

# **Towards a World in Balance**

A Virtual Congress for a Better Balanced World.

Global Marshall Plan Initiative

# **European Hope**

Strategy of Partnership

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Strategy of Partnership

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Global Marshall Plan

balance the world  
with an Eco-Social Market Economy



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# World in Balance

## A Virtual Congress for a Better Balanced World

The arrangement of contributions as chapters is an attempt at a thematic structuring. However, every article can also be regarded as 'stand alone' and often touches on more aspects than the overarching issue. The published articles mirror the opinion of the individual author. These opinions do not necessarily correspond to the opinion of the Global Marshall Plan Initiative. Not all of the quoted persons mentioned in this book are supporters of the Global Marshall Plan Initiative.

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## The Potsdam Manifesto

*Prof. Dr. Hans-Peter Dürr*

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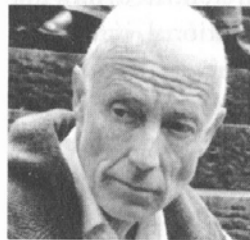
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## Introduction<sup>1</sup>

On the occasion of the Einstein-Year 2005 Hans-Peter Dürr, J. Daniel Dahm and Rudolf zur Lippe composed the Potsdam Manifesto 2005 *We have to learn to think in a new way* and its mother-script, the *Potsdam 'Denkschrift' 2005*. Their draft was discussed intensively and deliberated by people of various disciplines during an international symposium from June 24<sup>th</sup> until 27<sup>th</sup> in Potsdam. On October 14<sup>th</sup>, 2005, both the short Potsdam Manifesto 2005 and the more explicit Potsdam 'Denkschrift' 2005 were presented to the public in Berlin. Manifesto and Denkschrift refer to a central demand of the Russell-Einstein-Manifesto from 1955: "We have to learn to think in a new way." They challenge the deeper causes of crisis symptoms and call for radical and far-reaching re-orientations for the future development of humankind and our thinking. More than 130 well-known scientists and public figures from all over the world have signed the Potsdam Manifesto 2005. The authors explicitly welcomed and authorized the publication of the following extract of the Potsdam Manifesto 2005 in the present publication.

## Freedom and Participation

It is high time to implement a new thinking in a new activity and learning to avail ourselves of the power of the differentiated, moving and self-changing. To this end, parallel new institutional, individual and societal developments are necessary. The current strategies for the economic, political, cultural and ecological interplay between people are dominated by centralized power structures that we can and should replace.

The goods necessary for human life are common goods. They range from material to immaterial basic provisions of life. The immaterial basic provisions needed to ensure the possibilities of individual and cooperative development include: political and social participation on a level as close as possible to those involved (subsidiarity); comprehensive political contribution from everyone in their

respective competencies; the strengthening of local decision-making processes; and the institutional and infrastructural preconditions for emotional and spiritual development. This applies to education, training, the opportunity to share in humanity's pool of knowledge and information, art, play, communication, the opportunity for creative development, and for social, cultural, and political community work, the opportunity to share in life-serving achievement, in work – in everything that supports individual development in community and that essentially lifelong learning to promote a constructive openness to the world and no longer power interests. But the preconditions thus assured must still be taken advantage of, in joy over one's own effectiveness, in life activity as the expression of personality. All children enter life with this drive; it does not need to be taught. But our societies, each in its own different way, channel these energies in ever narrower pathways and destroy their primal force and vitality.

Highest priority must be given to all initiatives that strengthen the responsible, coliberal person. History teaches us that fundamentally healthy and successful societal structures decline and die if they lead to an increase in centralization. The basic precondition for the thriving development of a society is adequate freedom for the creative individual to develop his abilities. Only this makes possible the differentiation essential to and necessary for a living society. But – and this must be emphasized again and again – differences are advantageous to a community only if they are simultaneously constructively and cooperatively, i.e., organismically integrated with others: The greater flexibility thus gained also provides greater adaptability to changed or unforeseen future living conditions. From the individual this demands responsibility toward the community and participation commensurate with his particular abilities in responding to common problems and challenges. This combination is mirrored in essence in the demand for "freedom and democracy," but only when freedom is understood as the best possible development and strengthening of the personality in harmony with the freedom of others. And only when democracy is understood as dedicated, active and responsible participation of all in shaping the



community, starting in the places where we live (this means much more than formal voting rights as practiced in democratically constituted states, which offer no possibility of a truly relevant selection). In this way, the liberal and social components do not work against each other, but are constructively related: freedom and democracy must be seen as an inseparable unity. We need individual initiative in societal responsibility toward other people, but also toward our surrounding world. This prevents the one-sided exaggeration of one or the other quality that derails human society.

### Steps in the New Orientation

This can be shown in many examples. For example, the economy's formal emphasis on maximum efficiency in the allocation of resources. A pillar of economic globalization, leads to artificially homogenized and monoculturally reworked living spaces. And to people's maximum dependency on external factors they cannot influence, though they are not inherently fixed, but merely increasingly negatively provoked. This view of efficiency, extremely narrow even in economic terms, ignores a sore loss of freedom and the accompanying possibilities of personal development for the people affected, a hindrance to their creativity through the acceleration of all the processes in the environment, and not least a greater burden on the biosphere. There is no question that, all in all, such an "optimization of allocation" does not even add up in economic terms, if we consider the person and her development and the society in its cooperative living together – not to mention the consequences for the ecology, i.e. for a necessary prudent harmony with the rest of nature. All too often, such decisions are not even based on short-sighted criteria of efficiency, but simply on the desire to increase power over others.

When we consider the escalating problems burdening humanity today, we see that they result from an extreme concentration of power and from economic inequality, directed and promoted by a financial network hostile to life that has degenerated into an insati-

able end in itself, instead of strengthening the network of relations between people on behalf of people. The uncoupling of the unlimited growth of monetary capital from the spatially and materially limited earth drives this mechanism forward. The liberalization of the traffic in capital has today enabled capital to force the states to support its claims to eternal growth through a doubled redistribution "from the bottom to the top:" through the flood of compound interest and through refuge from the burden of taxation. Both together have meanwhile widened the gap between the income and fortune of the few at the top and of the many below. Too little remains of the distributable, producible values to finance the community and to adequately reward joyless and unsatisfying occupational work. The resulting uprooting and lack of freedom of a growing number of people who, robbed of their dignity and the possibility of shaping their lives on their own responsibility, will and must radically demand a change.

It is necessary to build up polycentric economic structures that complement each other. Monetarily oriented market-economic institutions must be connected with civil-societal social, cultural and subsistence-economy initiatives and institutions in mutual enrichment. Parallel to this, decentralization and variance in economic, political and socio-cultural institutions should be supported by flat, transparent hierarchies within their decision-making bodies. To this end, the monopolistic power structures concentrated in a few companies must be reduced in favor of a diversity of economic enterprises borne by the market and by civil society. Their cooperative interplay must be politically, juridically and infrastructurally ensured on all levels, from the local to the intercontinental. For a complementarity of plural local, regional and intercontinental economic strategies, institutions must be created and strengthened that will institute and supervise the global framework conditions on all spatial and temporal levels. The spatial and temporal externalization of ecological, socio-economic and cultural burdens and costs must be stopped. Closed process cycles must be realized wherever no (almost) inexhaustible source is available (e.g., the sun as energy pro-

vider). A “deceleration” of economic, social and ecological processes is necessary to make regeneration cycles and creative differentiation possible. All of these processes urgently require a reform of international financial systems and flows. Unlimited monetary growth in a limited world increasingly uncouples economic processes from their finite ecological and socio-cultural foundations. The international money supply must urgently be stabilized and dynamically steered to economic activities that promote the improvement of the quality of life and global supply.

To reduce or avoid the dangers and risks of warlike conflicts, we must promote our abilities to work out conflict with reduced violence and create the preconditions to make peaceful and cooperative interplay possible and easier. To prevent a catastrophic scenario in the conflict between *Homo sapiens* and the natural environment – the destabilization of the geo-biosphere – we need an ecologization of economic processes and strategies of production.

The complete disarmament of all weapons of mass destruction (nuclear, chemical and biological), the reduction of conventional weapons, and the containment of arms trading are urgent for ethical reasons, but also for purely economic reasons. A strengthening and furthering of intercultural and interreligious dialogue and of civil-societal forces and institutions is indispensable for the successful processing and regulation of intercivilizational conflicts. Respecting the many kinds of tolerance limits of the dynamic stabilization of the geo-biosphere, of the resilience of the natural foundations of life, and of their cycles of regeneration is the precondition for surviving in the future and for peace among humankind. This must be reflected in the creation of closed economic cycles of production and materials, the minimization of ecological risks, and the internalization of ecological burden-externalization – a strategic orientation toward the paradigm of what is alive.

## References

- 1 For a more detailed version of the Manifesto, please cf. [www.vdw-ev.de/manifest](http://www.vdw-ev.de/manifest).

