

50 years Eurowoche - present and visions

From the lecture by Norbert Gorltd 2003

Visions begin by defining one's own location. We are in year 14 after the fall of the Wall. This event has also significantly changed the face of Euro Week.

Fifty years ago, when Hella Heynmöller put her idea of meeting young people across borders and the "Iron Curtain" into action, it happened in a different world than today. In 1953, people were still directly under the impression of war and collapse. The idea of creating a common Europe to prevent such a catastrophe in the future was enthusiastically received by young people in Europe.

The economic and especially the political conditions have changed fundamentally since then. We have the Schengen Agreement: Border formalities are a thing of the past in most of Europe. We hold the euro daily in our hands. Our daily life today is regulated in many small and big things by guidelines from Brussels, not always for the enjoyment. It has long been normal to hear the different languages of Europe on the bus or on the street. One likes to go to "his" Italian or "his" Greek.

What does this have to do with our Euro Week?

During the many Euro Weeks at the castle, we have been able to observe and even feel this very well on a small and a large scale. This is most clearly visible in the many groups from the countries of the former "Eastern Bloc".

In the working group "European conversation", a working group that was from the beginning a focal point beside the artistic and artistic working groups at the Euro week, these upheavals could be observed very well. From the first hesitant attempts to express one's own opinion to the confession of one's own political commitment.

Our proven concept is now 50 years old. The youth culture has changed significantly. With the new media (e.g. satellite TV, Internet) distances and borders no longer play a role. The result is a worldwide, unified youth culture with new values and aspirations.

Can we still inspire young people with tradition, folklore and folk music?

I am convinced that this is possible and I think that I can speak here for our whole club.

Anyone who has experienced the very special atmosphere here for a whole week at the Ludwigstein, who has spoken "European" for a week and sees how much effort and joy lies in the programs shown here, and who once said goodbye after a Euro Week will agree with me that this concept still inspires young people today.

The idea of Hella Heynmöller to use music and dance as a connecting element is still alive today!

Do we have to and can we renew this concept, make it "more modern"?

And how could that be?

Thoughts and ideas that need to be considered and discussed would be, for example:

- The visible borders in Europe have disappeared. Should the Youth Week continue to be strictly European, or should we continue to open up?
- What about the much cited wall in our heads? A Euro Week with Europeans living and working in the middle of us? With Europeans living side by side with us, that would open other dimensions. Do we want and can we meet this within the scope of our possibilities?

- Are we just inviting "nice, colorfully dressed people", knowing that they're going home again?
- Visions also include the vision of a funded Euro week. The difficult economic situation does not pass us either. The funds that were hoped for did not materialize, and at the last minute a grant from the district was granted, but overall the regular annual performance of the event is questionable.
- Even in these constraints of financing, we have to go new ways. A first step in this direction is the more intensive contact with the city of Witzzenhausen. I'd like to thank Mr Roeper for being the point of contact for us in many ways and helping us a great deal.
- A further consideration was the closer contact with the tradesmen of the region, coincidentally exactly matching the new concept for an integration and repositioning of the castle in the Werra valley. Representative I would like to mention here Mr. Schinkel, who is represented with our products for the first time with us.
- The possibilities of sponsoring have to be considered again.
- We are in discussion with the hosts of this castle, the "Stiftung Jugendburg Ludwigstein and Archive of the German Youth Movement", represented by the Burgbetriebsleiter, Mr. Dieter Brauch, in order to find new ways and concepts in this direct cooperation, because both sides could of it benefit. With a little pride, I can point out that the Eurowoche is also one of the highlights of the castle's annual run.

For a long time I could report on the many thoughts and ideas that have been addressed in our association, but unfortunately my speaking time is limited. I hope that we were able to give you an impression of our work in this small ceremony and that we can continue to approach you.

Norbert Gorldt

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