

## **Panel debate on a forward looking inclusive Europe**

### **Abstract**

*Europe stands in a unique position to create a forward looking culture of human rights, utilising its privilege of binding legislation to inspire better communication and inclusion, particularly in the growing population of young people. Education, political leadership and the rule of law form the necessary foundations for the creating of a human rights culture, and must work in tandem to create a driving force for the inclusion of all within the political process, inspiring civil society to undertake a watchdog role in regards to fundamental human rights. It is imperative that the forward outlook of Europe is not limited to just within the European borders, but in recognition of the highly interconnected nature of modern day societies we must create more dynamic interpretations of the notions of sovereignty and borders, in order to breed truly international equality in a sustainable manner. "Politics is about the future", and with an ever growing youth population we must create a culture of inclusion and human rights, to inspire full participation within and respect for institutions upholding fundamental rights.*

### **Speakers:**

1. Cecile Kashetu Kyenge, Member of Parliament
2. Per Olsson Fridh, State of Secretary, Ministry of Culture, Sweden
3. Kate Gilmore, Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights, OHCHR
4. Michael Georg Link, Director of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, OSCE

### **What is the step as a Parliament member, you are willing to take to have a forward looking Europe?**

We have to work together for the refugee crisis and there is a need to elaborate on a European-wide policy, which would provide for full participation. We need participation through culture and education; this is a process of inclusion. There is a lot of demand for young people to participant in the cultural process. So all of this is important to strengthen

the identity of these people and use citizenship as a tool for promoting inclusion. Everyone who grows up in Europe can feel included and participate in the political process and so they don't feel excluded. I think one needs to be really strict about school programmes and promote good communication. This would be a different way to promote the responsibility and participating in dialogue.

## **What do you think an important step to take in a forward looking inclusive Europe?**

Human rights were invented to be a guide during hard times. Currently, human rights are challenged in our 28 democratic states of Europe. Additionally, the transition to human rights governance is a challenge. To resolve these issues we need coordinated and systematic work in European bodies in order to show the important work civil societies do. In this framework we need to allow a culture of rights to grow. The question is: How can you foster a culture of rights? First, we need to start by acknowledging the role of education and culture. Then once you have a right to culture (i.e. minority language), this is where a culture of rights grows. A culture of rights goes hand in hand with the respect for institutions upholding these rights.

However, what is needed is an inclusive planet – a forward inclusive planet. We cannot have an approach that cherry-picks from globalisation. As this world is interconnected and facing more global challenges than ever in human history, you cannot have globalisation and imagine that sovereignty and borders will remain the same. Doing so would be a falsehood. The problems arising are being manipulated through fear. There are individuals using incorrect descriptions of human rights as political correctness. Leading opponents of human rights are engaged in political non-correctness. We need to join ourselves to a renewed understanding to the idea there is no planet B. We are consuming this planet in an unsustainable manner. To make matters worse, young people are being left out of these discussion. Demography of power cannot remain undistributed.

We need sustainability that includes the largest adolescent population we have ever seen. The Sustainable Development Goals commit to deal with unsustainable issues in the world, especially inequality. The problem is

these young people are being ignored whilst older people live with too much privilege. The young population needs to be part of this conversation.

It is not to be tolerated that political leaders are breeding fear and hate. Those who have been elected have a deep duty to lead in the interests of all constituencies. Pathway paved with hate and fear is a pathway that always leads in disaster. We don't have to look to far back to see that this is true.

Education is critical. We have to invest in the competencies of inclusivity and tolerance. Education must extend into the tertiary level and to all public policy makers.

There must not a policy that damages the “textual account” of the human being. We have voices, choices and decisions and the right to make decisions. We must commit to counter speech in regard to hate speech with full force of the law. Rights are for all of us; there are no exceptions.

The European Union has the privilege of having binding legislation and can really work towards an inclusive Europe. The EU can move concretely forward. We need to enshrine legislation in member states individually and bind very clear legal commitments that we give up this old paternalistic approach where we say “we know what is good for you”.

## **How should the EU lead by example?**

We need to joined rules for asylum seekers in order to see migrants and refugees not as a threat and we need joined rules for asylum seekers. Additionally, in elections, ODIHR discovered there are not enough candidates with disabilities in EU politics.

## **How at a nation state level do you foster commitments?**

Member states need to build strong legal institutional protection. There is a need to build the framework for not just “sunny days”. In times when these basic principles are challenged Member States must build legal and institutional protection. We also need to make sure we work with civil societies because they are watchdogs to protect and promote human rights. There needs to be space for a rights culture to grow. In welfare states like Sweden, the system isn't build on rights, but needs. The transition from needs to rights is not easy, but a rights culture allows for this transformation

to occur more easily. Culture must follow and monitor legal process to better protect rights.

## **Where are you looking and really make a difference?**

The question of migration with a holistic and global approach that the EU must adopt.

As well, the EU must adopt a vision and a shared vision. It would be difficult to speak of a solution but they must make efforts to submit proposals. I think a holistic approach is essential in domestic policy and foreign policy. We also need to focus on discrimination in legislation every country.

People should have the right to move to different countries and one should not forget that fundamental rights must follow the universality of human rights. This needs to be a fundamental basis for discussing these issues with countries. Each country must develop its own strategies against discrimination. One should look at all of the laws from a holistic perspective. People are excluded from society, especially young people due to intersectionality. Discrimination makes it hard for these young people to accept themselves. It is not as simple to just say "I am black". The situation is more complex, you have responsibilities for each person to participate in the political process.

## **How do we include morally disabled people – those who are fearful and hateful?**

1. Political leadership. Those who have been elected to office to lead for constituencies owe a deep duty of all the constituencies.
2. Education is critical. We have to invest in inclusiveness and tolerance. That education needs to go to those who would join the rank of policy makers.
3. We need to go against hate speech and use the law. Rights are for the best and the worst of us. Furthermore, human beings have voices and choices but not in a way that infringes on anyone's rights.

## **Do you see examples of leadership?**

Leaders have a responsibility. Politicians are the driving force of polarisation. However, politicians do not really take responsibility over what goes on after the debate. Yet responsibility needs to be on the whole scene. We need young people involved and freedom of opinion in schools.

Schools are not without values and teachers need to be prepared and trained to deal with controversial topics.

## **We have laws but how do we enforce them and can NGOs strengthen them?**

Everyone who should promote and respect human rights. Everyone who is independent should fight discrimination. Everybody should promote respect of human rights. Every agency member must be aware of the law. At this moment there is a difference between what is happening in the real world and the internet. Civic society must heighten awareness of this gap. To do this, I think one should attempt to raise awareness for the use of terms in language. We must coordinate how we address these themes at the EU level. Additionally, greater coordination to disseminate ideas between member states everyone is needed to combat racism.

It is important to report what is happening. ODIHR publishes its annual hate crime report from 57 governments and civil society. But not everyone reports and this is a big problem. Reporting is important to understand what is happening on the ground.

There is too little enforcements. The EU has more possibility for enforcement and it should be doing this when Member States violate these rights. Member States need to be reminded when they violate the rights enshrined in the EU. It is not suggestive, it is mandatory.