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***More Balance for More Peace
– in Language and Economy***

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More Balance for More Peace in Europe – in Language and Economy

That the European Union received the Nobel Peace Prize must probably rather be understood as a mission than a merit – after all, it would be no special merit to keep peace in one's own family. However, it is a sad thing we have to observe: Over the last years, the European Community has not shown itself very worthy of the prize. Many leading politicians of the EU member states seem to forget all too often many of the aims of the EU. They can be read in Article 3 of the EU Treaty. According to this article, some of the goals are “the sustainable development of Europe based on balanced economic growth [...] social market economy, aiming at full employment and social progress [...] It shall promote economic, social and territorial cohesion, and solidarity among Member States. [...]”. And furthermore: “It [=The EU] shall contribute to peace, security, the sustainable development of the Earth, solidarity and mutual respect among peoples.” Instead, at the end of 2015, we look at different kinds of force.

In many EU countries, the society has to suffer a kind of violence in the form of increasing poverty and inequality. According to the EU databank Eurostat¹ many EU countries have seen, since 2010, an increase in the percentage of people who suffer from significant poverty². Exceptions are Sweden, Britain and France. There is a particularly strong growth of the percentage of poor people in Greece, Ireland, Portugal, particularly after the introduction of forced austerity measures. These austerity constraints are misleadingly sometimes called “rescue measures”: Through these measures, the number of poor people rose in Ireland from 5.7% in 2010 to 7.8% in 2011; in Portugal from 2011 on from 8.3% first very slightly to 8.6%, but then to 10.9% in 2012; in Greece from 11.6% in 2010 to 15.2%, 19.2%, 20.3% and finally 21.5% in 2014. After Ireland freed itself from the constraints of this “rescue parachute” for the financial industries in 2013, the percentage of the poor has again dropped from 9.9% to 8.4%. But even in Germany the number of the poor has risen from 8.4% (2010) to 9.0% (2014), with a high at 9.9% in 2012. This may surprise some people since Germany is seen as economically strong among the EU countries. Yet it already shows that this must have to do with the unequal distribution of the strong overall prosperity. According to the EU database Eurostat inequality increased in many EU Member States from 2010 to 2014 (as measured by the Gini coefficient on a scale of 0 ‘zero inequality’ to 1 ‘one person has everything’). Inequality rose not only in the countries called *crisis countries*, Greece (from 0.329 to 0.345), Spain (from 0.335 to 0.347) and Portugal (0.337 to 0.345), but also in Germany (from 0.293 to 0.307). The clash between the rich and the poor become in Britain and France, though. Empirical calculations show that an ideal inequality is a Gini coefficient in the range of 0.2121-0.3333³. This is moderate inequality or moderate equality. And the closer you get to this equality/inequality-balance, the higher the general standard of living—as studies have shown⁴. Unfortunately, Germany itself moves more and more toward the higher limit. Other have already fallen out of this ideal bandwidth since 2010: in addition to Greece and Spain, also Estonia, Bulgaria, Cyprus and Romania. Already before, Portugal, Lithuania and Latvia missed these values. The poor performance of Germany may surprise many readers, because Germany is often portrayed in the media as a model. But one has to ask: as a model for what actually? Mostly just purely financial, monetary value-related key figures are presented,

calculating any averages. But an exchange of money says nothing about the underlying goods and services. And an average does not say anything about whether something is evenly or extremely distributed. If one person earns 99 EUR per hour and another person 1 EUR per hour, then the average of 50 EUR is a pure play with numbers without much information on the welfare of society as a whole. Therefore, the gross domestic product in total or per capita is completely useless for judging the goals mentioned at the beginning. Also unemployment statistics and employment statistics are of little use if they provide no information about how many people actually have an income that can be described as sufficient. This is due to the flexible way in which one can define *unemployed* and *employed*.

What can be solutions? Being German I have no right to give other countries concrete recommendations—unless the impact of their actions also affect me. As a general neutral rule for Europe it can be said that legally only by means of the state the wealth created by the whole community can be distributed in a moderate way. To put it bluntly: The average citizen in the statistics does not care; many people have to be well off in the real world! For this we need people in power who understand doing this. In elections, every nation has a choice to enable political changes—provided that people are and can be sufficiently informed about the ideas and the credibility of political candidates. Some nations in Europe have used this option. Some of the alternative political applicants are unfortunately ignorant to the cited goals of the EU. Others, however, have explicitly put the welfare of the majority of the people into the center and have thus received more approval: for example, in Greece Syriza, in Spain Podemos, in Portugal the alliance under the new Prime Minister Antonio Costa, in the UK the group around the new laboratory Jeremy Corbyn boss. The last example shows that a change can happen within an existing party. Of course, this does not mean that an election can enable an immediate change. But there is a chance to make a new policy: not the high society against the low society, not the low society against the high society, but the high society with the low society and vice versa. At the moment, all four political groups mentioned are receiving resistance from the people in power in politics, economy and media—both nationally and internationally. Watch again even as the resistance to those who work for more public good, sometimes is violent, at least linguistically. It would be an important step towards the prosperity for the mass, when the alternative politicians managed, after winning people's attention, could now cultivate a language that is a balance between clarity and peacefulness.

Our monetary system is actually also based on *balance*, as stated in the cited article of the EU Treaty: sometimes one person gives and the other takes, at other times it is the other way around. The income of one person is always the expense of another person. And to avoid the collapse of the system, the roles must be taken in a balanced. The economic term *balance* does consciously go back to the physical term *balance*. The existing money must always stay in economic circulation to ensure prosperity; if one wants to even increase prosperity, this can only be achieved through money that is newly created by the bank. These are the famous loans, or credits, with which one can invest. With this knowledge and this policy, the respective EU Member States have performed well until the 1970s. But this policy has been gradually given up—evidently also in the euro zone. Originally intended as a community of partners the euro-zone countries became a group in which at least some see the others as opponents; but these opponents are at the same time expected to buy the goods of the other side. To see one and the same group as both a competitor and a customer at the same time is a contradictory view. But this ultimately sneaky view is spreading. It motivates especially export-oriented countries such as Germany to buy little from other countries, but the other countries spend their money in the companies of the exporting countries, until no more money

is there. For this, these import countries, who are backing the prosperity and growth of export countries, are in the end even criticized by the export countries. It is obviously not understood that saving, which means: the withdrawal of money from circulation, prevents a society from prosperity and growth. Rather, it must be emphasized: increasing growth comes only through more loans, in other words: debts. The growth of saving-oriented export countries like Germany is based on the willingness of other countries to go in debt. If, however, always the same nations save masses of money and the other nations always spend money, in other words: if there is no balance, the result is logically an imbalance and the EU's objectives can not be achieved. Conflicts arise.

What can be solutions? To tell all people to save money is an illogical way—this has already been demonstrated. You can even learn that from history. Western policy until the 1970s has shown that one can achieve the goals quoted from the EU Treaty quite well if you have a state which takes care that companies invest and that the state itself controls the industrial key branches in the hand, a state in which one's and the family's safety is guaranteed, in which there is a good infrastructure, in which there is a pleasant environment—you could say: if you have a healthy state. What we observe, however, are totally illogical demands. Some claim that the poor countries would have to adapt their way of working to the rich countries. However, it is not the case that all countries of a monetary zone have to work the same amount. This requirement does not have an economic basis. Economically based is only that every nation must live according to their own productivity. It is also claimed that the crisis countries should simply just save money. But they do not have any money left to save. They would have to get money from those who have taken it from them. In contrast, some expect the crisis states to sell precisely those goods that still bring them revenue—Greece, for example, was expected to sell their ports and airports. Ports and airports in Greece, with its 87 inhabited islands, are part of the public transport system. Actually, we already know from earlier European studies that the privatization of public transport led to more expensive and worse access for citizens⁵. Actually, we also know from previous examples that austerity generally brings no improvement in terms of the cited targets. We can think of German Chancellor Brüning's austerity policies: they favored the rise of Hitler. We can think of the massive austerity programs of the 1990s, which the International Monetary Fund imposed on Latin American countries: it was only after the end of the programs that the Latin-American nations were better off again⁶. In other words, saving policies gradually make diseased states dead. This is not a typical war, but a kind of economic warfare that takes place within Europe. Let's have another look at Greece: the unemployment rate, according to the Greek Statistical Office, as risen from 9.2% in 2009 to 27.3% in the year 2014. More than half of people have to resort to additional resources⁷, in particular the old-age pension by a parent or grandparent, with the retirement age in Greece at 67 years being higher than in many other EU countries (incl. Germany). From an EU country with a very low suicide rate, Greece, with the so-called "rescue measures", has become the EU country with the highest suicide rate⁸. Due to the forced financial cuts, the public health system collapsed: more than 3,500,000 people have no access to the public health care system more; for the first time since 1950 the infant mortality rate is rising again; the cases of HIV infection among drug users has increased by 1,250%; after 40 years, reinforced cases of malaria and tuberculosis are observed again⁹. According to the erroneous view of EU representatives, the tax losses resulting from the high unemployment and poverty rates shall be compensated by higher general value-added tax on food (23 percent!). This could of course not be afforded by the poor. The human catastrophe will only increase. Many people in a responsible position in Europe accept that people die; they even promote it! Perhaps some do this unconsciously, because they are not always provided

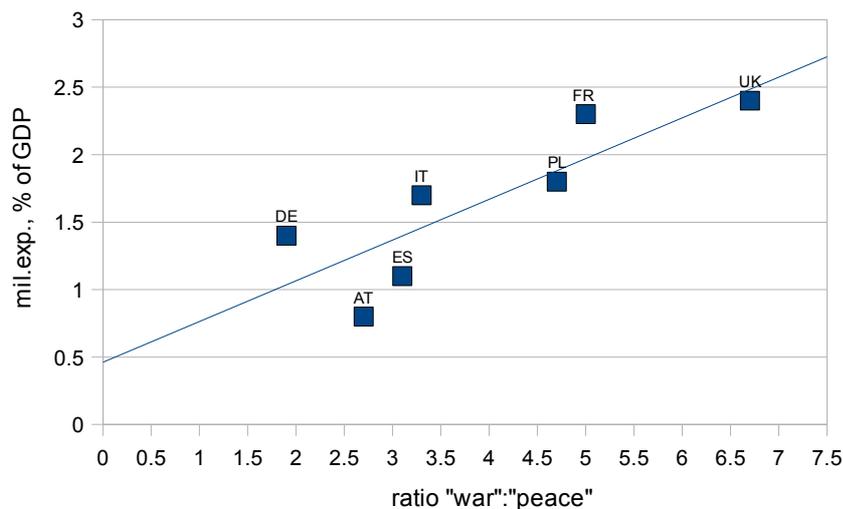
with the relevant facts. Many believe, for example, that it is the task of the mass media to provide balanced information. But already Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky have emphasized for many years that the main business of the mass media is not to sell the product “information” to the customer “audience”, but the main business of the mass media is to sell the product “audience” to the customer “advertiser”—there are huge internationally operating media companies¹⁰. Therefore, it also needs educational institutions that are independent of party politics and profit orientation and that feel only obliged to the generally accessible search for truth. This is how we view ourselves at the Europäisches Haus Pappenheim. We can only speculate what the motives for cruel political actions are. Surely part of the answer lies in the question of who benefits from this economic and ideological war. Some benefit very well from the current economic ideology of market radicalism and from the crisis. This is true for the financial industry. This is ultimately also true for the German state apparatus: due to the crisis hardly anyone wants to buy Greek government bonds, while there is a run on German government bonds; the German state apparatus hardly has to pay interest on loans. Different calculations have shown that due to the Greek crisis, Germany has saved about 100.000 million EUR¹¹. So some benefit from rising prosperity, but, as I said, this is simply not distributed in a moderate way. Most Europeans lose with the current economic ideology. If we stick to it, it is only logical that the damage in so many EU countries continues to rise. Consequently, more and more people will flee to the states such as Germany, which are overall rich in money and which have enriched themselves at the expense of other states. The EU countries are today often referred to in the media as “partners”; with respect to the US, European rhetoric style also uses “friends”¹². Why do we not transfer this term this to all countries outside the EU and call people in other EU countries even “brothers and sisters”—as in Beethoven’s Ode to Joy, whose melody was, after all, chosen as the EU anthem? A peaceful language is a further step here. But this is occasionally difficult for politicians, because sometimes peaceful words are simply hyped. This is what happened recently to Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi, who recalled that the EU had to serve all the 28 countries and not only Germany. The Financial Times labeled this as a sharp attack in their edition from 21 December 2015¹³. Meanwhile, the simple Greek people organize help themselves, among other things the network “Solidarity for All” (AgO), which also has created an international fund, which all deputies of the Syriza party donate 20% of their allowances to.

Finally, let’s have a look at the international activities of the EU. Here, the result of certain economic policies is even stronger. A dominant theme in European media is the large number of refugees from Africa and the Middle East. They flee from the threat of death by starvation or by weapons. Some fear that new problems of coexistence may arise due to the many refugees from other cultures. Professional integration measures are called for. The Europäisches Haus Pappenheim contributes to this through its highly efficient method for learning the most important language skills: the Language Emergency Doctor (“Sprach-Not-Arzt”)¹⁴. Politicians are looking for solutions. Some have proposed to shift the problem away so so you no longer directly see it: The already weakened countries on the southern and south-eastern external borders of the EU have been critically reminded that they need to secure their external borders; but when they did it, they also reaped criticism. Furthermore, some want to send money to countries beyond the EU borders, so that the refugee camps are better equipped there and the refugees stay there. But both suggestions do not fight the actual causes that push people to leave their homes: violence by hunger and violence by weapons. The EU has its share in both types of violence.

Yes, unfortunately, the EU is also involved in armed violence, the violence of war—indirectly through arms sales to Qatar and Saudi Arabia (which they pass on to the terrorist organization Islamic State) or—in the wake of the Paris Terror strikes—by direct participation in the war in Syria. This is intended to combat the organization Islamic State. But does this agree with the EU’s values? The participation takes place without a UN mandate. The invasion of Syria was carried out without the request of the Syrian government. And we should also remember: the Paris attacks were primarily carried out not by Syrian terrorists, but by French and Belgian terrorists—for the time being it is still unclear whether any Syrians were actively involved at all. After all, have such wars the desired effect? If so, are they the most efficient means? How many people had to lose their lives who were not involved in military operations? They are euphemistically and cynically referred to as *collateral damage* (de. *Kollateralschaden*, fr. *dommage collatéral*, es. *daño colateral*, it. *danno collaterale*, pl. *szkoda kolateralna*, sv. *sidoskada* etc.)—this turns people into things. But they are people killed. Terror was replaced by terror. How many of those killed by western military were not enemy combatants, but were killed accidentally? According to official calculations, the amount in the Yugoslavia War in 1999 (Operation Allied Force) is at least 50 percent¹⁵ and in the second Iraq war 29 percent¹⁶. Is it worth it? It will have led to new hatred. Just imagine in your neighborhood three terrorists were discovered and the police would accidentally kill one to three members of your family in addition to the three terrorists. What feelings would you develop not only against the active police officers, but against the entire police organization, and even against the whole state?

What can more peaceful solutions look like? The cutting off from financial sources is one way which seems to be relatively quickly implementable. In addition, there must be strategies for the medium-term development of the EU countries. One way would be to convert the arms industry into a pure defense industry without sending weapons across Europe (instead of seeing the arms industry as a field for European economic growth). Another way would be the elimination of all forms of weapons of mass destruction in Europe, also the “financial weapons of mass destruction” (that is those businesses that bet about the future value of a good or a value paper, in other words: speculating).

A peaceful attitude can already be promoted when you speak and write less of “war” and much more of “peace”. This is supported by an analysis of article headings in British, German, French, Italian, Austrian, Polish and Spanish newspapers. Comparing the occurrence of words for ‘war’ and ‘peace’ with the military spending expressed as the share of gross domestic product (according to Eurostat), then there is a clear effect between wording and military expenditures (shown in the graph below): The more headlines include “war” (rather than “peace”), the more military spending there is in that country¹⁷.



As a linguist, I have repeatedly pointed out Marshall Rosenberg, who died earlier this year. He has developed the conversation model of Nonviolent Communication, which also works between warring parties, if they are willing to engage in a conversation¹⁸. Where someone's life is in immediate danger, of course, this threat must first be dispelled. But then communication starts. The core of Rosenberg's model is the clear distinction between (1) universal needs and (2) strategies to meet those needs. As soon as someone has described which strategy of the opponent interferes with what need, a concrete alternative strategy is requested from the opponent. It is important that it is a request, not a demand. This must be made clear to the opponent. Rosenberg's language is not a language of pressure. It is not a language of compromise where both sides give up something. It is a language of consensus. With Rosenberg's model two people can not only resolve conflicts, but also avoid them. Now the challenge for politicians is that they should not speak for themselves personally, but for a group that they represent. EU representatives should therefore speak for the EU population. That is, they have to know the EU Treaties and must have empathy for other people. They have to ask what are good strategies for the fulfillment of human needs and the EU targets or even the UN goals.

As I said, Rosenberg assumed that all people have the same needs. Indirectly he tried to find something that does not produce culture-specific or group-specific associations. However, there is hardly anything that could not be charged with cultural significance. Who, for example, belongs to the group which is referred to as "my family"? In some cultures, 'the granddaughter of the grandmother's sister' is included, in other cultures not. What is "time"? For some cultures, this means the scope of '5 minutes prior to 5 minutes after the agreed time', for other cultures 'up to half an hour after the agreed time'. Culturally significant is also the relationship between the spoken word and written word. Therefore, the more precise one puts thoughts into words (mentioning also the purpose of an thing), the more you reduce misunderstandings. The clearer you make it whether something is intended as a question or a suggestion or a request, the more you reduce misunderstandings. The more you also try to decode the words of the interlocutor this way, the more a peaceful dialogue is possible. Here, too, a balance between conversation participants is required.

The greater the number of people, the smaller our imagination and empathy. Therefore, it is important to become familiar with other people's personal stories—and even with your own

destiny. However, it is also necessary to examine how individual political decisions that we—perhaps under wrong assumptions—have supported, may have led to certain biographies. Maybe we need to reflect more intensely about future decisions in order to balance the welfare of many people in Europe and the world, for the sake of our own welfare. That was the goal of the EU. Since you cannot repeat it often enough, I will cite the EU goals again. The European Community aims at “the sustainable development of Europe based on balanced economic growth [...], social market economy, aiming at full employment and social progress [...] It shall promote economic, social and territorial cohesion, and solidarity among Member States. [...] It shall contribute to peace, security, the sustainable development of the Earth, solidarity and mutual respect among peoples.” Instead, at the end of 2015, we look at different kinds of force.” In this sense, I hope and wish for the Europeans and the world a more peaceful year 2016.

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Annotations

- 1 Cf. <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/home>.
- 2 Severe material deprivation according to EU definition is given if people by way of self-assessment characterize their households as lacking at least r items among the 9 following: the household could not afford: (1) to pay for arrears (mortgage or rent, utility bills or hire purchase instalments), (2) to keep home adequately warm, or could not afford (even if wanted to), (3) to face unexpected expenses, (4) a meal with meat, chicken or fish every second day, (5) one week annual holiday away from home, (6) a personal car, (7) a washing machine, (8) a colour TV, (9) a telephone.
- 3 Cf. E. Herlyn, *Einkommensverteilungsbasierte Präferenz- und Koalitionsanalysen auf der Basis selbständlicher Equity-Lorenzkurven: Ein Beitrag zur Quantifizierung sozialer Nachhaltigkeit*, Wiesbaden 2012, especially p. 159-166, F.J. Radermacher, *Balance oder Zerstörung: Ökosoziale Marktwirtschaft als Schlüssel zu einer weltweiten nachhaltigen Entwicklung*, Wien 2005, T. Kämpke / R. Pestel / F.J. Radermacher, “A Computational Concept for Normative Equity”, *European Journal of Law and Economics* 15 (2003): 129-163, G. Jacobs / I. Šlaus, “Indicators of Economic Progress: The Power of Measurement and Human Welfare”, *Cadus* 1/1 (2010): 53-113.
- 4 Cf. R. Wilkinson & K. Pickett, *The Spirit Level*, London etc. 2009.
- 5 Cf. T. Brandt, *Die Privatisierung öffentlicher Dienstleistungen und deren Auswirkungen auf Qualität, Beschäftigung und Produktivität*, Wien 2009.
- 6 Cf. J. Stiglitz, *Globalization and Its Discontents*, New York 2002.
- 7 Cf. <http://tinyurl.com/q6muw67>.
- 8 Cf. <http://left.gr/news/syglyklonistika-stoiheia-gia-tin-ellada-tis-krisis-ayxisi-kata-35-stis-aytoktonies>.
- 9 Cf. <http://www.solidarity4all.gr/el/about-solidarity-initiative>.
- 10 E. Herman & N. Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent*, New York 1988/2002. See also the 1992 award-winning documentary film *Manufacturing Consent: Noam Chomsky and the Media*.
- 11 Cf. J. Boysen-Hogrefe, “Die Zinslast des Bundes in der Schuldenkrise: Wie lukrativ ist der ‘sichere Hafen’?”, *Kiel Working Paper* No. 1780, Kiel 2012, https://www.ifw-members.ifw-kiel.de/publications/die-zinslast-des-bundes-in-der-schuldenkrise-wie-lukrativ-ist-der-201esichere-hafen201c/kwp_gesamt.pdf, and G. Dany et al., “Germany’s Benefit from the Greek Crisis”, *IWH Online* 7/2015. Halle (Saale) 2015, http://www.iwh-halle.de/d/publik/iwhonline/io_2015-07.pdf.
- 12 Cf. J. Grzega (2015), “Analyzing Languages on the National, European and Global Level – Different Goals and Frames Require Different Methods”, *Journal for EuroLinguistiX* 12 (2015): 4-15.
- 13 Cf. J. Politi, “Eurozone austerity fanning populist flames, says Renzi”, *Financial Times* 21.12.15.
- 14 Cf. <http://www.sprach-not-arzt.de>.
- 15 Cf. Human Rights Watch, 2000, <https://www.hrw.org/reports/2000/nato/Natbm200-01.htm> (489-528 civil victims out of 956 humans killed by NATO attacks)
- 16 Cf. C. Conetta, “The Wages of War: Iraqi Combatant and Noncombatant Fatalities in the 2003 Conflict”, Cambridge (Mass.) 2003, <http://www.comw.org/pda/0310rm8.html>.

- 17 The analysis compares the 2012 military expenses in relation to the Gross National Product (according to Eurostat) and the occurrences of “war” und “peace” (incl. grammatical forms) between 13 Dec 2014 and 12 Dec 2015 in one liberal-progressive and one conservative journal in each of the following EU countries: UK (*The Guardian, The Daily Telegraph*), France (*Le Monde, Le Figaro*), Spain (*El país, El mundo*), Italy (*La stampa, Il corriere della sera*), Germany (*Frankfurter Rundschau, Die Welt*), Austria (*Der Standard, Die Presse*) and Poland (*Gazeta prawna, Gazeta wyborcza*); the archive used was LexisNexis. A Kendall Tau test reveals a probability value of $p=0.0163$ and an effect size of $\tau=0.8095$.
- 18 Cf. M. Rosenberg, *Speak Peace in a World of Conflict*, Encinitas 2005.