



Conference Report, 10 & 11 November 2017

A SOUL FOR EUROPE Conference 2017

Who is assuming responsibility for Europe – How citizens, cities and parliaments should cooperate for Europe

DAY 1: 10 November 2017, Allianz Forum Berlin

Words of Welcome

Satu Kuitunen, Frédéric Meseeuw A Soul for Europe Strategy Group
Gerry Woop State Secretary for European Affairs, City of Berlin
Volker Hassemer Chairman Stiftung Zukunft Berlin



Satu Kuitunen, Frédéric Meseeuw, Volker Hassemer, Carin Tiggelhoven, Elmar Brock, Gerry Woop, Juan Gabriel Vásquez, Emil Boc, Laura Kleiner © A Soul for Europe, seesaw-foto.com

Satu Kuitunen: *If we want a strong, inclusive, and welcoming Europe, we cannot expect the sceptics, or those who feel left behind from the European Project, to come and find us. We need to go and find them, and these kind of events, and their inspiring conversations, are one way. " (...) "These kinds of gatherings are an excellent opportunity to challenge fundamentally our values, and have our opinions challenged.*



Public Debate

Emil Boc Mayor of Cluj-Napoca

Elmar Brok President Union of European Federalists and MEP

Karl-Heinz Lambertz President Committee of the Regions

Gerry Woop State Secretary for European Affairs, City of Berlin

Juan Gabriel Vásquez Writer

The panel was moderated by **Carin Tiggeloven, Lauer Kleiner**, Members of the initiative "Wir sind Europa!", **Volker Hassemer**, Chairman of Stiftung Zukunft Berlin.



Carin Tiggeloven, Elmar Brok, Gerry Woop, Karl-Heinz Lambertz, Juan Gabriel Vásquez, Emil Boc, Laura Kleiner
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The A Soul for Europe Conference opened with a public debate on the topic *Who is assuming responsibility for Europe – How citizens, cities and parliaments should cooperate for Europe*.

Cutting across the fields of culture, politics, activism and urban planning, the participants raised diverse perspectives, with the aim of developing a notion of transnational belonging as a new paradigm for citizenship in Europe.

As Karl-Heinz Lambertz, President of the Committee of the Regions, put it: "Europe is not Brussels. Europe is where you live!" The Mayor of Cluj, Emil Boc, who succeeded in bringing together the diverse communities of his city in order to apply for the title of European Capital of Culture, disclosed his professional secret: "All politics is local. Let people participate in their municipalities and trust will increase for the political system at large."

The idea of activating cities in an European sense is also the aim of Volker Hassemer, Chairman of Stiftung Zukunft Berlin: "The national level does not give the support we expect. Therefore, we in the cities and regions must assume our own responsibility – especially in Germany."



Cities for Europe



Gerry Woop © A Soul for Europe, seesaw-foto.com

DAY 2: 11 November 2017, Radialsystem V

Words of Welcome by Andreas Bock (A Soul for Europe) and Interventions by Karl-Heinz Lambertz (President Committee of the Regions) & Juan Gabriel Vásquez (Writer)



Karl-Heinz Lambertz and Juan Gabriel Vásquez © A Soul for Europe, seesaw-foto.com

Juan Gabriel Vásquez : Social media have changed our way of exercising citizenship, of participating in the great story of our political life. And, despite the wonderful advantages that they have brought us, changing the balance of power in the most unequal societies and denouncing authoritarianism in the less free, they have also become an efficient ally of the worst angels of our political nature. [...] We must take control of the story again. Of our own story as individuals – not the one being imposed on us by forces we can't control. In other words, we must put what we may call the literary word back in the centre of our lives. This is where culture and politics touch each other.

Karl-Heinz Lambertz: Cities and regions are Europe. We are Europe. Just as the European level influences the local and regional level, local and regional levels should now be able to exert their full influence at the European level. For there to be mutual benefit, there must be complete interaction.



Workshops – Topic 1: Cities for Europe

How Can Cities and Citizens Strengthen Europe?

Organised by: Cities for Europe



Brigitte Russ-Scherer, the spokesperson for the “Cities for Europe” initiative, stressed the importance of the direct responsibility of citizenship, and emphasized the concrete role that citizens can play. Project representatives then presented seven exemplary initiatives:

Begegnungschor, Berlin: This project uses the power of music to create a bridge of solidarity among people. “Let’s sing, no hate” could be the slogan of this choir.

Project NN-To a Culture Centre of Neighbourhoods: Project NN was born with the aim of developing some cultural spaces and activities in a district of Novi Sad (Serbia). The project involves three phases: 1) interviews with citizens in order to understand their needs; 2) working groups with experts; 3) discussions with local decision makers.

Beyond 91-Portrait of the Perestroika Generation: This project is part of Cafébabel, the first European participatory online magazine. Beyond '91 is the latest editorial project of Cafébabel Berlin, and aims to present feature reports by the Perestroika Generation, 25 years after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Club der polnischen Versager: The Club, founded in 2001, is an instrument of action, communication and production between German and Polish citizens which organizes and promotes cultural and artistic projects, initiatives, and events.

Bunte Liga Berlin: Bunte Liga Berlin is a project that wants to increase awareness to the fact that sport also belongs to culture, as culture belongs to sport. They also promote an alternative European Championship.

Schweizerhaus Seelow: An old farm transformed into a place of culture and encounter - a place where it is possible to create a bridge from the past to the present, where people can relax and have contact with nature.

Pulse of Europe: This initiative started in 2016 as a counter movement after the Brexit vote. Now, Pulse of Europe is present in 21 countries and many people support its projects and events.



These initiatives, alongside nearly 30 others, were presented as part of our European Marketplace.

The workshop continued with a debate between Karl-Heinz Lambertz (President Committee of the Regions), Emil Boc (Mayor of Cluj-Napoca), Michael Cramer (MEP), Hella Dunger-Löper, (former State Secretary for European Affairs, City of Berlin), Søren Schumann (editor in chief arte/rbb); Ursula Bertin, spokesperson of the Pulse of Europe initiative in Berlin.



Brigitte Russ-Scherer, Søren Schumann, Emil Boc, Hella Dunger-Löper, Michael Cramer, Karl-Heinz Lambertz, Ursula Bertin © A Soul for Europe, seesaw-foto.com

The first questions focused on the consequences of the Brexit vote and the importance to act, as pointed out by M. Cramer, in order to avoid similar situations in the future, by increasing institutional presence in local places, but also by leading a change in the media coverage. It is important that journalists learn how to cover European Affairs in a more positive and interesting way. Media plays a strategic role in promoting participatory processes. How can we change their approach?

Mrs Hella Dunger-Löper stressed the importance of re-establishing people's trust and confidence in Europe, and in the European Institutions, in order to support a bottom-up movement. Mayor Emil Boc concluded by remembering a quote by Jean Monnet: "If I started again, I would start from culture."

The second part of the workshop was organized as four parallel table talks covering four topics: Cultural Activities/ Sister Cities/ Cultural Heritage/ Pulse of Europe.



European Cities from the Bottom Up – New Responses From Civil Society and Local Administration

Organised by: Advocate Europe & Actors of Urban Change, MitOst

Tamar Gurdikyan 70 TK (Istanbul)

Julia Hoffmann and Christina Nuhr Program Manager Advocate Europe

Martina Michels MEP

Ognjen Tomašević and Darko Polić Project NN (Novi Sad)

Sebastian Schlüter Program Manager Actors of Urban Change

Christoph Stark and Agnieszka Wnuczak Refugees for Co-Creative Cities (Oberhausen)

Franziska Wagner and Sandra Schürmann JobAct (Witten)



This workshop explored where the new site of agency for creating European policies might be found. Using an interactive World Café format, the activists shared their insights and experiences from working in partnerships across different sectors.

The conclusion of the participants was that politics should no longer be created from above (by governments), but its driving force should be

located in the cities and municipalities. One of the conclusions was that local governance should be empowered to build European integrity at the global level, thus providing a multi-layered perspective of "acting locally - thinking globally". 70 TK from Istanbul and Refugees for Co-Creative Cities from Germany presented best-practice examples which revealed how citizens in their local regions could indeed be activated to take part in everyday political practices.

The guiding questions of the four workshops were: *How can we break down communication barriers between cultural actors, city administration, and city dwellers? How can memory and cultural heritage of different eras and groups be preserved in a city under economic and political pressure? How can we co-create and refurbish buildings together with local residents and new arrivals? How can we empower young people from diverse backgrounds to face the complex demands of unemployment?*



Workshops – Topic 2: Europe from the Bottom up

#DialogueOnEurope – New Ideas for Migration Policy

Organised by: Das Progressive Zentrum

Satu Kuitunen Forum Aberdeen

Maria Skorá Senior Project Manager Das Progressive Zentrum

Joachim Zeller MEP

During the conference, Das Progressive Zentrum hosted a workshop session focusing on migration challenges in Europe. The subject was inspired by the outcomes of their #DialogueOnEurope project, carried out in partnership with the German Federal Foreign Office.

Joachim Zeller, Member of the European Parliament and Satu Kuitunen, Forum Aberdeen, facilitated the session. The main conclusion of the discussion was that there are still challenges to be tackled regarding integration policies, raising awareness about migration, as well as European coordination of migration policies. The failure in coordinating the influx of migrants to Europe revealed the weakness of the EU and insufficiency of its policy measures to handle the situation.

Participants suggested that to overcome these phenomena, mutual exchange should be fostered: more initiatives should embrace local residents and immigrants by giving them more opportunities to meet and mix. At the European level, a profound reform is needed to initiate a fundamental renewal of the EU, allowing for a redefinition of its values, and more transparency and more efficiency in common actions - complex but necessary tasks for the years to come.

Civil Society in Georgia on the Way towards Europe

Organised by: Stichting Caucasus Foundation

Steve Austen Member of the A Soul for Europe Strategy Group

Viktor Dolidze Minister of EU and NATO integration of Georgia

David Sakvarelidze Artistic Director of Tzsinandali Music festival

Giorgii Sharvashidze Rector of Javakhisvili Tblisi State University

Volker Hassemer Chairman Stiftung Zukunft Berlin

Levan Khetaguri Stichting Caucasus Foundation, A Soul for Europe Strategy Group

Doris Pack former MEP





Cities for Europe

The discussion in this workshop benefited from a preparatory workshop in Georgia, where A Soul for Europe organized a youth forum called "Future of Citizens – Future of Europe". The dissemination of an understanding of Europe was discussed with Minister Viktor Dolidze and the President of the University Tiflis in two respects: first, the focus was on referring mainly younger Georgians to the principles and objectives of the European Union; and secondly, the discussion explored the potential and perspectives of culture in Georgian society. These themes were discussed with a view to closer cooperation with the EU.

For 2018, future pathways for this work were envisaged, perhaps even in the form of an academy. Levan Khetaguri has agreed to take on the necessary cooperation between A Soul for Europe and Tbilisi.

Creating Active Citizenship: The Notion of Civil Society and Culture in Belgrade and Amsterdam

Organised by: Felix Meritis Foundation & GRAD – European Centre for Culture and Debate

Steve Austen A Soul for Europe Strategy Group

Dina Cubric GRAD – European Centre for Culture and Debate, A Soul for Europe Strategy Group

Silke Gebel Member of Berlin Parliament

Radomir Lazovic Activist "Lets not drown Belgrade!"

Hala Naoum Néhmé Municipality of Amsterdam

Representatives from three different countries and three different spheres of political engagement presented their experience in different geopolitical situations. All three perspectives (from Belgrade, Amsterdam and Berlin) provided insights into their own specific environments, revealing economic differences between EU and non-EU countries. The conclusion of the panel discussion was that engaging citizenship is a multilayered process that takes place on parliamentary level (as in the case of Berlin), activist level (in the case of Belgrade) or in everyday experience at municipality level (in the case of Amsterdam).

European Marketplace



Impressions from the European Marketplace © A Soul for Europe, seesaw-foto.com

Europe is often only associated with its institutions. But Europe actually is all of us, the European citizens. The European Marketplace aimed to present inspiring daily practical examples from cities and citizens themselves. For this year's European Marketplace, more than 30 initiatives from many different European countries presented their concepts, ideas and visions.

Artistic Intervention: Musicians4UnitedEurope



Musicians4UnitedEurope © A Soul for Europe, seesaw-foto.com

Manifesto, Musicians4United Europe:

We live in alarming and turbulent times: Brexit, the US election, increasing authoritarianism in Eastern Europe, the rise of populism across other parts of Europe and the advance of the far right within national and international politics. There is a genuine fear that our European continent may be falling apart, both politically and culturally - or at best be reduced to a purely economic entity. We feel strongly that a cultural call to action is necessary and urgent.

Musicians know about the importance of listening, of sharing emotions with each other in order to create and re-create one of the highest forms of expression known to human beings: music, which we believe is the most international of languages. This is why we feel emboldened to share this message.



Input Guillaume Klossa, Chairman Civico Europe



After the lunch break, Guillaume Klossa spoke about challenges such as new technologies and Brexit, which potentially endanger Europe today – while also exploring possible ways to overcome these challenges.

In this context he introduced his initiative Civico Europe: *We need to take on responsibility. And it's now or never. [...] We need to prepare ourselves. And preparing ourselves means first to engage civil society and citizens and to create the dynamic in order to manage Brexit, which means to have unity in Europe and to prepare the future.*

He also underlined the importance of citizens taking responsibility for the European project:

How could you feel more European? How can Europe protect you more? How can Europe offer you opportunities? The goal is that each citizen thinks as a leader and each leader behaves as a citizen.

Guillaume Klossa © A Soul for Europe, seesaw-foto.com

Workshops – Topic 3: Arts and Politics – A good Match?

New Stories for Europe?

Organised by internationales literaturfestival berlin (ilb)

Priya Basil Writer

Daphne Büllesbach Executive Director European Alternatives

Ivana Sajko Writer

Simon Mundy Vice-President of the Writer's for Peace Committee of PEN International, A Soul for Europe Strategy Group

Juan Gabriel Vasquez Writer

Simone Schröder Project Management International Congress for Democracy and Freedom, internationales literaturfestival berlin

In a “fishbowl discussion”, participants gathered to challenge the existing narratives of Europe and develop new potential narratives outlining a more inclusive concept of Europe. Starting from the International Congress for Democracy and Freedom that took place earlier this year, the workshop aimed to prove that art and culture can be powerful tools in re-imagining the political framework in which Europe is located. Through reimagining the past we can explore possible reimaginings of the future and thus outline new communities in a future Europe.



Creating a European Public Sphere

Organised by Cafébabel & n-ost

François Fameli Executive Director Cafébabel
Katharina Kloss Editorial Coordinator Cafébabel
Sébastien Vannier Cafébabel Berlin
Anke Plättner Journalist
Andreas Bock Editor, n-ost

The idea of this open dialogue workshop was to discuss with the audience how European ideas, stories and angles can be developed; how cross border investigations can be organized; and how writing, translation and distribution in a European framework can be managed.

Participants agreed that crisis situations in Europe during the last decade have contributed to a stronger debate about European issues across the national public spheres. European/EU related issues are more frequent in the press/radio and TV shows. Transnational networks of European publications can help to contribute to a European public sphere. However, networks including smaller publications still have a relatively low impact. Therefore, networks of leading national publications in various countries (like the LENA network) must join forces to have a stronger impact.

Among the audience some called for genuine European formats that are based on collaborative cross border research. Challenges to such projects are the enormous costs, the complicated implementation of such research projects, and the difficulty in "customizing" stories for audiences in different countries. In times of a growing European divide between liberal people on the one side and nationalist (illiberal) members of societies on the other, a process reinforced by social networks above all, European media outlets bear a great responsibility. European publications such as Café Babel and euroltopics can help to bridge different opinions across Europe and have an impact on the existence of a European public sphere.



Next Generation, Please! – Artistic Workshop

Organised by Center for Fine Arts Brussels

Leni Huyghes Artist

Melat Gebeyaw Nigussie Project Manager BOZAR

The workshop used the speeches of European policymakers, such as Barack Obama and Arnold Schwarzenegger, and the lyrics of British hip hop artist Lady Leshurr as a starting point, challenging the participants to draft a joint statement, expressing their dreams, wishes and fears about the future of Europe. You can read the result below:



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Dear Europe,
But I don't know who you are.
Acceptance
Equality
Unity in diversity
I took you for granted. But be honest,
I want to trust you,
I am here, and so are you.
So, what now?
Help my community be a better place
Be empathetic
Pay my taxes
Fight for humanity
So, let's do this together.

I have failed you.
You once promised
Protection
Empowerment
You promised a common future.
Do you want to share your power?
But do you trust me?
We are Europe,
I commit to
Participate in decision making
Be peaceful
Agree to disagree
I want to listen.
(Next Generation Please, BOZAR)



Cities for Europe

What Can Theatre (for Children) do for Europe?

Organised by Theater an der Parkaue & Image Aiguë

Nicolas Bertrand Co-Director and Administrator of Image Aiguë (Lyon), A Soul for Europe Strategy Group

Karola Marsch Dramaturge Theater an der Parkaue

Sarah Wiederhold Dramaturge Theater an der Parkaue

The question of the workshop was how theatre can help in building European citizenship. By touring through Europe, not only do actors travel, but also their stories, offering the audiences the possibility to develop a better and more personal understanding of current issues that people all over Europe are dealing with. One participant from Ukraine underlined the subversive potential of theatre, which can bring topics on stage that would not find their ways into the news under repressive governments. Theatre, or the arts in general, have always had ways to communicate critical views „between the lines“.

Furthermore, a participant pointed out that theatre can not only show the different situations in countries, but also gather Europe-wide topics together. European theatre collaborations have the possibility to create new European narratives, which could strengthen the European unity and increase solidarity between the nations in times of rising nationalistic populism.

Another big topic of the discussion was the cooperation between schools and theatres which offers the possibility to reach a wide group of young people from different social and cultural backgrounds in each country. The group concluded, that there should be a Europe-wide funding system to support easier access to theatre for children and young people.

Conclusions and Outlook

This year, the A Soul for Europe initiative succeeded in gaining more impact by strengthening its contacts with other initiatives and organisations in order to develop together the A Soul for Europe Conference. The new cooperations with 17 organisations from all over Europe showed that despite different approaches or topics, we share one conviction: That the European project has to be shaped by civil society and the means of culture. Through the cooperations, we were also able to reach out to a younger and more heterogenous audience.

The ten interactive workshops challenged the participants to state their opinions and make their voices heard. It is this feeling of being heard that will convince citizens from all over Europe to discover and accept their roles and responsibility for our common future in Europe. This conviction will be reflected and applied with the upcoming « Wir sind Europa » workshops taking place in Erfurt, Germany.

33 projects and their representatives at the European Marketplace similarly underlined the important role of cities and citizens in this story. When considering the EU Urban Agenda, A Soul for Europe will cooperate with the Senate of Berlin, the Berlin City Parliament, the President of the Committee of the Regions, several MEPs as well as selected European Cities, in order to add the cultural aspect to the existing EU Urban Agenda, as well as to formulate a new Urban Agenda of the cities and regions.

The idea of addressing European stakeholders from the area of culture and politics prior to the conference in an online debate, and to integrate their statements into the workshops and discussions, also made the reasons for the European integration process even more obvious. A Soul for Europe will continue its activities, and together, we will gain more strength to shape our European future.



Cities for Europe

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