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WORD PEACE

NEWS

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EU values



Values: a basis for European Union, a part of an heritage

The importance of European values is well known. History can be controversial (Europeans have actually a long history of making war one another) and culture is often tied strongly to national identity. But we, as part of the EU, suppose that those values are shared by all European and the larger the EU becomes, the more important it is for the people who live in it to realise that their union has been built on common values.

The European Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, liberty, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. Moreover, the Member States are characterised by pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men. These values play an important role: first of all, in order to be an eligible member of EU Union any Country must respect these values. Secondly, failure by a Member State to respect these values may lead to the suspension of that Member State's rights deriving from being a member of the Union. Furthermore, in accordance with the principle "unity in diversity", the Union shall promote the diversity of its cultures, while "bringing the common cultural heritage to the fore"

But the enlargement of the EU Union does bring problems. For example, the union now contains countries that are geographically distant from one another, and which have experienced very different histories. To some extent geography determines interests. Historical experience also shapes perceptions of national self-interest. Thus in a broader union it may become harder for the member-states forge common policies and approaches.

Most Europeans could probably get behind 'human rights' as a value, but the refugee crisis has caused deep divisions over the 'universality' of these supposedly universal rights. Furthermore, there are people which think that there is no such thing as 'European values', and that there are sets of National values within Europe, that Europe isn't and never will be a single country. The point of departure of most discussions on European identity is the idea that a political community needs a common set of values and references to ensure its coherence, to guide its actions and to endow these with legitimacy and meaning.

The basic values of the European Union are (or they are supposed to be) the basic values of each country, even before being part of the Union. Each country is different, has different traditions and culture, but at the same time countries (most of them) are based on the same values (for instance respect for human dignity and respect for human rights), both as a result of a common heritage and as an arrival point for improving the life of people living in it.

In conclusion, the values that characterise the Union are and should be shared by each country, not only in order to be a part of the EU, but also because they were already a part of the country on its own.

Are You sure that You know Your rights?

The spirit of confidence, the strong untrembling voice echoes all over the world: "I do have rights!" But what doesn't it mean in real? What do we imply saying that? What is our the precious right? What is that fragile verge between using and abusing? How to protect yourself?

This is one life from thousands, this is one story that could happen to each of us, one pain that unites vulnerability of all human beings.

"It was extremely exhausting trip. Hopely I've booked it in advance searching for something cheap and convenient the same time. We departed in time to Domodedova airport, but my mood and weather was horrible: dark grey sky and it was raining a lot. Next step was direct fly to Kiev and saying good bye to sweet memories about Vietnam. I've spent several hours drinking coffe and watching the people hurrying, spreading all over the airport like an ants army, standing in huge snake lines, waiting and exited. At last the call for my flight and checking procedure. The tall man with strong jaw and impressive muscles pointed out at me, came closer and asked me to step out the line . His face impression was serious and there was something terrifying in it. I felt myself like a small child lost and scarred. I couldn't understand anything. Why? What did happen? What's wrong? What did I wrong? And than I received huge slap of everlasting questions, one stupid question was passing into another one completing this absurd. Probably, it was not enough derisions, because after they decided to check my hang back (luggage), and check it deeply. Odious hands began to rummaging every smallest corner of my bag, they even took out my lingerie. I felt thousands of eyes staring at me and enjoying humorous comedy. Embarrassed and naked - the only feelings I had for that time. "Why are they doing it to me?" - this phrase was spinning in my head. They were treating me like a criminal or some weird person, but I wasn't. They were dealing with me rudely but I was just flying back home. And genuine reason was found after. I was the only Ukrainian passenger at that flight.

So the question is open: Why do we discriminate the other people?

The story about God

Religion is a cultural system of behaviors and practices, world views sacred texts, holy places, ethics and social organisation that relate humanity to what an anthropologist has called “an order of existence”. Different religions may or may not contain various elements, ranging from “divine”, sacred things, “faith”, a supernatural being or beings, or some sort of ultimacy and transcendence that will provide norms and power for the rest of life. Religious practices may include rituals, sermons, commemoration or veneration (of God or deities), sacrifices, festivals, feasts, trances, initiations, funerary services, matrimonial services, meditation, prayer, music, art ect.. They can also contain symbolic stories which are sometimes said by followers to be true, that have the side purpose of explaining the origin of life, the Universe and other things. Traditionally faith in addition to reason has been considered a source of religious beliefs.

There are an estimated 10,000 distinct religions worldwide. About 84% of the world’s population is affiliated with one of the four largest religions: Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism. In this article we are going to stick with these four religions.

Christianity and its beliefs

Christians believe in a loving God who has revealed himself and can be known in a personal way, in this life. With Jesus Christ, the person's focus is not on religious rituals or performing good works, but on enjoying a relationship with God and growing to know him better.

Faith in Jesus Christ himself, not just in his teachings, is how the Christian experiences joy and a meaningful life. In his life on Earth, Jesus did not identify himself as a prophet pointing to God or as a teacher of enlightenment. Rather, Jesus claimed to be God in human form. He performed miracles, forgave people of their sin and said that anyone who believed in him would have eternal life. He made statements like, "I am the light of the world; he who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."¹

Christians regard the Bible as God's written message to humankind. In addition to being an historical record of Jesus' life and miracles, the Bible reveals God's personality, his love and truth, and how one can have a relationship with him.

Whatever circumstances a Christian is dealing with in their life, the Bible teaches that they can confidently turn to a wise and powerful God who genuinely loves them. They believe that God answers prayer and that life takes on meaning as they live to honor him.

Islam and its beliefs

Muslims believe there is the one almighty God, named Allah, who is infinitely superior to and transcendent from humankind. Allah is viewed as the creator of the universe and the source of all good and all evil. Everything that happens is Allah's will. He is a powerful and strict judge, who will be merciful toward followers depending on the sufficiency of their life's good works and religious devotion. A follower's relationship with Allah is as a servant to Allah.

Though a Muslim honors several prophets, Muhammad is considered the last prophet and his words and lifestyle are that person's authority. To be a Muslim, one has to follow five religious duties: 1. Repeat a creed about Allah and Muhammad; 2. Recite certain prayers in Arabic five

times a day; 3. Give to the needy; 4. One month each year, fast from food, drink, sex and smoking from sunrise to sunset; 5. Pilgrimage once in one's lifetime to worship at a shrine in Mecca. At death -- based on one's faithfulness to these duties -- a Muslim hopes to enter Paradise. If not, they will be eternally punished in hell.

For many people, Islam matches their expectations about religion and deity. Islam teaches that there is one supreme God, who is worshiped through good deeds and disciplined religious rituals. After death a person is rewarded or punished according to their religious devotion. Muslims believe that giving up one's life for Allah is a sure way of entering Paradise.

Buddhism and its beliefs

Buddhists do not worship any gods or God. People outside of Buddhism often think that Buddhists worship the Buddha. However, the Buddha (Siddhartha Gautama) never claimed to be divine, but rather he is viewed by Buddhists as having attained what they are also striving to attain, which is spiritual enlightenment and, with it, freedom from the continuous cycle of life and death. Most Buddhists believe a person has countless rebirths, which inevitably include suffering. A Buddhist seeks to end these rebirths. Buddhists believe it is a person's cravings, aversion and delusion that cause these rebirths. Therefore, the goal of a Buddhist is to purify one's heart and to let go of all yearnings toward sensual desires and the attachment to oneself.

Buddhists follow a list of religious principles and very dedicated meditation. When a Buddhist meditates it is not the same as praying or focusing on a god, it is more of a self-discipline. Through practiced meditation a person may reach Nirvana -- "the blowing out" of the flame of desire.

Buddhism provides something that is true of most major religions: disciplines, values and directives that a person may want to live by.

Hinduism and its beliefs

Most Hindus worship one Being of ultimate oneness (Brahman) through infinite representations of gods and goddesses. These various manifestations of gods and goddesses become incarnate within idols, temples, gurus, rivers, animals, etc.

Hindus believe their position in this present life was determined by their actions in a previous life. Hinduism therefore provides a possible explanation for suffering and evil in this life. If a person's behavior before was evil, they might justifiably experience tremendous hardships in this life. Pain, disease, poverty or a disaster like a flood is deserved by that person because of their own evil actions, usually from a previous lifetime.

A Hindu's goal is to become free from the law of karma...to be free from continuous reincarnations. Only the soul matters which will one day be free of the cycle of rebirths and be at rest.

Hinduism gives a person freedom to choose how to work toward spiritual perfection. There are three possible ways to end this cycle of karma: 1. Be lovingly devoted to any of the Hindu gods or goddesses; 2. Grow in knowledge through meditation of Brahman (oneness)...to realize that circumstances in life are not real, that selfhood is an illusion and only Brahman is real; 3. Be dedicated to various religious ceremonies and rites.

Nevermind which one we are talking about, the purpose of all religions is to have a peace and toleration between people. There isn't any religion in the world that calls for killing spreading hate among people.

Experience Turkey

Every country has its own traditions, derived both from its history and its religion. The culture in which every one of us is born and raised, will shape our own beliefs and our way of behaving and thinking.

Today we will go a little bit inside of the Turkish culture, showing some traditions.

1. If a man wants to marry, then he has to go with his mother and father to the mother and father of the girl he wants to marry and talk with them. Parents of both have to agree, otherwise the couple is not allowed to marry. When parents agree, they can marry: they will have a ceremony with families and then they have the permission to live together in their own home.
2. In Turkey we are celebrating Ramadan for 30 days. We eat before morning prayer, then we are called to pray and after that time we are not allowed to eat or drink anything. We are allowed to eat only at the time of the next pray and usually we do not eat or drink anything for 20 hours. This is not a matter of hungry, but a matter of religion and tradition, we should not sin, we shouldn't say bad words or fight with anyone. Every time after we pray, there goes Iftar, when we can eat and drink. When the time for Iftar comes, we invite friends, parents and neighbours to our home for a drink and to eat together.

In the time of Ramadan and during the feast of sacrifice, we wear our own clothes or new, nice and clean dresses.

During Ramadan we usually congratulate to each other: when someone is older, you kiss his or her hand and then touch it with the front. For what concern the younger ones, you kiss them on their cheeks.

After Ramadan, during Ramadan Bairam, we bring parents, friends and neighbours pastries and candies to congratulate with them and we give children money.

Before Ramadan we go to visit our relatives at their home or at hospital and we go to visit the one who are in the cemetery.

3. When you invite someone to eat with you, you are supposed to pay also his or her part.
4. When you go to visit someone, for example in another city, they will give you a gift and they will host you.
5. When someone is going to become a part of the army, as soldier for example, he goes to visit their parents and neighbours before and they say "helal", that means that that person can both die or come back home. In Turkey, who is enjoying the army is considered blessed.
6. When someone is older than you, you should call him "older brother" or "older sister". When someone is really older than you, then you usually call them "uncle" or "aunt", even if their are not your real parents. We usually do not use their own name, and when someone older than you want to sit, you should stand up and leave your sit to him or her.

Things written above are just some little tips to help everyone understand Turkish culture and live there, but we will go more inside it and help you living there in the next number of our magazine.

Connect and React!

Connect the words on the left side that have numbers with those on right side. If you connect them correctly, the order of the first letters of each word on the right side will give you a new word which is the solution.

1.ACTIVE

2.SOLUTION

3.UNDERSTANDING

4.DEMOCRACY

5.INTOLERANCE

6.KNOWLEDGE

7.INTERCULTURAL

Tolerance

Zero

Citizenship

National

Issue

Education

Involvement

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