

EUGEN BISER – STIFTUNG

für Dialog aus christlichem Ursprung



Summary of the Statement by the Eugen Biser Foundation concerning the Preamble to the EU Constitution dated 26th September 2003

Widenmayerstraße 48
D - 80538 München

Telefon/Telefax:
089 - 33 06 62 69

kontakt@eugen-biser-stiftung.de
www.eugen-biser-stiftung.de

HypoVereinsbank München
BLZ 700 202 70
Konto-Nr. 38 4 38 000

The Eugen Biser Foundation petitions the members of the Government Conference to include a reference to God and a reference to the Christian tradition in the Preamble of the EU Constitution, and proposes the following wording:

Zeichen: EBS\D1522_eng

Ehrevorsitzender des Kuratoriums:
S.K.H. Herzog Franz von Bayern

The Member States and the citizens of Europe, in their responsibility before God, mankind and the Creation, and in their awareness of the Christian, philosophical and humanist heritage, are resolved to maintain and consolidate peace for the future.

Vorstand:
Helmut Linnenbrink (Vors.)
Marianne Köster (stellv. Vors.)
Claudia von Bressendorf

The European Union is based on the common, indivisible and universal human rights and the common values of freedom, equality, the rule of law, tolerance and solidarity.

Stiftungsrat:
Prof. DDr. Dr. h.c. Eugen Biser (Vors.)
Prof. Dr. Richard Heinzmann (stellv. Vors.)
Prof. Dr. Gunther Wenz
Prof. Dr. Michael Wolffsohn

1. The personal dignity of the individual is anchored in the Judaeo-Christian image of God. For this reason, the reference to God is necessary in the Preamble in order to justify and protect human dignity.

Kuratorium:
Prof. Dr. Paul Kirchhof (Vors.)
Dr. Heiner Köster (stellv. Vors.)
Dr. Martin Balle
Prof. Dr. Reinhold Baumstark
Dr. Tovia Ben-Chorin
Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Bergsdorf
D. Theodor Glaser
Alois Glück
Dr. Thomas Goppel
Dr. Günter Gorschenek
Dr. Friedemann Greiner
Prof. Dr. Franz Henrich Armin Herbst
Dr. Hermann Herder
Dr. Herbert Hoffmann
Hildegund Holzheid
Dr. Peter Jentzmik
Prof. Dr. Klaus-Peter Jörns
Dr. Renate Köcher
Dr. Helmut Kohl
Franz Graf von Meran
Prof. Dr. Erwin Möde
Prof. Dr. Johannes Neuhardt
Prof. Dr. Hans Paarhammer
Dr. Alfred Pfeiffer
Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. Katharina Reiss
Dr. Annette Schavan
Markus Schächter
Dr. Florian Schuller
Prof. Klaus Schultz
Dr. Wolfgang Seibel SJ
Dr. Franz X. Spengler
Johann Störle
Prof. Dr. h.c. Horst Teltschik
Erwin Teufel
Bülent Tulay
Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. Felix Unger
Dr. Friedrich Völkl
Dr. Bernhard Voel

In the course of western intellectual history, essentially two concepts of mankind have developed in the light of the various concepts of God and the world. The alternative is man as an example or as a person.

- Man as example

The concept of man as an example is essentially based on ancient Greek philosophy. The individual is only an example of the species. It is defined

in terms of the species and has the function of maintaining the species, but of itself has no significance. The species always has the greater importance as against the individual, and for this reason enjoys priority in every respect. The individual is subject to the law of the general, and does not enjoy freedom of decision against the general. Maintained in motion by an eternal and apersonal principle, the individual is only a temporary isolated instance of the species in the eternal cycle of the world. The individual's value and right to existence are a function of his contribution to the community in which he or she accidentally lives.

- Man as a person

The concept of man as a person brings the Judaeo-Christian tradition into play.

The relationship between God and mankind resulting from the Creation and the incarnation involves a lasting return connection between the created and its Creator, with the result that the individual man is and must be more and other than merely an arbitrarily exchangeable example of his species. His being a person and his irrevocable uniqueness are based on this relationship. It is no accident that the concept of person as the designation for a singular mode of existence has its roots in Christian thinking. If God is not thought of personally or at all, man can never be understood as a person. Through this concept of man, Christianity started a development that was ultimately taken over by philosophy; without it, the Modern Age would be just as inconceivable as the Enlightenment or the French Revolution. Free by nature, man must never be understood as a means towards a purpose. Man does not simply exist, he stands of himself and knows about himself. It is on this that the possibility of free disposal of self is founded.

It is in the freedom of conscience, by which man is inseparably bound in responsibility before God, that being a person achieves its highest manifestation. There is no instance that can oblige man to act against his convictions.

- The counter question

The counter question is put as a further concept: what or who is damaged if the reference to God is used to categorically counter all man's claims to absoluteness and if a reference to Christianity is included in the Preamble of the EU Constitution as the only genuine guarantee for the inviolable dignity of mankind? This consent does not involve a profession of faith; the suspicion that Christianity is to be raised to the status of a state religion is completely absurd. Thus there are only positive aspects, even for the convinced atheist and the non-Christian, as well as for the members of non-Christian religions: Christianity alone, with its concept of mankind, unconditionally guarantees freedom of religion and philosophy; a value that will be of particular importance for the future of Europe.

2. **Christianity is the historical and present source of western culture.** The statement of this historic fact is important for the European identity, not least also as a precondition for the dialogue between civilisations and cultures.

The basic elements of any democratic system, liberality, solidarity and tolerance, made universally applicable by the Enlightenment, are genuine Christian principles that overcome oppression and social coldness, permitting a constructive coexistence between different ethnic groups, civilisations and ways of life.

If it wishes to become a community of values, Europe needs a clear fundamental orientation, and therefore needs a binding legal document that declares European law, its roots in Christianity, humanism, Enlightenment and social movements to be the basis of the applicable law, thereby giving it legitimisation, justification and an explanatory objective.

Signed by the members of the Foundation Board

Prof. DDr. Dr. h.c. Eugen Biser (Chairman)

Prof. Dr. Richard Heinzmann (Deputy Chairman)

Prof. Dr. Gunther Wenz

Prof. Dr. Michael Wolffsohn