

Humanity is woven in a dance, called life. In recent decades, for example, a change took place in respect for the concepts of norms and values and we faced the mania phase of the classic financial bubble. That started to bother and I went looking for a counterpoint to get ideas.

In 2004, NEXUS organized about the concepts and European culture the closing conference **Europe, A Beautiful Idea?** I noticed the announcement, signed me up and cycled Saturday morning December 4th to the former Van Nelle factory in Rotterdam. There, various forms of flattening in society, the cultural heritage, the wisdom gained through a tragic past and the classics of Europe were discussed:

Europe is more than a market and a single currency, the European spirit is missing, Europe suffers from an identity crisis, you only become aware of values when you lose them, the EU has lost its citizens somewhere on the road, fear, uncertainty and nationalism are re-emerging, what are the European countries going to do about social exclusion, do we want to make a beautiful museum, or do we also want to be a player in the world.

Former Austrian Federal Chancellor Wolfgang Schüssel thought conclusions and invited audience to come to Salzburg in January 2006 to attend the follow-up conference **The Sound of Europe**. NEXUS passed me the contact address of the Art Affairs Department of the Federal Chancellery. I received the invitation and registration form and there I was, the man of that e-mail, between Elsa Monti and Andrew Moravcsik during Working lunch 1: *Is there a democratic vacuum in Europe?*, led by Paavo Lipponen, Mario Monti, Josep Borrell, Benita Ferrero-Waldner and Javier Solana. **An unparalleled experience possible through NEXUS.**



Once back home, I no longer saw the world in the same way and realized that my knowledge needed to be cultivated, not about different phases of classic financial bubbles, but about *The Idea of Europe* and the European project. And that is what unfolded.

The big question 'is there a democratic vacuum in Europe' is still current today, as is the majority of countless others, sometimes thousands of years old, like those of Plato about identity, sameness, and difference.

The NEXUS Institute offers qualified support, such as to the Bibliotheca Alexandrina, and brings the big questions to society's attention. It is the place where debates are conducted provocatively, where excellence is sought, that gives substance to the true meaning of 'the proud word **universitas**' and that inspires thousands of people, including myself, by constantly providing insight into contemporary issues. I learned NEXUS as an institute with in-depth-expertise in the Studia Humanitatis, that sees great challenges coming at an early stage, fights against apathy and ignorance and that stands up for Europe to avert 'the wreckers will destroy it'.

But not only NEXUS, who wants to take the next step with an international school, commits itself to pass on the expertise. In a sense we are all one of the characters out of The Magic Mountain and, to capacity, responsible for improving the human condition. There remains need to cultivate and more awareness for purpose of philosophy and not for a new take-off for greed and financial delusions.

It's only recently the world turned from humanistic attitude into more tribal behaviour. But we know Europa is the land of creative activity and that we ourselves can give meaningful interpretation to life. Let us, in the spirit of NEXUS, continue to fight against apathy and ignorance and the very essence of the values, moral principles and ethics of comity thrive and function as a future-proof foundation for generations of the coming era of change in order to live in freedom, peace and justice.

Erik, "the man of that email", 21 September 2019.

To mark **25th anniversary the NEXUS Intitute**, established 9 September 1994.