



AIMS AND VALUES OF THE EU

Why does the EU exist? What are its aims? Are these aims based on certain values? These questions can be difficult to answer as the aims and values of the EU are not expressed in one place; thus one of the objectives of the Convention on the Future of Europe is to simplify the Treaties of the EU so that the aims and objectives form one simple 'constitutional text'. The quotes below show a range of aims and values taken from a variety of current EU documents.

Are these values coherent? Are there any contradictions? Does the EU actually live up to these values in practice? What would be an ideal set of values and aims for the EU, or any other international institution?

"world peace can be safeguarded only by creative efforts commensurate with the dangers that threaten it..."

RESOLVED to substitute for age old rivalries the merging of their essential interests; to create, by establishing an economic community, the basis for a broader and deeper community among peoples long divided by bloody conflicts; and to lay the foundations for institutions which will give direction to a destiny henceforward shared ...

[the European Coal and Steel Community has] as its task to contribute ... to economic expansion, growth of employment and a rising standard of living in the Member States"
(Treaty establishing the European Coal and Steel Community - 1952)

"... DETERMINED to work together to promote democracy on the basis of the fundamental rights recognized in the constitutions and laws of the Member States, in the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and the European Social Charter, notably freedom, equality and social justice ...

AWARE of the responsibility incumbent upon Europe ... to display the principles of democracy and compliance with the law and with human rights to which they are attached, so that together they may make their own contribution to the preservation of international peace and security ..."

(Single European Act - 1987)

"... AFFIRMING as the essential objective of their efforts the constant improvements of the living and working conditions of their peoples,

... INTENDING to confirm the solidarity which binds Europe and the overseas countries and desiring to ensure the development of their prosperity ...

RESOLVED by thus pooling their resources to preserve and strengthen peace and liberty...

Article 2

The Community shall have as its task ... to promote throughout the Community a harmonious, balanced and sustainable development of economic activities, a high level of employment and of social protection, equality between men and women, sustainable and non-inflationary growth, a high degree of competitiveness and convergence of economic performance, a high level of protection and improvement of the quality of the environment, the raising of the standard of living and quality of life, and economic and social cohesion and solidarity among Member States.

Article 6

Environmental protection requirements must be integrated into the definition and implementation of the Community policies and activities ... in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development.

Article 13

... the Council ... may take appropriate action to combat discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation."

(Treaty establishing the European Community 1958 - amended in Amsterdam 1999)

"... The peoples of Europe, in creating an ever closer union among them, are resolved to share a peaceful future based on common values.

Conscious of its spiritual and moral heritage, the Union is founded on the indivisible, universal values of human dignity, freedom, equality and solidarity; it is based on the principles of democracy and the rule of law. It places the individual at the heart of its activities, by establishing the citizenship of the Union and by creating an area of freedom, security and justice."

(Charter of the Fundamental Rights of the European Union - signed and proclaimed in Nice 2000 - not in the Treaties)

"The main aim of the European Union is to create ever-closer cooperation among the European peoples, where decisions are taken as close to citizens as possible"

(EU information leaflet)

"The European Union's mission is to organise relations between the Member States and between their peoples in a coherent manner and on the basis of solidarity"

(EU website)

"These [the long-term objectives of the EU] may, with *the overall objective of sustainable development*, include improving human capital, knowledge and skills; strengthening both social cohesion and competitiveness; meeting the environmental challenge; supporting territorial diversity; and contributing to regional peace and stability."

(European Commission, White Paper on Governance, 2001 - my emphasis)