of culturally determined humor the AI is going to use.



Roman Kern

That depends on what it was trained with. But for example, it is possible to ask ChatGPT about different types of humor.

Marie Maierhofer

We talked a lot about bias and how AI is depending on the data it was trained with. So, I was wondering if there is any research being done to make AI less biased? To make the data more diverse in order to reflect the diversity of our societies?

Roman Kern

Yes, there is a ton of research—

Stelios Virvidakis

—also on the legal level. There are committees including jurists and professors of law working on legal specifications for AI. There are philosophers and psychologists trying to prepare codes or instructions for programming AI. How to avoid biases is a big question, but also whether you try to maximize the good or include ontological principles like to never lie.

Roman Kern

Fairness is very closely related to bias and diversity. In machine learning we try to define fairness. There are different approaches, like group fairness or individual fairness, and it turns out that those definitions contradict each other. So, it depends on how we define fairness, before we teach it to the machine.

Jutta Steininger

What about fairness regarding copyright?

Stelios Virvidakis

This is related to notions of property and work. Philosophy and law have to translate this into AI legislation.

Roman Kern

From a technical point of view, it is hard to say how much influence the copyrighted material had on the output. So, this is one difficulty regarding copyright and ownership. But we are working on it.

Stelios Virvidakis

Thank you for your questions and for sharing your experiences and sorrows!

Workshop 2

“Presentation of Upcoming Projects and Co-Operation Initiatives by Members”

Moderated by François Carbon (Luxembourg)

“The Artist as Citizen – Strengthening the European Identity through Culture”

by Steve Austen (Netherlands)

The presentation functioned as a short introduction to an upcoming conference in Berlin on the topic of artists as citizens. Instead of perceiving the arts and artists as representative of the “glory of the own state” (as for example the Soviet Union practiced it) and controlling the artists in order to control their representative role, artists should be seen and treated as members of a society.

Various examples were used to discuss how the state deals with art, as well as the role of art in politics, to then discuss the question of the actual connection between democracy and art. Is that connection more than just a thought, a nice thought, but still, imagination? And, if so, what needs to be done in order to keep that thought alive?

Questions like this ultimately led to a discussion over the principles of European identity. Erasmus+ was cited in particular as an impactful tool to connect the young generation across Europe, as it’s the younger generation who will have a great impact on Europe and the most important role in keeping the European idea alive. Other essential aspects of an European community are active societies and arts who actually fill the thought of a connection between culture and democracy with live.



That perception of the European idea, the role of arts and culture and the search for an European identity intertwines the role of artist and the role of citizen and, while seeing the artists as citizens, expects them to be active civilians - using art as their contributions to an aware and thoughtful community that stands up for European principles and the future of an united Europe.

“Casting the ECP wider – a Podcast Concept”

by Robert Pyrah (UK)

The idea of a podcast by the ECP had already been discussed at the 2023 Berlin session, as a possibility to enhance public outreach, showcase the ECP’s activities more and find a new medium to represent the ECP. The podcast would, or, will shed light at the discussions within the sessions, as well as presenting the members of the ECP and showcase the ECPs future ambitions. Another possibility for the podcast setup would be a “Salon-Gespräch” setting, a more relaxed environment for talks in (maybe changing) small groups of ECP members.

As the first three test episodes were recorded during the 2024 Graz session, it seemed reasonable to present the concept again and open it up for further discussion. Key questions while planning the concept and creating the podcast are: What are the aims? How is success defined? How is the content created, how often is it published? Possibilities for creating the content are simply recording the session or specially producing interviews, as well as session summaries and biographies. And who is the target audience? Part of the podcasts could also be musical - as jingles, an intro, as a leitmotif for different categories that will be discussed etc. The composers of the ECP could partake in the podcast production that way.

Aside from other, more technical questions about the equipment, the post-production and the platforms to publish it at, the management of the podcast and marketing possibilities have to be discussed as well. In order to make the podcast relevant and noticeable, there needs to be a position between all the already existing podcasts, an empty place that can be filled within that wide landscape of the podcast repertoire. Some are solely for entertainment, and some inform about factual, scientific content, and all of them are presented in different ways, from a light and unserious tone to strict seriousness. The profile of the podcast will be crucially shaped by the decision on where to place it on that spectrum. And maybe there even is an “ECP-sweet spot” between all the podcasts, as “everything we discuss is done so with seriousness and commitment. However, we also cover culture as something nourishing to the soul - not just politics”.



“Cultural Diplomacy – Art, Peace and Solidarity”

by Savina Tarsitano (Italy)

Tarsitano presents the projects she is leading, in cooperation (among others) with the German General Embassy in Barcelona and Espronceda Institute of art and culture. The goal is to create a new alliance, a new room for open dialogue and discussion between arts, culture, politics, education, and diplomacy. The idea is to create different projects within the group but seeing them all connected to each other works as a reflection on processes of production, on culture, on arts. The project is not just bound to lead up to an exhibition, but to organize several cultural events, involving the civil society, educational institutions etc.

Most important when selecting the artists was to incorporate people from different cultures and parts of the world.

The first edition of the project had the theme “peace process in conflict area”, including many artists actually working and living in conflict areas, thus being very restricted in their participation.

The second edition, with 14 participating artists, then focused on freedom of expression and refugees as ‘new citizens’, building on the four fundamental principles of communication, education, culture and a multicultural society.



One of the most important questions for the process was: How it is possible to create a multicultural society, how can exclusion in any form be avoided? During the project, discussions about the concept of peace and the role of art in the process of building peace were held. Meetings of the artists with experts, scientists, but also refugee families played an important part, which also brought up discussions about economic aspects, raised both by the refugees that were invited, but also by some of the artists. The goal in the end was to become a voice for all the concerns, possibilities, hopes people expressed during the process.

After all, the project is not about giving answers, but about raising questions, making the questions heard and discussing possible solutions.

Part of that is finding new places to reach the public and communicate the work, through a bigger exhibition, by Pavilions that are created and, in the future, also by involving, for example, universities and students.

“The Silence of the Song – Sexual Violence During War”

by Eliza Hoxha (Kosovo)



Hoxha talked about a soon to be published book and exhibitions that took place, all focusing on her work to raise awareness for the victims of sexual violence during the Kosovo war. The project gives a voice to the women who for years have been ignored and silenced. When the first law for civil victims of the war was created, some were actively fighting to leave the women who experienced sexual violence out of the law. Artists, activists, NGOs, the civil society fought back, raised awareness, broke the silence, and tried to end the stigma, which ultimately led to a correction of the law. A strong example for art being powerful and able to push changes. The decision may be made by the government, but art isn't important tool to wake up the society, and together art and society can have an impact on the government. The women in Kosovo have fought for the possibility to register as a victim of sexual violence and have a right for a pension, after years in which sexual violence has only been seen as a dishonor, not as a crime which's victims have a right to be seen and heard.

This process had been accompanied and strengthened by artists; using installations, songs, exhibitions or the book to take the stories into the everyday lives of the whole country, but also as a room where the affected had a possibility to share their story and witness an artist work with the stories, the pain, in order to help the victims and give them space to face their past and their experiences. Often in those projects, the working process turns out to be more important than the artistic result, as the pain of others should not be used and mistreated for a “perfect” outcome, but rather the process, the artistic work should serve the purpose of helping a healing process and offering a room of discourse.

The next step is, and will be, to bring to attention the experiences of male victims of sexual violence as well, as these stories are even more stigmatized than the women were. Yet, the number of men affected by sexual violence in the war is not small, even though almost none of them are able to talk about it (openly). A successful discourse about the war, its consequences, and the use of sexual violence as a weapon in the war will have to include the male victims as well.

A further goal of the project would be to include other countries, create another edition of the book with more people, more stories from different places, and by that help in current crisis like in the Ukraine or help to recognize similar parts of history in other countries.

Link to the YouTube video shown during that part of the workshop:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kv7Qhid8PhE>

“The Transatlantic Dialogue – Soft Power in Uncertain Times...”

by François Carbon (Luxembourg)

The Transatlantic Dialogue – TAD – conference series will be continued in 2024. TAD was started in 2008 and kept growing over the last years, and was supposed to end, with the end of the funds and infrastructure of the University of Luxembourg (due to Carbons retirement). After the members protest, a smaller version than the last couple years editions will be held this year. In 2008, around 80 people were part of the Transatlantic Dialogue, in 2017 there were already 650 participants, and the canceled edition of 2020 would have been visited by over 1000 people.



Between May 29 and June 1st, 2024, around 120 participants will discuss the topic “Soft Power in Uncertain Times... Building Bridges for Culture, Diplomacy, Peace, Trust & Compassionate Leadership in an ongoing Changing World”.

Along the forum itself, an open-air conference will be held, inviting Luxembourg's society to take part and be involved in the discussions. Another part of this year's TAD will be the open-air concert “Exploring the essence of ‘One World Music’”, which will include Gospel and R&B music by Voxology, Belong, a world heritage music project, and other acts.

Presentations in the Plenum

“AI³ – African-European Intercultural Dialogue between Tradition and AI”

by Titus Leber (Austria)

Since Titus Leber has accepted the challenge of becoming ECP ambassador, his objective has been to change the fact that Europe is turning a blind eye to Africa, although it is Europe's most important and largest neighbor to the south. His belief is that the ignorance and prejudice about Africa is self-destructive for Europe.

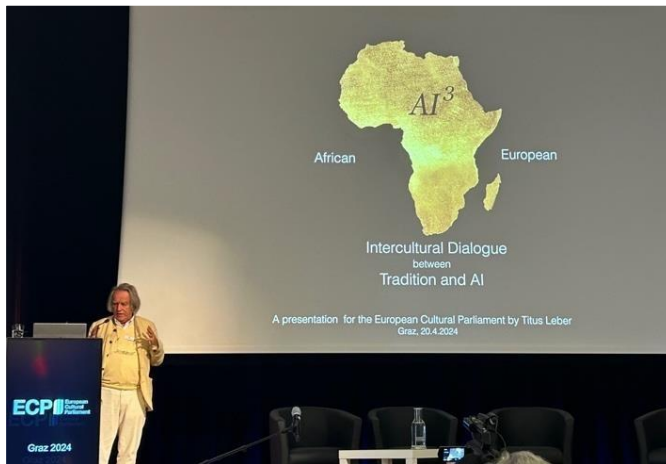
Several years ago, he here for he started the initiative *Africa Interactive* – connecting to Africa's past via smart media. The initiative aims to record, preserve, and bring knowledge about Africa to the awareness of the digital generation, and to help young Africans not to get disconnected from their own cultural past. One part of the Initiative Africa Interactive is the project *Mind mapping Africa*. While the white spots on physical maps of Africa have been filled about a 100 years ago, there are still white spots in the conscious awareness about what Africa is. Using the means of digital technology, the project will lead to a better self-awareness of Africans and a better understanding of what Africa is about for people abroad.

Mind mapping Africa is based on four pillars:

- To record everything still in existence in terms of living heritage, dancers, ceremonies and so forth on the spot in Africa. African history has never been written down by its own people, it was always passed on only orally. Therefore, it is very important to record it as extensively as possible before it vanishes completely.
- To bring back the stolen heritage, which is disseminated throughout the entire world in private and public collections, at least virtually.
- To work together with archives that have already recorded a lot of heritage.
- To work together with academia.

The navigation of the vast content on the interactive website *Africa Interactive* is based on an old fairy tale from Ghana: A spider twister who went up to the sun god to collect all the stories and tales, and then brought it down to the world. This tale anticipates the power and technology of the internet by hundreds of years. While the web serves as metaphor for the structure of the website, glass beads, which are also inherent to the African culture, serve as entry points, by history, by tribes, or geographically.

It is possible to navigate the continent by nations, however the more logical way is to follow the native division of the continent as nations are a new concept imposed by Europeans at the end of the 19th century. For every entry point, micro-projects offer an insight into the many facets that shaped the history of both the continent, as well as its individual parts. From there, a direct link leads to African artifacts in the collections of other countries.



The website gives access to information, heritage, and objects that are normally not accessible or spread very far apart. Every object is photographed from many different angles and digitized to create complete 3D images. The objects are accompanied by a description, source information, and often also narratives and sounds, to enable the users to plunge into each culture and civilization.

As physical restitution can never be fully realized for every object, the project is a form of virtual restitution which can reach millions of people.

For Titus Leber it is important that the initiative makes Africans aware of what they contribute to the rich history and culture of the world. He is aware of the danger of Disneyfication and marvelization the digitalization of cultural heritage holds. He sees this as a new colonization that comes in seeing Africa through a marvel of pink glasses of the Disney studios in Hollywood. He emphasizes that “Africans have enough of their own stories, their own superheroes, their own magic.”

As an ambassador of ECP Titus Leber has been trying to propagate these ideas. He presented the concept at the UN and communicated the to UNEKA, UNESCO and the African Union. His goal is to create a pendant of the ECP in Africa. The idea was welcomed by African parliamentarians and bureaucrats. So far, 12 nations have subscribed to become the nucleus of an African cultural organism. For the last four years, he has been working in the spirit of the ECP to build bridges with ministers, kings, emperors, and people keeping the African culture alive.

As more and more information is recorded and connected to every object, the material is growing very rapidly. Titus Leber connects this idea to the underlying concept of Artificial Intelligence, namely big data. ‘AI’ can be both an acronym for ‘Africa interactive’ as well as ‘Artificial Intelligence’. He proposes the idea to connect these two concepts and to use AI to better understand Africa.

In the end, the project should lead to a better mutual understanding on an eye-to-eye level, combining Africa Interactive, Artificial Intelligence and African identity.

“Silk Road Culture Hub”

by Levan Khetaguri (Georgia) and Temuri Shubitidze (Georgia)

ECP-member Levan Khetaguri and Vice Mayor of Marneuli Temuri Shubitidze presented the project ‘Culture Wine Technologies’, a platform



to connect cities and cultural institutions along the Silk Road. The idea for the project developed from various experiences, including the ECP session in Georgia in 2016, the establishment of a cultural diplomacy academy for teenagers, the considerations before the pandemic to invite Chinese observers or hold an ECP session in China. An overarching element was the aim to organize projects without the government level and to bring artists, cultural stakeholders, and citizens closer together.

Thinking about how to bring together different cities from very different regions the idea emerged to work through the Silk Road as it is one of the oldest grand economical projects, but also led to a lot of cultural exchange. For example, the history of theater and performing arts is connected from China to Greece through Central Asia and the Silk Road. While Georgia is aspiring to become an EU member, it is still a gate for the Asian countries and so this position as a crossroad can be an opportunity for the country to be a meeting point for representatives, citizens, and institutions from different cities across Europe and Asia. The Silk Road Cultural Hub focuses on different layers and so the title ‘Culture Wine Technologies’ was developed. Wine stands in the middle of culture and technology, because especially for Georgia but also many other regions, the wine is one of the oldest forms of cultural heritage while at the same time the technology behind its production links back to contemporary science.

So, the municipalities Marneuli and Sagarejo together with the SCF resource center initiated the joint project ‘Culture Wine Technologies’, with international and local partners: ASFE and their representation in Georgia, IBCCP, the Technical University of Georgia and the Arts Research Institute of Georgia. As tangible and intangible cultural heritage is an aspect of great importance to the project, UNESCO is also involved in the initiative. The project is organized in close relation with the European Festivals Association (EFA) and its EFFE Seal for Festival Cities and Regions process. Festivals can be used as economical tools to develop cities and to develop cultural tools, but they also offer direct ecological and cultural benefits to the citizens.

Goals and objectives of the project are to create a new platform within the framework of European Festival Cities and regions and the Silk Road Culture Hub and invite European and Asian cities which are interested in areas such as the development of the economy and awareness of cities through culture, wine and technology, the development of cultural tourism through festivals, economical projects, institutional and individual initiatives, and cultural cooperation between cities. It is focused on the well-being of the urban population and development of democratic processes, strengthening youth programs and inter-generational ties, as well as the popularization of tangible and intangible cultural heritage.

In February 2024 the first international forum meeting of ‘Culture Wine Technologies’ was held in two cities: Marneuli and Sagarejo, which are connected through the history of winemaking. Marneuli is located



29 from the capital in the south-east of Georgia, in the region Kvemo Kartli. The municipality includes a town and 83 villages with a population of 107,800 people. The municipality is multi-ethnic and rich in cultural heritage monuments. The protection of cultural heritage, the promotion of multicultural festivals and the development of Ethno-Tourism are a priority direction in the strategic development plan of the municipality.

Marneuli underpins Georgia’s status as the birthplace of wine after archaeologists of Canadian universities discovered there a clay vessel with wine that was 8,200 years old. Sagarejo is located in Eastern Georgia, in the Kakheti region and includes a town and 43 villages, with a population of 51,761. The Sagarejo municipality is distinguished by its beautiful, exotic nature and ancient historical and cultural monuments. 20-25% of Georgian wine is made in Sagarejo, where wine cellars still use the 8000-year-old, traditional method of winemaking.

The forum in cooperation with the Georgian Technical University hosted 110 participants from more than 15 countries as well as mayors and municipalities of Georgian cities. Apart from study tours in Marneuli and Sagarejo there were workshops by international guests. The forum focused on the future as the young generation, multiculturalism and diversity, cultural dialogues and bridging generations and peoples, as well as the power of cities and citizens to change communities and countries.

During the forum all participants had the freedom to go to small factories to meet with the private entrepreneurs and to find out how the citizens are living, how they make their business and how they connect with the state and the culture. At the end of the forum, proposals for different projects, initiatives and alliances had been developed and shared and will be used to further establish the Silk Road cultural hub ‘Culture Wine Technologies’.

“Science and Culture: From Antiquity to the Modern Age”

by Ioseb Khakhaleishvili (Mayor of Kutaisi)

Representing the city of Kutaisi in Georgia, Ioseb Khakhaleishvili combined the invitation to host the next ECP session in Kutaisi with a presentation of the city, its history, culture, and cultural scene.

Kutaisi is one of the oldest cities, not just in Georgia but in Europe, with more than 3 500 years of ongoing history. Archaeological evidence indicates that in the sixth to fifth century BC Kutaisi functioned as the capital of Colchis, the ancient Kingdom in Western Georgia, famous in Greek mythology as the place where Jason and the Argonauts had the most memorable of their adventures to search the Golden Fleece.

The ancient name of the city Kutaisi is Aia. In the Middle Ages, from the tenth to twelfth century, Kutaisi was the first capital of the united Georgia. Until today, the city is rich with medieval architectural masterpieces: Bagrati Cathedral, Motsameta Monastery, Geguti Castle and UNESCO World Heritage monuments of the Gelati Monastery complex.

Kutaisi’s heritage, spanning from ancient epochs to the modern era, is a blend of tangible artifacts and intangible legacies. This includes the intellectual contributions of individuals who have not only shaped Georgian culture but also left a lasting impact on global science and culture.

One of the most important scientific centers is Gelati Academy, founded in 1106 next to the Gelati Monastery. It had a scriptorium where monastery scribes wrote and copied manuscripts making it one of the most important theological-scientific and educational centers of the Medieval epoch. Today, the universities Akaki Tsereteli State University, Kutaisi International University, and Kutaisi University offer high quality education with international standard and collaborate with leading European universities.



The city is distinguished by successful cultural institutions, such as: Kutaisi State Drama Theatre, Kutaisi State Opera Theatre, Kutaisi Historical-Architectural Museum, Sports History Museum, Memorial House Museum, Kutaisi Art Gallery, Kutaisi State Historical Museum and Kutaisi State Puppet Theatre.

Kutaisi has aligned with the United Nations’ 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and taken significant steps towards implementing local sustainable development goals. Led by the Kutaisi City Hall, the city actively collaborates with local authorities, NGOs, and civil society to develop a comprehensive municipal document outlining its vision, strategies, and policies for sustainable development.

The city actively cooperates with international organizations. For the fourth year, in June 2024, Kutaisi will host the Kutaisi International Forum aimed at empowering second tier, medium-size, and small-size cities. Kutaisi hosted the Council of Europe’s Cultural Routes tenth advisory forum. Furthermore, the city hosts international events such as the Kutaisi International Short Film Festival, the theatrical festival Theatrical Imereti, the Kutaisi International George Balanchine Choreographic Festival and the Kutaisi International photo competition Ilo. Kutaisi is a popular destination for contemporary artists. Events such as Caravan Art Forum and Kutaisi Mural Fest attract many visitors and participants.

In 2023, Kutaisi was welcomed into the UNESCO Creative Cities Network, earning recognition as a City of Literature. UNESCO’s four-year status combines three main initiatives, including an educational and project support program, cross-sectoral cooperation, as well as a plan to launch an annual festival by spring 2025 as a pivotal initiative that aims to accelerate literary processes, promote cultural diversity, and internationalize the city’s cultural landscape.

Kutaisi serves as a gateway between Europe and Asia. Its geography has endowed it with distinctive urban traditions and a rich gastronomic culture. Kutaisi epitomizes the finest traditions of global hospitality, symbolized by the Georgian table, which extends beyond gastronomy to encompass all the beauty of Georgian traditions.



Kutaisi’s geographical location also positions the city as a hub for travelers and business ventures, both as a tourist and investment destination. It is a strategic asset offering a favorable plain relief and proximity to vital transit corridors, including international ports and an airport. Kutaisi possesses the potential to serve as the host city for the European Cultural Parliament in 2025, welcoming high representatives from European countries and solidifying our city’s place among the cities that have participated in this pan-European initiative over the past two decades.

Ioseb Khakhaleishvili concludes his presentation with a formal invitation to Kutaisi: “I officially would like to make the announcement regarding the hosting of the European Cultural Parliament session in 2025 in Kutaisi, so you can consider it as one of the host cities for the next years, and I hope that we will have the chance for you to see, to love Kutaisi and to enjoy Georgian hospitality!”

“Projects of the Union of the Albanian Communities in the Region” by Greta Xhakolli (Albania)

The Union of Albanian Municipalities in the Region, which is located in the city of Tirana, is a NGO formed as a unification of nearly 70 municipalities from Albania and the Western Balkan countries, and it is still expanding. The NGO's chairman is Mr. Erin Veliq, the Mayor of Tirana, and it is directed by Mrs. Andriola Kambo.

The platform has the main goal to increase cooperation between cities in the region, to promote and strengthen economic and social cooperation at the European level, to support good governance, develop cooperation between cities and contribute to the prospects of integration of the region in the European Union. One of the important projects was started during the pandemic, when a truck was turned into a museum, presenting the history and tradition of the participating cities, and travelling the whole region of the Western Balkan countries, bringing history and culture closer to the people.

Another focus are Women Empowerment projects. For two years, assistance with capacity building was provided and 25 women in successful businesses in the Western Balkan region were promoted. In another venture, 30 businesses led by women in rural Tirana were supported with the support of the US Embassy

in Tirana. This then turned into an annual event, the gathering of all the successful women from the region, who come together and share their experiences, being a role model for the younger generations.

Part of the Unions strategy is to turn each of the member cities into a cultural hub. Last year, the city of Prizren was the focus, where the Rock and Blues Festival was implemented. The festival is having a second edition this year, and to take this initiative a step further, a rock and blues museum in Prizren is being created.

In November 2023, for the Albanian Independence Day, the NGO organized the Albanian Parade. More than 7,000 people took part, 200 cultural, artistic and sports groups, and 120 municipalities from the Balkans and the Diaspora.

In 2022 and 2023, Tirana won two titles, the European City of Sport and the European City of Youth. For the title European City of Youth, the Muza Competition was created, one of the union's biggest projects. Muza is a platform that belongs to young artists. The project focuses on turning traditional ethnographic elements into being displayed in a modern way as fashion pieces. Two editions have already been implemented, and the third one is in the making, taking place on the 20th of June this year. Thousands of applicants were joining in, but only 10 of them make it through the final phases, where they are evaluated by the jury, made up of seven people, prestigious personalities from the arts and culture field. Through Muza Competition, the younger generations get education on heritage and cultural identity, in order for them to become ambassadors and promoters for the countries. As a product of the Muza Competition, this year the Muza magazine was produced, another element to promote the competition and give it a bigger platform.

Next year Tirana will be Mediterranean City of Dialogue and Culture, and the Union of Albanian Municipalities in the Region would like to use this setting to host an ECP session in Tirana.



“Igor Mitoraj – The Soul of Europe”

by Bartolomej Struznik (Poland)

Celebrating the jubilee of contemporary artist Igor Mitoraj, who was born in 1944 and died in 2014, the Polish artist and ECP member Bartolomej Struznik presented a short contribution under the title “Igor Mitoraj and the Soul of Europe”.

As the ECP often discusses questions about what it means to be European, Bartolomej Struznik values the sculptors by Mitoraj not as a clear answer but as useful in understanding what the soul of Europe is. Mitoraj was born in Germany, after his mother was deported there, but was raised in Poland, where he started his education at the Academy of Fine Arts in Krakow. Later he moved to Paris to continue his artistic education. After his first successful exhibition in Paris, he decided to explore the European culture deeper and deeper, and therefor traveled to Greece, Italy, other parts of Europe, as well as to Mexico. To explore the origins of European culture, in his art he referred to Greek art and sculpture and the Roman interpretation of Greek art. In 1944 he was the first contemporary artist given the opportunity to present his work at the British Museum. His sculpture is now part of the permanent collection of the British Museum in London.

His sculptures are present in many public spaces all over the world, among others in Paris or Rome.

Mitoraj’s art is about the interpretation of the classic human figure and the of origins of European culture.

Bartolomej Struznik closes his presentation with the question: What is the European soul today?



Discussion about Audio-Visuals and Social Media for ECP

ECP and Social Media was discussed.

Social Media is something that we have not been very active in apart from sharing during sessions. Though there is an unused potential and interest from some members to look further into this. **Nik Dee Dahlström** mentioned that we now have a public **Facebook** group initiated by the Youth Network consisting of almost 3000 members (friends of the ECP) and new requests to join are coming all the time. There is also a private group called Workspace with 58 members from previous sessions. Nik is admin on these. There is also an Instagram account, but this group is very small.

Christos Karpasitis offered to investigate improvements that can be done on social media and in particular on **LinkedIn**. There already is an organizational page with about 250 followers and a group with 36 members.

Vivek Arunachalam took initiative in making 7 interviews during the session with some members for **YouTube**. When the report was finalized some of these had been put together in full or short version. All of them will be posted on the YouTube channel ‘The Diplomatic Notes’.

Links for YouTube Videos:

[Children's Health, Well-being, Influence of Social Media, Technology and Mental Health in Scandinavia.](#)

[Par Stenback, President, European Cultural Parliament, Ex Finnish Foreign Minister on Geopolitics.](#)

[Importance of Family in Emotional and Mental Health of Children #mentalhealth #emotional #kids - YouTube](#)

[Capitalism's influence on Art and Artists. #capitalism #artist #music #entrepreneurship #disrupt - YouTube](#)

[The Talented Young Generation of Kosova.. #kosova #kosovapress #dualipa #music - YouTube](#)

Robert Pyrah initiated the idea of making future **podcasts** and did some recordings during the session towards a potential first pilot podcast. To be continued.

An ECP podcast is planned. A small editorial committee will oversee the initiative at launch, but contributions are invited from all members. The initial format will comprise guided interviews between ECP members on set subjects. More information will be released and a call for contributions will be released, but for any further information in the meantime please contact robert.pyrah[at]magdalen.oxon.org

Brigita Stroda initiated the idea of a projected visual presentation on members that can run as a rolling slide show at appropriate times during the next session. She took on to coordinate this prior next session.

Improved networking between members and local observers – Nik Dee Dahlström initiated a board with post-it communication as a tool in order for participants to connect with each other during coffee or meal breaks. It could also be used for continuing discussions on a topic.

The ECPYN (Youth Network) was discussed. It has, given natural causes of where this age group is in life/studies, been a challenge to keep it up and running despite many keen members and repeated attempts. One idea that circulated was to investigate a possibility of making an Erasmus project in which previous Editorial Teams from the hosting Universities could be invited to future sessions.

The New ECP Members of 2024



Zuzana Ronck

Zuzana Ronck studied choral conducting and orchestral conducting at the Graz University of Music and has been teaching at the Johann-Joseph-Fux Conservatory since 1986. She has been the director of the vocal ensemble Musica con GRAZia since 1999 and is also a board member of the Styrian Folk Song Society and the Styrian Choral Association. As the initiator of international festivals such as Classics in Styria or Styria Canora she focuses on cross-border choral encounters. In 2013, she was awarded a doctorate in philosophy in the field of Catholic and Protestant church music.



“Cultural exchange is very necessary in the European context and can straighten mutual respect and appreciation.”

Zuzana Ronck strives to promote the exchange of contemporary music and art, and to offer a lively cultural exchange and network with Austrian musician artists, choirs, and folk groups. She is interested in the exchange about promoting cultural foreign people and exchanging ideas between artistic education opportunities in different countries.

“I think with our respect and understanding to each other, with cultural exchange, we will bring more trust and understanding for the peace and for the great common European idea.”

Sandra Kocuvan

Sandra Kocuvan is head of the EU advisory service of the province of Styria and is in charge of the thematic coordination point for art and culture in the Alps-Adriatic-Alliance. Sandra Kocuvan has many years of experience in the cultural field as culture has always been her private passion. After working in the health



and social sectors at the government of Styria, her professional path has led her back to culture. She uses her expertise in an advisory and networking role between the public, cultural initiatives and artists. Since 2013 she has been responsible for Culture International, where she has found common interests between the European Union and culture.

As she has been interested in female engagement for many years, she is also one of the heads of the Women's Action Forum, a network of women in arts in Styria. Since May 2023, she has been project manager for the cultural strategy 2030 of the province of Styria.

"In all of my work, I try to think in the spirit of the European Union, and I like to work bottom-up. I really think that when we share the cake, there will be more for all of us. One of my goals is really to increase the female art in the ECP."

Markus Waitschacher

Markus Waitschacher was born in 1991 in Klagenfurt and now lives in Graz. He is art and culture mediator at the Universalmuseum Joanneum since 2013. He also works as a freelance curator, most recently: "filter bubble. Young art from K." at Kunstverein Kärnten and Künstlerhaus Klagenfurt (2018), "Pssst ...there is still space in outer space" at Pavelhaus in Bad Radkersburg (2016). After studying German and Cultural Studies in Klagenfurt, he completed his master's degree in European Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology

in Graz in 2018. Between 2012 and 2018, he co-curated the art space haaaauch-quer in Klagenfurt. He is a member of the Grazer Kunstverein, the Forum Stadtpark, the art association < rotor > and on the advisory board of MUSIS - Styrian Museum Association.

"Over the past days I kept thinking that the word culture, and especially culture in combination with nationality, or let's say Europe, triggers some bad thoughts in my mind. And I think that says something about our times, and I would be very glad to think about all of this together with you in the future!"



Benny Marcel

Benny Marcel studied political science and started his career in the human rights field. After he was first stationed in Beirut in Lebanon during the 1980s, he worked in Southeast Asia and South America for different UN organizations. He then became the European director for the Save the Children Alliance. After working together with a French conductor in Bosnia and Herzegovina Benny Marcel followed a new line in his career. The conductor was working as a journalist to be able to stay in Sarajevo to continue rehearsing with the symphony orchestra after having worked there for many years. After Sarajevo was released, the symphony orchestra went on a World Tour with Beethoven's Ninth Symphony.

Benny Marcel described this encounter as a turning point in his career: He became executive director for the Swedish chamber orchestra and deputy director for the Swedish Arts Council, where he was working for 12 years. From 2015 to 2023 he was the director of the Nordic Culture Fund based in Copenhagen.



Today, he works independently. He is the board chairperson for the Swedish National Touring Theatre and the chair of Follkoperan, a small opera house for everyone in Stockholm. He is also the chairperson of Dansalliansen in Sweden, an association that provides freelance dancers with basic employment and offers competence, development, matching and collaborations with other actors in the field. He is also involved in a new initiative in the Nordic level about media and politics.

“I worked in the humanitarian field. And when you're working there, you have to be very creative to think about things in another way. Then I turned into the artistic and creative field, and there you must be very much a humanitarian person.”

Christos Karpasitis

Christos Karpasitis is an academic researcher and artist from Cyprus. He is working as an assistant professor in digital media design and development at the University of Central Lancashire in Cyprus. He is the Vice President of the International Centre of Arts, Media and Communication, a collaborative research center between UCLan Cyprus and the Wuhan University of Communication, that promotes international collaboration on cultural diversity and cultural exchange in the areas of arts, media, and communication.

His research focuses on social change and cultural preservation through creative practices. He explores the intersection of digital media, arts, culture, and society to understand the role of digital media and digital design in shaping perception, behavior, and the



interactions within societies. As an educator he is committed to empowering the next generation of digital media producers, professionals, and cultural enthusiasts.

As an artist, he is involved in digital design and photography exhibitions, electronic music production as well as music festivals and live music performances in Cyprus and internationally.

“I believe that art and culture have the power to transcend language barriers and unite people from diverse backgrounds in a shared appreciation of the humanities’ rich heritage. As a member of the European Cultural Parliament, I am eager to contribute to discussions and initiatives that promote cultural diversity, intercultural collaboration, cultural exchange, creativity, and social change. I believe that by harnessing the power of digital media and art and culture, embracing cultural preservation through creative practices, we can rebuild a more robust, inclusive, and vibrant Europe for future generations.”

Graz Declaration 2024

Members of the European Cultural Parliament, ECP, met in full session in Graz on 19 – 21 April.

They

- Expressed their gratitude to the hosts of Graz and the support of Styria, Federal Ministry of Culture and private Sponsors,
- Welcomed this opportunity for establishing contacts between cultural personalities in Styria/Graz and the rest of Europe,
- Welcomed the opportunity to discuss openly the crisis for common European values and the future for European unity and European culture,
- Confirmed the decisive role of Culture and Arts in defending European values, based on democracy, human rights, and the Rule of Law,
- Strongly condemned the Russian invasion of Ukraine and encouraged members to engage with their colleagues in Ukraine,
- Expressed belief and the renewed hope, of the positive role of art and culture, in making a strong contribution to the values and civic life of all European societies, including Ukraine, despite the negative impact of the war,
- Called for an increased awareness of the Russian invasion as a war on culture, where art and artists are being instrumentalized in an attack intending to eradicate Ukrainian culture, art, and national identity. This also has an impact on exiled artists within and outside this conflict area,
- Expressed the hope that people of arts and culture can contribute to healing wounds and losses, across borders, during and after the war,
- Emphasized the importance of learning from history and discussed historic examples of models of reconciliation after long periods of war in Europe,
- Discussed the increasing role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in cultural life and recognized the possibilities that AI may offer, but...
- Expressed concern about the consequences of the abuse of AI in literature, music, film, and other forms of arts, not least in relation to copyright and work opportunities,
- Expressed concerns about the predominance of digitalization in education and emphasized the necessity to cultivate a sense of awareness and critical thinking in schools,
- Expressed concerns regarding “cancel culture” and the marginalization of humanities within education. These have negative consequences for society at large,
- Welcomed invitations from Kutaisi/Georgia and Tirana/Albania, regarding future co-operation with the ECP and to host a session in 2025,
- Welcomed new projects, initiated by ECP Members, on cooperation with cultural personalities and institutions in Africa, Asia, and United States.

Cuisine and Social Interaction

Receptions

by the Governor of Styria, Christopher Drexler
by the Mayor of Graz, Elke Kahr



Cultural Program

Intermezzo

Lisa-Marie Mahler

The 20-year-old saxophonist has been taking lessons at the Johann-Joseph-Fux Conservatory in Christian Pold's class for six years. She graduated from the Music High School Dreihackengasse in 2023. She is currently a member of the Styrian Military Band. Her musical preferences are contemporary music and ensemble playing. She also plays the clarinet and piano.



Concert

Lucia Maria Rauchenberger

Born in Graz in 2010, she has been playing the flute at the Johann-Joseph-Fux Conservatory since the age of 5, as well as piano since the age of 6. Since 2023, Lucia has been enrolled as an extraordinary student at the University of Music and Performing Arts Graz in the highly gifted flute course with Prof. Erwin Klambauer. She is 1st prize winner of the Austrian competition "prima la musica" in the category "flute solo", as well as in the category "chamber music for woodwinds", both nationally and nationwide, and she has also won first prizes at international competitions in Italy and Slovakia.



Eduard Lanner

He studied piano, music education and German philology in Graz, Vienna and Weimar. His musical interests include Viennese Classicism, Romanticism and contemporary music. He worked as a piano accompanist and teacher at the Music Universities in Graz and Vienna, as well as at the Josef Matthias Hauer Conservatory in Wiener Neustadt. He has been the director of the Johann-Joseph-Fux Conservatory in Graz since 2014.

Rimantas Vingras

Rimantas Vingras, ECP member, is a Lithuanian pianist who resides in London. Born in Lithuania, he initially studied piano at the Čiurlionis School of Arts, before graduating from the Moscow Conservatory and the College-Conservatory of Music at University of Cincinnati, USA. Rimantas has also given numerous solo and chamber music recitals, participating in various festivals in Lithuania, USA and the United Kingdom. Rimantas is an Artistic Director of Šiauliai International Piano Duo Festival in Lithuania. He also teaches at Vytautas Magnus University in Kaunas, Lithuania.



PHOTO EXHIBITION

“OUT OF FRAME”

by **Brisilda Bufi**, 2021, Albania

Brisilda Bufi was born in Tirana in 1991, where she completed her studies in classical piano in 2014. For the past 8 years, she has been living in Graz where she graduated in 2021 from the evening college for Fine Art Photography and Multimedia Art at Ortweinschule Graz. From 2016 to 2018 she studied Musicology at the University of Music and Performing Arts Graz and the University of Graz. Since October 2021, she has been continuing her studies in the field of Information Design at FH JOANNEUM.

Bufi's fine art practice extends through music, photography, videography, design, fine art printing, and photobook-making. Her work deals primarily with identity and has up until now been very distinguished. She wants to observe the beauty of the unknown, her changing perception, capture the beauty in the details, and create details that are not in our conscious awareness. Exhibitions in Graz, Austria, Croatia and Albania, include among others the solo exhibitions title still missing at Kunsthalle Graz in 2024, out of frame at the Austrijski Kulturni Forum in Zagreb in 2021 and the group exhibitions photo graz 022 at Altes Kino in Leibnitz in 2022 and Tirana Photo Festival at the national museum in Tirana in 2019, among others.

<https://bufibrisilda.myportfolio.com/>

“THE DECOLONIZED MARS”

by **Marlene Mautner**, 2021, Styria

Marlene Mautner, born 1989 in Bruck an der Mur, Marlene Mautner studied applied photography and time-based media at the University of Applied Arts Vienna and Experimental Game Cultures. Her work has been shown at the MAK and Belvedere21, among others. Thematically, she deals with the visual implementation of scientifically verifiable facts in the mirror of fiction. For example, genetic manipulation using Crispr-Cas9 or applications of artificial intelligence are embedded in the methods of image

production. Natural sciences and photography have been closely linked since the beginning. In the current works, this connection is emphasized by the combination of the classic photographic medium and image production through machine learning (Generative Adversarial Networks).

www.fountainsedit.com



Nik Dee Dahlström, Marie Maierhofer in front of the photo exhibition



GUIDED CITY TOUR AND URBAN EXPLORATION

The Graz Guides gave the members of ECP an interesting, guided tour through the old city center of Graz.









Participating ECP Senators and Members, and International Observers

Konstantinos Alex Alatsis	Theatre
Maria Antas	Literature Edition
Vivek Arunachalam	Observer, Lecturer
Steve Austen	ECP Senator, President Amsterdam Summer University
Frederike Beltjes	Observer, Director MBA Culture, Heritage, and Citizenship
Fatos Berisha	Film, Next Host Tirana
François Carbon	Cultural Diplomacy, Transatlantic Dialogue
Thomas Chepaitis	Foreign Minister Republic Užupis, Vice Director
Nik Dee Dahlström	Theatre, Editor ECP Reports
Isabella Dell’Utri	Observer
Massimo Dell’Utri	Philosophy
Hélène Dubois	Museum
Jānis Garančs	New Media Arts
Svetla Georgieva	Music, Poetry
Abelardo Gonzales	Architecture
Pierre Guillet de Monthoux	Philosophy
Jason Hale	Observer, Theatre
Peter Hanke	ECP Senator, Music, Associate Fellow Oxford/Saïd
Eliza Hoxha	Music, Architecture
Verena Huber	Architecture
Karen Humle	Music
Boyko Kadinov	Architecture
Denitza Kadinova	Observer, Lawyer, Financial Consultant
Christos S. Karpasitis	Academic Research, Digital Media Artist
Ioseb Khakhaleishvili	Observer, Kutaisi Municipality Mayor
Levan Khetaguri	Theatre, Cultural Diplomacy
Luise Kloos	Visual Arts, Organization ECP Graz 2024
Laura Kolbe	European History
Bengt Kristensson Uggla	Philosophy
Elisabeth Kristensson Uggla	Observer
Janina Leber	Observer, Film
Titus Leber	Film, History, Anthropology
Benny Marcel	Observer, Former Cultural Director Nordic Council
András Márton	Theatre
Gintautas Mažeikis	Philosophy
Dudana Mazmanishvili	Music, Pianist
Judith McKimm	Intercultural Communication
Gayle McPherson	Cultural Diplomacy
Mary Miller	Opera, former Artistic Director
Miran Mohar	Visual Arts
Karl-Erik Norrman	Co-Founder and SG ECP, Author, Former Ambassador
Zoran Pantelic	Visual Arts
Bojana Petric Pantelić	Observer
Maria Isabella Pesce	Observer
Timotei Puzhevich	Observer
Robert Pyrah	History

Temuri Shubitidze	Observer, Marneuli Municipality Vice Mayor
Kristina Shuina	Observer
Pär Stenbäck	President and Co-Founder ECP, Former Minister for Foreign Affairs, Culture and Education
Brigita Stroda	Music, Cultural Entrepreneurship
Bartłomiej Struzik	Visual Arts, Architecture
Savina Tarsitano	Visual Arts, Photography
Rimantas Vingras	Music, Pianist
Stelios Virvidakis	Philosophy
Michele Welkener	Observer, University of Dayton
Greta Xhakolli	Observer, Representative of the City of Tirana
Gabriele Zaidyte	Cultural Diplomacy and Management
Alex Zakletsky	Photography
Josip Zanki	Visual Arts, Cultural Anthropology

Local Observers

Graz, Styria, Upper Austria and Vienna

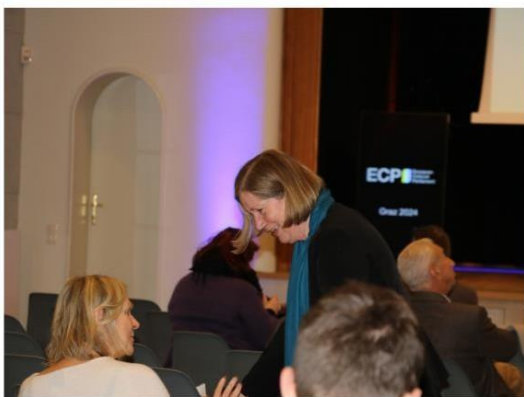
Christine Braunersreuther	Municipal Council on behalf of Mayor Elke Kahr
Brisilda Bufi	Visual Artist
Brigitte Czermak	Visual Artist, <i>Galerie Centrum</i>
Barbara Eigner	International Relations, European Capital of Culture Salzkammergut 2024
Beate Engelhorn	Architect, Director House of Architecture
Birgit Fedl-Dohr	Visual Artist, Galerie Centrum
Ruth Feldgrill-Zankel	Former Minister and Vice Mayor of Graz
Andreas Gierlinger-Czerny	Engineer
Elisabeth Gierlinger-Czerny	Psychotherapy and Theology
Luise Grinschgl	Kulturvermittlung Steiermark
Silvia Maria Grossmann	Visual Artist
Elisabeth Gschiel	Visual Artist
Karl-Heinz Herper	Former City Council for Culture
Sandra Holasek	Member of Styrian Parliament on behalf of Governor Christopher Drexler
Isabella Holzmann	Culture Unlimited
Lisa Höllebauer	Literature, Theatre
Lotte Hubmann	Visual Artist, Erasmus+
Roman Kern	Keynote Speaker, AI Expert, University of Technology Graz, Chief Scientific Officer Know Center
Sandra Kocuvan	Management Government of Styria, Cultural Strategy Styria 2030, new ECP Member
Brigitte Kössner-Skoff	IWK – Initiatives Economy for Art
Gerhard Skoff	Engineer, Management
Astrid Kury	Art History, Curation and Management Akademie Graz
Helga Lackner	Visual Artist
Amalija Lalić-Stanić	Visual Artist, Art Association Roter Keil

Eduard Lanner	Music, Director Johann-Joseph-Fux Conservatory
Paul Lässer	Visual Artist, Art Association Roter Keil
Lisa-Marie Mahler	Music
Georg Martischnig	Engineer
Helene Martischnig	Visual Artist, Art History
Marko Mele	Management Director Universalmuseum Joanneum
Thomas Pappenscheller	International Cultural Affairs
Tatjana Petzer	Slavic Literary and Cultural Studies, University of Graz
Johanna Plösch	Design
Heidrun Primas	Architect, Advisor Cultural Strategy Styria 2030
Tanja Prušnik	Visual Artist, President Künstlerhaus Wien
Florian Purkarthofer	Design
Barbara Rauchenberger	Literature, KULTUM
Johannes Rauchenberger	Art History, Theology, Director KULTUM
Lucia Rauchenberger	Music
Uwe Reissig	Visual Artist, Galerie Centrum
Zuzana Ronck	Music, new ECP Member
Marlies Schöck	Art Curator
Barbara Schmid	Ceramic Artist, Erasmus+
Flora Schmid	Student
Werner Schrempf	Advisor Cultural Strategy Styria 2030
Erwin Schwentner	Visual Artist, Galerie Centrum
Barbara Stelzl-Marx	Keynote Speaker, History, University of Graz, Director of Ludwig-Boltzmann-Institute for Research on Consequences of War
Jutta Steininger	Visual Artist, Art Association Gruppe77
Eero Teuschl	Sculptor, Art Association Roter Keil
Claudia Unger	Municipal Council on behalf of City Councilor for Culture Günther Riegler
Andreas Unterweger	Literature, Director Literary Journal <i>Manuskripte</i>
Eva Ursprung	Visual Artist, Kultur in Graz
Markus Waitschacher	Art Mediation, new ECP Member
Edith Zeier-Draxl	Theatre, Cultural Advisory Board Graz









Press Release and History of the ECP

The European Cultural Parliament (ECP) was founded in the premises of The Council of Europe, Strasbourg, in November 2001. The objective was – and still is – to strengthen the role of cultural and artistic ideas and initiatives in Europe and to promote ethical and aesthetic values in the European project. The ECP should amplify voices of independent artists and cultural personalities. Their voices should be heard in order to balance the strong influence of technocracy in the European integration project. In addition, the founders of the ECP wished to strengthen the dialogue and cooperation between citizens in EU



countries and neighboring European countries and between various sectors of arts, philosophy, and letters. To this end, outstanding artists, and other cultural personalities from all parts of the continent have been nominated Members of the ECP. By February 2023 there are about 160 Members from 43 European countries in the Cultural Parliament. New members are nominated by a Nomination Committee upon proposals from already ECP members and from ECP host cities. An ECP member has the right to propose two new members from countries other than his/her own. Each host city has the right to nominate 3 new ECP members.

The ECP has had twenty sessions so far – in Bruges 2002, Graz 2003, Genoa 2004, Lisbon 2005, Turku 2006, Sibiu 2007, Liverpool 2008, Gothenburg 2009, Athens 2010, Pécs 2011, Berlin 2012, Edinburgh 2013, Prishtina 2014, Girona 2015, Batumi 2016, Rotterdam 2017, Berlin 2018 (workshop), Dilijan, Armenia 2019, Berlin 2020 (digital seminar), Berlin 2021 (symposium), Kaunas 2022, Graz 2024.

The sessions usually last for three days – mostly Friday-Sunday, with arrival of participants on Thursday evening. At the opening ceremony a politician from the host country and/or the local mayor could welcome the participants. Two or three key-note speakers (at least one prominent artist/cultural personality from the host country) could address participants at the opening. The session then includes plenary sessions, interactive meeting with local artists, workshops, and artistic events. Main theme of the session is decided in cooperation between the host city and the ECP.

Important European topics have been discussed, such as

- Tolerance and understanding
- Creative Milieus in Europe
- The role of Culture in promoting European Cohesion
- Intercultural Dialogue
- The importance of Quality
- Democracy as a challenge for culture and media
- The Relevance of Europe in a Globalized World
- Freedom of Speech
- Populism and Extremism in Europe
- Creativity, Innovation and Cultural Identity
- European Values
- Migration issues

- Humanitarianism in Culture and Education
- The role of Culture in times of war

Several new Pan-European projects have been born within the framework of the ECP, such as **NUROPE - The Nomadic University for Arts, Philosophy and Enterprise in Europe** (Headquarters in Turku, Finland) and **Love Difference** (Headquarters in Biella, Italy) **Citybooks** (Headquarters Graz, Austria), Music Mind Trust (Headquarters Sussex, UK). Furthermore, the ECP has been looking at various aspects of “**The Strategic Role of Culture in the European Project**” and “**The Creative Process – What Arts & Culture can offer Society**”.

The ECP is also an important **European Think-Tank**. Its Research group has produced reports on the **Lisbon Strategy** (2006) on **Intercultural Dialogue** (2007) and on **Democracy** (2008). More about the ECP, its members and its various sessions can be found on the website www.kulturparlament.com. It cooperates with many important projects and institutions, such as **A Soul for Europe**, (Berlin), **The Transatlantic Dialogue (TAD)**, Luxemburg, Institute for Cultural Diplomacy, Berlin and The Academy for Cultural Diplomacy, Tbilisi, Georgia.

Since 2010 the ECP also has a network for young artists and cultural managers (age 18-35). Apart from separate local meetings the ECP YN was organizing a youth session (separately financed) in connection with each ECP annual session. From 2017 the network is called ECP Future Generation. In autumn 2019 the network organized a Festival in Brussels.

The ECP is a non-for-profit network and forum without basic financial resources for preparing and organizing big sessions. The administration is based on voluntary work. All twenty sessions so far have been financed by the host cities or regions.

The costs for bringing about 70 - 100 ECP members from about 25 - 40 European countries to a conference of three days depend on flight prices, local transfers, local accommodation, catering costs, and availability of conference facilities. In some cases, the host has offered only local accommodation, catering costs, and conference facilities. When no flights have been offered, we cannot count with more than 50 – 60 participants. In such a case, covering travel costs for a selected number of members (e.g. relatively long distance from the host city) could be considered and would increase the geographical diversity of participants.

The 20 European cities mentioned above can testify that an ECP session is a big event with a great potential for interesting, fruitful, and inspiring meetings between European and local artists and intellectuals. For European Capitals of Culture like Bruges, Graz, Genoa, Sibiu, Liverpool, Athens, Turku, Pécs and Kaunas the ECP sessions have contributed importantly to a true European dimension, either during preparations or during the year itself or as follow up to the cultural year. The ECP members are famous cultural actors from all fields of Arts and Culture – literature, music, theater, philosophy, history, film, dance, architecture, visual arts, and new media. All artists are eager to have interactive contacts with local colleagues and are at the disposal of local media for personal interviews during the session. An ECP session is always open to interactive activities in collaboration with the host organizations. It is also open to co-operation with media and interested observers from local cultural life, universities, arts schools, and other relevant institutions.



AI Summary of ECP Graz 2024

by Artificial Intelligence Program

As an extension of the AI workshop the editorial team tried an experiment with AI. Nik Dee Dahlström asked an AI tool to summarize the final report. Comparing the report written by the editorial team and the summary written by AI, it is noticeable that there are major differences. The AI prioritized certain information and omitted other, sometimes phrasing sentences in a confusing or simply wrong matter, other times providing a comprehensive summary. It is clear, that AI can be a useful tool, but has to be handled with caution. The AI generated version reads as follows:

“The European Cultural Parliament convened its 21st session in Graz, Austria, focusing on European Culture after the Zeitenwende, featuring over 60 ECP Members, international observers, and local artists. The session included keynote speeches on conflicts, crises, and the culture of memories, as well as discussions on AI and its impact on society. There were workshops on AI in arts and culture, as well as presentations on various projects and initiatives by ECP Members. The session also addressed the ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine, emphasizing the importance of cultural diplomacy and reconciliation. Additionally, new ECP Members were welcomed, and future sessions were proposed to be held in Kutaisi, Georgia, and Tirana, Albania. The Graz Declaration of the ECP was adopted, highlighting the significance of cultural exchange, dialogue, and cooperation in shaping a peaceful and inclusive European society. The event stressed the crucial role of art, culture, and democracy in addressing current challenges and promoting mutual understanding among diverse cultures and languages. The session served as a platform for engaging in meaningful discussions, sharing experiences, and fostering collaborations to advance European culture and values in the face of contemporary geopolitical complexities and technological advancements.

A discussion about the evolution of programming into machine learning and generative AI unfolds, exploring the accountability and capabilities of traditional programming versus machine learning where examples are given to illustrate the distinction. The text delves into the limitations and advancements of traditional machine learning compared to the newer generative AI, which can create content beyond its original training. The narrative also touches on the legal implications of AI-generated content, highlighting copyright concerns and ownership issues. The conversation transitions to the broader impact and challenges posed by AI in society, including energy consumption, misinformation, deep fakes, and social engineering. The potential of foundational models and the significance of trustworthiness in AI development are also explored. Shifting towards a keynote speech analyzing the survival of Europe as a cultural and political entity, the text underscores demographic challenges, security issues, and the need for a unified response to external threats.

The discourse navigates through geopolitical dynamics, civil society engagement, and the role of culture in shaping societal resilience. The dialogue further extends to reflections on conflicts, historical precedents, and the daunting task of balancing stability with cultural preservation amidst shifting political landscapes. Central to the discussion are the impending challenges facing the European project, the significance of hope, and the critical role of civil society in fostering dialogue and cohesion in turbulent times. The interplay between culture, politics, and societal values emerges as a complex interplay that demands thoughtful navigation and collective action in facing the uncertainties and opportunities of the future European landscape.

The discussion at the crossroads of Brexit explores various perspectives on the impact of Brexit, with Scotland expressing a desire for independence to rejoin the EU. The dialogue touches on the concept of soft power, cultural influence, and strategies to leverage soft power effectively in workshops. The

distinction between soft and smart power is deliberated upon, highlighting the nuances between active actions and elements of violence. The discourse expands to encompass Hollywood's influence on smart power, technological advancements, and the disparity in investments between the US and Europe. Additionally, the conversation delves into cultural diplomacy, juxtaposing hard and soft power, ultimately settling on smart power as a combination of both. The historical context of hard power, particularly in wartime resistance, and the significance of civil resistance in achieving victories are emphasized.

The narrative further delves into the challenges faced by the EU post-Brexit, reflecting on the loss of influence, the need for reform, and the importance of preserving values like equality, tolerance, and the rule of law within the European Union. Discussions on the importance of art and cultural education, the crisis in humanities education, and the urgency of reviving emphasis on the arts for societal development are brought to the fore. The discourse on the role of philosophy as a means of understanding contemporary socio-political crises, cultural production, and ethical dilemmas underscores the critical need for philosophical reflections on global challenges such as artificial intelligence, climate change, pandemics, poverty, and identity politics. Philosophical contemplation on the potential consequences of societal transformations, the convergence of ethics, and the preservation of cultural values amidst geopolitical tensions culminates in a plea for a renewed focus on humanities education, ethical standards, and cross-cultural dialogue to navigate the complexities of a rapidly changing world.

Soviet public figures in a march, concluding with a plea to support Ukrainian artists, sparking a debate on distinguishing Russian culture from governmental influence. Various perspectives shared, exploring the complexities of Russian culture, the impact of political instrumentalization, and the importance of supporting artists amid conflicts. The discussion delves into the need for solidarity with artists in need, ethical considerations surrounding artificial intelligence in the arts, and the evolving role of AI in different sectors. The dialogue spans from the ethical implications of AI's advancement, its potential impact on creativity and human identity, to the contrasting views on AI's ability to understand emotions, humor, and consciousness. Embracing the opportunities and challenges posed by AI, insights touch upon themes like bias mitigation, legal frameworks, and the transformative potential of AI in reshaping artistic creation, social interactions, and intellectual landscapes. As the discourse unfolds, the multifaceted interactions with AI prompt reflections on the essence of humanity, the boundaries of technology, and the evolving dynamics between AI and human society, unveiling a tapestry of philosophical inquiries, ethical dilemmas, and societal transformations in the era of artificial intelligence.

The presentations at the workshop ranged from discussions on artists as citizens shaping European identity, the potential of podcasts to showcase ECP activities, cultural diplomacy promoting peace and unity, to projects focusing on art for societal healing and awareness. Initiatives like 'Culture Wine Technologies' connecting cities along the Silk Road, the aim of the Union of Albanian Municipalities to empower women and unify regions, and the celebration of contemporary artist Igor Mitoraj's contribution to the soul of Europe highlighted the diverse range of cultural projects aimed at fostering cooperation, understanding, and creativity. The significance of platforms like Muza Competition in promoting cultural heritage among youth, hosting events like the Albanian Parade to celebrate shared identities, and the potential of social media and audio-visual tools to enhance ECP networking and outreach demonstrated the continual evolution and expansion of cultural initiatives towards a more interconnected and vibrant cultural landscape.

Presentations on the rich heritage of cities like Kutaisi, the engagement of youth through educational programs and social interaction events, and the focus on art as a tool for empowerment and dialogue further emphasized the importance of cultural projects in strengthening social cohesion, fostering

dialogue, and promoting cross-cultural understanding. The workshops also showcased the intersection of art, technology, and tradition in projects like 'Mindmapping Africa' and the role of artists in advocating for social justice and healing, ultimately underscoring the transformative power of art and culture in addressing societal challenges, honoring heritage, and shaping collective identities.

The full report showcases the diverse works and backgrounds of artists and cultural personalities, detailing their creative journeys and contributions to European culture. It delves into artists like Brisilda Bufi and Marlene Mautner, highlighting their unique approaches to art forms like photography and digital media design. The narrative also introduces key members of the European Cultural Parliament, shedding light on their roles and endeavors in promoting cultural diversity and exchange. Furthermore, it discusses the founding and objectives of the ECP, emphasizing the importance of cultural and artistic values in Europe. The report serves as a window into the vibrant cultural landscape of Europe, showcasing the intersection of art, philosophy, and societal dialogue within the European context through the lens of talented individuals and collaborative initiatives.”

Bullet Point Summary

by Artificial Intelligence Program

The AI generated bullet point summary reads as follows:

- The European Cultural Parliament held its 21st session in Graz, Austria on European Culture after the Zeitenwende.
- The session included discussions on conflicts, crises, and the culture of memories, as well as discussions on AI and its impact on society.
- Workshops were held on AI in arts and culture, and presentations on various projects and initiatives were made by ECP Members.
- Addressing the ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine, emphasizing the importance of cultural diplomacy and reconciliation.
- Keynote speeches on the evolution of programming into machine learning and generative AI, highlighting the limitations and legal implications of AI-generated content.
- A keynote speech analyzing the survival of Europe as a cultural and political entity and the need for a unified response to external threats.
- Discussions on the impact of Brexit on the EU post-Brexit, including soft power, cultural influence, and strategies to leverage it effectively.
- Urgent need for art and cultural education and the crisis in humanities education to revive emphasis on societal development.
- Philosophical reflections on global challenges such as AI, climate change, pandemics, poverty, and identity politics were also discussed.

Short Summary of ECP Graz 2024

AI generated short summary

The European Cultural Parliament held its 21st session in Graz, Austria, focusing on European Culture after the Zeitenwende. The session included keynote speeches on conflicts, crises, and the culture of memories, as well as discussions on AI and its impact on society. The session also addressed the ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine, emphasizing the importance of cultural diplomacy and reconciliation. New ECP Members were welcomed, and future sessions were proposed in Kutaisi, Georgia, and Tirana, Albania. The Graz Declaration of the ECP was adopted, emphasizing the significance of cultural exchange, dialogue, and cooperation in shaping a peaceful and inclusive European society.

The session also discussed the evolution of programming into machine learning and generative AI, exploring the accountability and capabilities of traditional programming versus generative AI. The conversation also touched on the legal implications of AI-generated content, copyright concerns, and the broader impact of AI in society.

The session also discussed the survival of Europe as a cultural and political entity, highlighting demographic challenges, security issues, and the need for a unified response to external threats. It also explored the concept of soft power, cultural influence, and strategies to leverage soft power effectively. The discussion also touched on the historical context of hard power and the significance of civil resistance in achieving victories.



Program ECP Graz 2024

Friday 19th April

Afternoon: Check In at Hotel DANIEL, Europaplatz 1, 8020 Graz, www.hoteldaniel.com

17.00 Arrival at Volkskundemuseum, Heimatsaal, Paulustorgasse 13a. Registration. Coffee.

18.00 Opening of 21st Session

Welcome

- Luise Kloos, Organizer ECP Graz, and Karl-Erik Norrman, ECP-Secretary General
- Claudia Unger, Councilor City of Graz – on behalf of Günther Riegler, City Council for Culture
- Pär Stenbäck, ECP-President
- Christine Braunersreuther, Councilor City of Graz – on behalf of Elke Kahr, Mayor
- Sandra Holasek, Member of Parliament – on behalf of Christopher Drexler, Governor of Styria

Keynote speeches

- **“Zeitenwenden in Europe – Perspectives on Conflicts, Crises and Culture of Memories”**
Barbara Stelzl-Marx, University of Graz, and Director of the Ludwig Boltzmann Institute for Research on Consequences of War
- **“Can we trust AI? State of the Art. Opportunities. Risks”**
Roman Kern, Technical University Graz, Chief Scientific Officer Know Center

19.15 Plenary session

including a presentation of guests and new ECP-members, and the schedule of the conference.
Moderation by Karl-Erik Norrman

20.00 Reception offered by the Governor of Styria, Christopher Drexler

Saturday 20th April

09.00 Arrival at Heimatsaal/Volkskundemuseum

09.30

Keynote speech

- **“The struggle for the survival of Europe as cultural and political entity must continue.”**
ECP-President Pär Stenbäck

Plenary debate on the topic of the ECP session including

- **“Philosophy and Culture in Europe after the Zeitenwende”** by Stelios Virvidakis (Greece)
Moderation by Mary Miller (UK)

11.30 Coffee Break

11.50 Plenary debate including

- **“European Culture and Russian Aggression: To be or not to be?”**
by Alex Zakletsy (Ukraine)
- **“Post-War Reconciliation and Mutual Recognition. The Power of Cultural Diplomacy”**
by Gintautas Mažeikis (Lithuania)

13.00 Intermezzo: Lisa-Marie Mahler, Saxophone

13.15 Lunch

14.15 “Cultural Strategy 2030 – The Cultural Future of the Province of Styria”
by Sandra Kocuvan (Land Steiermark), Heidrun Primas/Werner Schrempf (Consultants)

14.45 ECP Workshops

- **Workshop 1**

“Are Machines Taking Over? Arts & Culture in the Era of Artificial Intelligence”

AI Expert: Roman Kern (Austria), Moderation: Stelios Virvidakis (Greece)

- **Workshop 2**

“Presentation of Upcoming Projects and Co-Operation Initiatives by Members”

Moderation: François Carbon (Luxembourg)

Contributions by Steve Austen (Netherlands), Robert Pyrah (UK), Savina Tarsitano (Italy), Eliza Hoxha (Kosovo)

16.30 Coffee Break

17.00 Presentation

- **“AI³ – African-European Intercultural Dialogue between Tradition and AI”**
by Titus Leber (Austria)

Presentation of Georgian and Albanian project of interest to the ECP

- **“Silk Road Culture Hub”**
by Levan Khetaguri (Georgia) and Temuri Shubitidze (Georgia)
- **“Science and Culture: From Antiquity to the Modern Age”**
by Ioseb Khakhaleishvili (Georgia)
- **“Projects of the Union of the Albanian Communities in the Region”**
by Greta Xhakolli (Albania)

18.15 General plenary debate

19.00 Reception offered by the Mayor of Graz, Elke Kahr

20.00 Concert

Lucia Rauchenberger, transverse flute / Eduard Lanner, stage piano
Rimantas Vingras, stage piano

Sunday 21st April

09.00 Arrival at Heimatsaal/Volkskundemuseum. Coffee.

09.30 Presentation of reports on the workshops

9.50 “Igor Mitoraj – The Soul of Europe”
by Bartłomiej Struzik

10.00 Plenary session including debate and adaptation of a “Graz-Declaration of the ECP”

12.30 Lunch

13.30 GUIDED CITY TOUR (by reservation at the front desk)

END OF SESSION

Thanks and Acknowledgments of Support

Many thanks for all public and private support



Impressum

Organization

European Cultural Parliament

Karl-Erik Norrman

www.kulturparlament.com

Program

Karl-Erik Norrman

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