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MY EUROPE

When I imagine Europe in 2030 I see two options which can be reached in two ways. One is to continue what we are doing today. On this road I see a growing number of polluted areas and alienated people. When I look around, I see soil turned into deserts and devoid of all life, undrinkable water that is dangerous because of all the chemicals it contains. I see mountains and islands of waste, dying or extinct species, frequently changing weather, food shortages and relative starvation. I see sick people who do not have relationships any more, because they do not trust anyone and anything, they believe that addictions and material possessions will make them happy, who accept an illusion of the world, do not want to think or to take any responsibility. Due to the lack of natural resources I see poverty, migration and wars that erupted before. These will lead to the extinction of humanity. This is not the world I imagine for my children.

There is another road we can take. This is the road to Nature-ism. I believe that by changing a few elements of the system we can transform the entire institution. In my opinion the following steps can help us to fulfil the vision of a sustainable Europe:

Education

(Shift in mentality, real values, environment-based education, good examples)

Growing and profit-oriented economy destroys the environment. Economy follows the society's aims and values. Consequently, changing demands will lead to changes in supply. If we want to change the world, first we have to change people's mentality.

The goals of the majority will determine the direction a society takes. The purpose of most people is to find happiness. In recent decades, however, we have been misinformed as to how we can reach happiness. Recent generations suggested that the only way to be happy is to be successful, have power and unrealistic amounts of money, to have even more possessions, shop till we drop, compete with others...and so on. The principles of consumerism, materialism and egoism misguide people on their way towards happiness. This path will only lead us to loneliness and short-lived happiness which can cause addictions. We will become addicted to power, possessions, shopping, alcohol, pills and drugs. Addiction is an illness which is just as harmful for the body as for the soul. If we want to find the real answers, we have to find the real values. In my opinion the following have real values which can bring us true and lasting happiness: the respect of life; altruism; cooperation; strong relationships; seeing beauty and goodness in everything around us; finding harmony, love and peace.

The most impressionable in our society are young generations, who are the most open-minded and adaptive part of society. If they get the right instructions, they will be able to build a system which will be in harmony with the environment and will be sustainable. So we have to bring up a generation which will be ready for this change.

Children are mostly influenced by the school, their family and the media. First of all, we have to change the education system, which is currently based on the economy, and replace it with a new one that is able to teach them real values. We have to stop pupils competing with each other at school and help them to work together instead. We must show that each person is good at something and can be a useful member of society. Instead of using aggressive disciplining methods, teachers must show pupils how to calm down and focus again, for example by using meditation. Instead of encyclopaedic knowledge, we must strengthen a holistic and systematic way of thinking, together with practical knowledge. Volunteering should be made compulsory in order to learn how to help others without being paid for it.

Basic subjects should include natural sciences to teach pupils about life and nature, cultural history to learn about and thus understand other cultures, which enhances solidarity and acceptance, as well as environmental protection, which would probably be the most important subject of all. The Waldorf method has a lot of potential in this sense. We need an education system which supports life-long learning.

One of the most important tasks is to promote family-friendly jobs, so that parents have enough valuable time left to spend with their children.

Thirdly, we need to change the unrealistic world of the media. This is a platform which shows directions, trends and social norms to thousands of people. We have to curb the manipulative and destructive impacts of business interests on the media. It needs strict controls, because it is capable of generating significant impacts. It also has to present exemplary people and actions.

Union **(communication, cooperation, conscious society)**

The whole system is based on competition, which leads to a destroyed community. Only a cooperative and cohesive society is able to react to the global problems effectively. We are fragmented because of the different languages, however this division exists not only between nations, but also between generations, social classes and even professional fields. Better communication could help us to cooperate better. For example different specialties have different terminologies. These “different languages” can hinder understanding. If we were able to use a common language, it would be easier to understand, so the information flow could be quicker and the reaction time would be shorter. This would also facilitate clearer and better communication between younger and older generations, as well as social groups. A society which is able to think and act together gives hope for a global change.

Role of the money **(need for spiritual freedom, the value and power of symbiosis)**

Money is a driving force for everything. We need money to exist and to survive. That is why the thought of not having enough money fills many people with stress and anxiety. This anxiety imprisons us in money addiction. Money has become a god who is everywhere, people worship it and would kill for it. It has become more important than life and for many it has become the ultimate goal in life. We use money to measure our wealth, but it ignores the priceless values of nature and human relationships, which are the true sources of wealth and wellbeing.

We have to rethink the role of money. We must realise that the fundamental role of money is to connect human talent with human needs. Money, however, cannot express real values, so it distorts reality. The treasure is not hidden in money itself, it is hidden in connections and cooperation. The values are hidden in our symbiosis with our environment. We can live without money, but we cannot live without each other.

We need a financial system which is able to express true wealth.

On the road to localization **(short food-supply chains, self-sufficiency)**

The answers to the big global questions are to be found locally. Localization in production in my view means that food and other products are produced locally, which makes shipping, packaging and preservation by chemicals redundant. This way we could reduce the ecological footprint of food production.

Good examples include self-sufficient eco-villages. They would be capable of providing food and clean water, as well as using renewable energy to clean waste water. Self-sufficient houses have also great potentials.

The most important fact is that we have to stop being dependent on profit-oriented producers, because they endanger society and the environment.

Pactice of closed systems (**E**cological agriculture, **g**reen industry)

Ecological agriculture must be introduced. It enables us to produce quality food without exploiting the soil. It compensates what it uses, so it is able to create a closed system.

In the green industry input and output must be restricted. We must limit the use of resources and energy. It has to be able to produce better from less. This way the industry would be forced to use renewable energies and recycle. These regulations would result in a closed and rotational system.

Enactment (**T**he rights of the life-systems)

As a last step, we must pass laws of the rights of Mother Earth, which has already been done in Bolivia in 2010. The seven specific rights of Mother Earth and her constituent life systems (including human communities) are the following:

- *Right to life*: It is the right to the maintenance of the integrity of life-systems and natural processes which sustain them.
- *To the diversity of life*: It is the right to the preservation of the differentiation and variety of the beings that comprise Earth, without being genetically altered or artificially modified in their structure.
- *To water*: It is the right of the preservation of the quality and composition of water to sustain life systems.
- *To clean air*: It is the right of the preservation of the quality and composition of air.
- *To equilibrium*: It is the right to help achieve ecological balance.
- *To restoration*: It is the right to restoration of life-systems affected by direct or indirect human activities.
- *To live free of contamination*: It is the right to live free of toxic and radioactive waste generated by human activities.

Thank you for the opportunity to show that these steps...

E(ducation)
U(nion)
R(ole of the money)
O(n the road to localization)
P(ractice of closed systems)
E(nactment)

...contain the solutions and help us to make Europe sustainable.