

European values essay



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Unity in Diversity is the official motto of European Union. Is there a unity in diversity? Even there are many different cultures in Europe are there common European values? In order to define “ European Values” first we should answer an important question. What is Europe? In basic sense it is a continent. But actually it is more than just a continent. Olli Rehn who is the vice president of the European Commission says “ I am often asked where Europe’s ultimate borders lie. My answer is that the map of Europe is defined in the minds of Europeans.

Geography sets the frame, but fundamentally it is values that make the borders of Europe. Enlargement is a matter of extending the zone of European values, the most fundamental of which are liberty and solidarity, tolerance and human rights, democracy and the rule of law. ” In his words Olli Rehn defines Europe and European values very well. We can’t find the real map of Europe in books. The real map is inside the minds of Europeans. So, what Europeans think about it? What is the most important thing for them?

What comes first? Being a European or being a citizen of their own country? Do they see themselves as “ European”? According to a survey of Eurobarometer that took place on 2004 %48 of European Union (EU) citizens defines themselves as both European and a citizen of their country, %41 of them says they are only their country’s citizen. Besides %86 of them are proud of their nationality but only %68 of them are proud of being a European. Generally, Europeans importance order is like the chart below.

As we can see from the survey the most important thing for everyone is their own country. So, is it possible to have common European values when people care about their own heritage most? Is it possible to find unity in diversity? According to European Union it is possible. We should know what bounds Europeans together to understand where this unity comes from. There are some common European Values among the European Countries. In order to apprehend European Values first we should know about what are values. What do values mean?

According to the Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary-Seventh edition they are principles or standards of behaviour; one's judgement of what is important in life. Besides values are the main elements of a culture; they define the meaning and importance for the people in a social system. Principles and criterions of a society are derived from its values. From this perspective, it becomes understandable that values have a great impression for the individual social system due to the fact that they importantly influence, control and organize this social system. To sum up: values are the foundation of a society.

What are the European values? European Culture comes from European values. Term of “ European Values” involves arts like architecture, music, dance, paintings, sculpture and others. Besides these values contain the common essential values that Europeans have. There are six basic European values: Human rights, democracy, rule of law, secularity, rationality and humanistic thinking. First European value is “ Humanistic Thinking”.

Humanism is a group of philosophies and ethical perspectives that

emphasize the value of human beings. It is based on the educational ideal of Greek and Roman antiquity.

Humanistic thinking puts man in the center of everything. Second of them is “Rationality”. In philosophy, “Rationality” is the characteristic of any behaviour, belief, or desire, that makes their choice a necessity. But as one of the European Values rationality symbolizes an attitude, which regards rational thinking. Rationality means that a statement can be judged by its value and not on the basis of the authority of the person or institution who made the statement, or on how many others agree with this statement, or on the fact that the statement is attributed to any kind of god. Secularity” is the status of being separate from religion, or not being exclusively allied or against any particular religion. Secularity intends to disconnect public and religious bodies by law. Other value is “Rule of law”. The term means rule according to a higher law. No written law may be enforced by the government unless it conforms with certain unwritten, universal principles of fairness, morality, and justice that exceed human legal systems. It primarily contains four principles: Basic rights, separation of Powers, calculability of governmental actions, security mechanisms of law. Democracy” is a form of government in which all eligible citizens have an equal say in the decisions that affect their lives. We can call a democracy as a democracy if the actual sovereignty lies in the hands of the people and the rulers are elected by the people during free elections. A government should meet the basic standards such as free elections, democratic constitution, existence of an opposition. Without these basic standards we can't call a government as a democratic

government. The last European value is “ Human Rights”. It is the idea of human being possesses innate rights first came up in antiquity.

There are three supporters of human rights; freedom, equality and solidarity. Everyone has the freedom of thought, conscience, religion, press, and opinion that are all protected by the human rights. Everyone is equal before the law and are entitled to protection. Besides everyone has economical and social rights which is an essential feature of the human-rights system. These rights can be specified in five categories: political, civil, economical, social, and cultural human rights. These are the European values. So what is “ Unity in Diversity” for Europe?

In 2000, the European Union adopted ‘ United in Diversity’ (Latin: In varietate concordia) as official Motto, a reference to the many and diverse member states of the Union in terms of culture. It is one of the newest symbols of Europe, alongside the European flag and anthem but, unlike most, it is specific to the EU rather than originating from the Council of Europe. According to the European Commission: The motto means that, via the EU, Europeans are united in working together for peace and prosperity, and that the many different cultures, traditions and languages in Europe are a positive asset for the continent.

In conclusion, Unity in Diversity is the motto of European Union. It refers to Europeans as a whole. We may have some differences, we may have different languages. And we may have different traditions. We might see our country as the most important. But apart from our differences, we Europeans are united. Our diversity creates a great mixture in that unity. This is what

makes Europe, Europe. It is not economy, it is not borders. It is “ Common Values” what put us together, that makes us “ Europe”.