

# LECTURE 5

## IDENTITY AND EUROPEAN UNION 'CORE VALUES'

- This lecture will:

1. briefly identify some of the 'core values' that underpin the European Union
  2. examine what can be termed 'the culture' of those values and beliefs – the 'culture' underpinning them
  3. finally, briefly raise questions as to whether the acceptance of the 'culture' of those core values has drawn the EU member states closer together
    - and thereby drawn the citizens of those EU member states closer together, towards a common EU identity
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### 1. The 'core values' that underpin the European Union

- *'a shared set of ideas'* based on liberal democracy upon which the EU is based
  - the 'core values' of liberal democracy, and consequently, the 'core values' of the European Union
    - democracy
    - the rule of law
    - peace and security
    - economic stability and prosperity
    - respect for human rights and minority rights
    - diversity and tolerance
- the *'ideas'* and values that comprise/make up the elements of the 'European ideal'
  - the norms, social determinants, and institutional elements and processes that combine to shape EU identity – the basis of what it is to be a citizen of the EU
- the cultural representation of the 'European idea' is seen as the 'cement' that binds together the different groups of citizens in the EU member states

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### 2. The culture' of those values and beliefs of the 'EU idea'

- A report of the European Commission in 1988 stated:  
"The world of culture clearly cannot remain outside the process of completion of the big European internal market: that process demands the formation of a true European culture area."
- In his introduction to the European Commission's booklet entitled *'A Citizen's Europe'*, published in 1993, Pascal Fontaine sets out what he sees as the rationale and moral foundation for the European Union.  
"It is an experiment whose results are of universal significance, an attempt to establish between States the same rules and codes of behaviour that enabled primitive societies to become peaceful and civilised."

### 3. Can we yet talk of an 'imagined EU community' based on common citizen identity?

- *'agents of European consciousness'*
  - those forces and objects through which knowledge of the E. U. is embodied and communicated as a socio-cultural phenomenon
  - those actors, actions, artefacts, bodies, institutions, policies and representations which, singularly or collectively, help engender awareness and promote acceptance of the 'European idea'.

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'*agents of consciousness*' range from the abstract and intangible to the concrete and the mundane:

- *from* :
  - EU institutions and civil servants
  - the single market
  - the Euro
  - the metric system for weights and measures
  - and the proliferation of EU laws and regulations
  
- *to* :
  - educational exchanges
  - town-twinning
  - invented Euro-symbols and traditions
  - European Union historiography
  - and the harmonisation of European statistics by the Eurostat office

- *consciousness* of identity (in the citizen) arises through the medium of culture and communication

- the communication of that identity and what it means/represents

- the role that symbols play in the articulation and formation of patterns of consciousness and identity is crucial to understanding how Europe is being constructed as a political entity, and within that how citizen EU identity is being constructed.

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- symbols do not simply represent political reality; *they actively create it*

The European Commission has gradually attempted to mobilise popular support for the EU by creating a whole new repertoire/group of public symbols for the European Union

- the sky blue flag with the circle of gold stars symbolising European unification is now seen more and more flying alongside national flags in front of public buildings
- 'Ode to Joy' from Beethoven's Ninth Symphony is widely accepted as the anthem of a united Europe
- when we arrive at airports we follow the signs that say European Union passport holders
- and we hold a uniform European Union passport (adopted in 1985) – that declares we are citizens of the EU