

## Building a Sustainable Peace

How would Erasmus respond to the wars in the 21st Century and especially the war in Ukraine?

- I think he would criticize and satirize the excuses for ongoing war. For example, the misrepresentation of the war as the defense of democracy and of the democratic world. He would also tackle the propaganda on both sides. Above all, he would point at the stupidity of the war and the hubris and mediocracy of the warmongers. Only wise people build sustainable peace. Modern and smart weapons have not reduced the actual and potential atrocities of the war; and the weapons of mass destruction are waiting around the corner. Erasmus would also be a whistleblower and name the princes and kings, and the war profiteers who are responsible for the war. He believes that what cannot be refuted by argument and fact, can be parred by laughter.
- As a constructive pacifist, he would add peace-work to his critical analysis. This implies demanding a cessation of the war, because he considers peace to be more precious than the pursuit of triumph, and a frozen conflict less destructive, less costly, and less dangerous than a protracted war. The cessation of the war would go hand in hand with the reestablishment of communication and peace negotiations, but also with development. South Korea is a good example of a country that negotiated a cease-fire with North Korea in 1953 and decided (with the help of the U.S.) to use its talents to become a prosperous country. South

Korea reminds us that it is not who wins a war, but who wins the peace that determines their future. A cease-fire in Ukraine combined with efforts to win the peace could be a formula to end the war.

- Erasmus stresses the relation between education and peace. He would recommend that the Erasmus program for education, training, youth and sports, gives also attention to the education of sustainable peace building and the prevention of wars.
- Finally, he would encourage people to take part in the building of sustainable peace. This may sound like a dream. But as he said 500 years ago, he would remind us that “there are some people who live in a dream world, and there are some who face reality; and then there are those who turn one into the other.”

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## For Further Reading

Luc Reyhler, *Time for Peace: The Essential Role of Time in Conflict and Peace Processes*. Peace and Conflict Series. University of Queensland Press, Oct. 1, 2015. pp. 292.

Luc Reyhler & Arnim Langer, editors, *Luc Reyhler: A Pioneer in Sustainable Peacebuilding Architecture*. Pioneers in Arts, Humanities, Science, Engineering, Practice Series, Vol. 24. Springer, Jan. 2020. pp. 357.

Luc Reyhler, “Principles of Sustainable Peace Architecture,” 2021.

Luc Reyhler, *Symfonie van een voorspelde oorlog* (“Symphony of a Predicted War”). March 2, 2023.

## Maurizio Abbate

# Culture Is the Key for Peace

*This is the prepared text as edited of the presentation of Maurizio Abbate to Panel IV, “A Culture To Emancipate and Expand the Creative Capacities of Every Human Being: A Dialogue among Cultures and Civilizations,” of the Schiller Institute’s July 8–9 conference, “On the Verge of a New World War—European Nations Must Cooperate with the Global South!” Mr. Abbate represents the National Institute for Cultural Activities connected to the Ministry*



Maurizio Abbate

*of Culture, Italy. A subhead has been added.*

Dear friends and colleagues from around the world,

We are gathered here today to seek, with all our strength, useful ideas and solutions to resolve the terrible armed conflict that has been raging in the old continent for almost a year and a half.

A fratricidal war capable of bringing death and destruction

among the civilians in the territories directly involved and a very serious economic and financial crisis in the rest of the world, due to a system of speculation implemented with unprecedented wickedness by the food and energy multinationals. Corporations often controlled by the same masters.

We are well aware that giants such as Vanguard and BlackRock share a majority of the shares of agribusiness multinationals through Monsanto, Cargill and DuPont. The same hold today in Ukraine about 19 million hectares of land devoted to intensive agriculture, which corresponds to 60% of Ukrainian agricultural land. Similarly, 100% of Ukrainian mines are now owned by multinationals.

To ask why war broke out in this part of Europe, starting from those simple figures, therefore seems superfluous.

The important thing, therefore, is not to analyze the causes of the conflict, but rather to try to understand how was it possible that the American public, as well as the European public, always attentive to the problem of peace, thanks to their peace movements, are today almost numbed by what is happening.

War is peace. Freedom is slavery. Ignorance is strength. These were the slogans engraved on the facade of the Ministry of Truth described in George Orwell's famous novel [*Nineteen Eighty-Four*]. This year, the European Union, in an almost grotesque way, has created a Peace Instrument to allocate nearly €8 billion for the purchase of weapons. Buying weapons to prevent conflict and build peace. This is stated, prominently, on the European Council's website—almost a parallel to the Orwellian Ministry of Truth.

If an institution such as the European Union can alter the foundations of freedoms, that is, the truth, by characterizing the supply of weapons, tools for killing, as useful tools for building peace, then the cultural and moral degradation of the institutions, as well as that of the media that should be exposing such lies, has become self-evident.

Unfortunately, what I have previously stated about the concentration of food and energy production in the hands of a few power holders is also true for political institutions, the media, as well as those in charge of education.

### **Why a New Cultural Renaissance Is Necessary**

Culture, which, emulating the teachings of Socrates and Plato, should be concerned with developing thoughts and indicating the models of society to be

built in order to achieve nobler goals, such as general welfare and solidarity among peoples, is constantly downgraded to a kind of unimportant fashion. Such principles, at the same time, are subordinated to the interests of a few economic powers who have made contemporary society a huge market of precariousness in which everything can be sold or bought—even the right to life.

[Ours is] a society in which social cohesion is being progressively demolished and upon which continuous alleged emergencies are being imposed, such as climate, health and finance, capable of altering national choices in agriculture, crafts, industry and society.

Therefore, the time has come to stop this neo-barbaric drift caused by the globalization of economy and culture.

A new social and cultural Renaissance must be initiated.

To do so, a new paradigm is urgently needed for our Western communities, which must definitively abandon the principle of business as the centerpiece of society and put man with his material and spiritual complexity back at its center. Politics must redefine a harmonious system in which every man and woman has his or her own role in a synergistic and organic way.

A society in which human beings must be judged and valued for who they are, for the values they express and succeed in embodying, rather than for what they possess.

Only in this way can individual nations, free, independent, self-determined and with their own specificities, become communities again and contribute to the global growth of all humanity.

The differences and peculiarities of peoples, generated by centuries of history and different cultures, must become the driving force to build a constructive dialogue for peaceful coexistence. A dialogue that leads to an equitable distribution of the resources of the planet on which we all live and which are often the cause of armed clashes and unprecedented violence due to the criminal desire to concentrate them in the hands of a few.

As we develop this thesis and try to involve all those who share its aims, however, strong and persuasive signals must be sent out.

It is imperative to make it clear to the world that so many free people, not only have no intention of bowing to the deliberate decisions autocratically made by globalist elites, but are ready for a global change of the paradigm imposed until now by those who believe

themselves to be the absolute masters.

Confronted with the holders of the major global media in a now imminent head-on clash, networking is needed. It is necessary to organize as many events as possible and use every single television, computer or radio channel to spread the news.

Inviting foreign guests to local events must also become a habit capable of disrupting the mantra that only globalization can guarantee freedom, pluralism and democracy.

ENAC, the National Institute for Cultural Activities in Italy, which I am proud to represent, is organizing a conference in Italy with the aim of re-establishing relations between Syria and Italy; economic and cultural

relations that were interrupted for mere political interests and have not been reopened even in the aftermath of the dramatic earthquake that caused thousands of civilian casualties in Türkiye and Syria.

At this conference, in which we would be happy to welcome any of those present today who would like to participate, we intend to send a clear and unequivocal message:

While liberalism talks about peace and democracy causing wars and building walls, we respond with the strength of culture, the only one capable of guaranteeing and respecting individual differences while working on building a bridge made of friendship, solidarity and cooperation among peoples.

Tatjana Zdanoka

## On Demonization of Russian Culture

*This is the prepared text as edited of the presentation of Tatjana Zdanoka to Panel IV, “A Culture To Emancipate and Expand the Creative Capacities of Every Human Being: A Dialogue among Cultures and Civilizations,” of the Schiller Institute’s July 8–9 conference, “On the Verge of a New World War—European Nations Must Cooperate with the Global South!” Ms. Zdanoka is a Member of the European Parliament (MEP) and a member of the Latvian Russian Union, Latvia. A subhead has been added.*



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Each person exists only in the interrelations and the relations with other people, and these communications are irreducible to mutually advantageous or mutually acceptable economic exchange. These are social and political communications—belonging to language, culture, national or subnational community or to religious community. Both these communications and interests are unrealizable outside of community, outside of political space.

We used to say: “Don’t bring me, My God, to live during an era of big changes.” But we are living during an era of big changes now.

The methods of management focused on unifying the population of Europe and the world according to values of “*homo economicus*”—the self-sufficient rational consumer—are undergoing a systemic crisis. “The economic person” is not even an abstraction; it is a reduction, a flat projection of one of a set of measurements of any human being. The reality is that all people—West Europeans, East Europeans, the Chinese, Indians or Russians—cannot be reduced to the sum of their economic requirements and to functioning as consumers of goods and the benefits.

The following phenomenon is evident: with the growth of integration on the contrary, awareness of the originality increases. There is the known mathematical rule: the process of integration must be accompanied by the process of differentiation. I often quote the words of Yehudi Menuhin: “Either Europe will become the Europe of cultures or Europe will die.”

The title of my intervention is “On Demonization of Russian Culture.”

There is no need to argue that the European Union is infected with Russophobia. Here is just one single example out of thousands.

In **Figure 1** you see the invitation to the discussion “Pushing Pushkin: The Imperialism and Decolonization of Russian Culture” co-hosted by Rasa Juknevičienė, Member of the European Parliament (MEP) from Lithu-