

*The notion of European
identity applied to culture and
arts*



Written by Théo Majcher

As part of my internship at the *European Network of Cultural Centres* (ENCC) in Brussels, I was invited to work on some current projects of the organisation but also to work on a more personal project.

Since the beginning of my studies, I have always considered arts and culture as a key aspect of the European society. Thus, I took this experience as a good opportunity in order to express my vision and feelings about the need of this field in our present-day society. I am also extremely interested in the notion of the European identity. How can we define it, how can we improve it?

First, I started an academic research in order to collect concrete information about this notion, about what has been already said and about current and former research. However, I rapidly realised that it was not what I wanted to do.

Actually, what was deeply inspiring for me was the link I made between those three terms of culture, arts and European identity. And this link was the notion of human beings. I did not want to base this project on statistics, results of research or whatsoever. Precisely because it appeared essential that this notion of European identity cannot be something which could be concretely explained. Because it is something which is always moving, improving and developing itself thanks to people. It is something which is constantly looking for a better cohesion between people and nations. Perhaps it is a completely utopian vision. However, I do think it was a real opportunity to write a personal project on that matter. People gave me this chance, and for me what was important at that moment was to share my point of view. A positive viewpoint of a twenty year-old boy who is passionate and who is feeling concerned about the shaping of a European identity. At least, this is what European identity means for me.

In a European Union that is nowadays extremely focused on political and economic treaties this is now the time to look at the citizens it is composed by.

What was important for me in gathering together these three notions was the fact that they were all linked together. Indeed, the common society built by the EU seems to be missing. This community is, in my opinion, directly linked to the idea of identity. The aim of this research is to concentrate and encourage the togetherness of the community and thus a stronger sense of European identity. I do believe that arts and culture are key points to achieve this major aim. Because they are the root of interconnections and of dialogue and transmission of knowledge.

Thus, I am happy to present to you this personal essay which focuses on the notion of European identity in the field of arts and culture.

I wanted something alive, something which is gathering different people, which is creating a discussion and focusing on different ways of thinking. This is the reason why I chose to work with several interviews.

I worked with 9 different people. Some are working in the cultural area, some are students. They have different ages, different backgrounds but they are all inhabitants of the EU. I travelled between, France, Belgium, Denmark, Germany and Switzerland in order to meet them.

Of course, we met, we made interviews in order to create this essay, but what we did above all is talking and sharing. And this is the result of this essay, there is no general truth in it. There are only viewpoints that lead to discussions. And this is what this work is about. A great discussion in which you readers will take part in. Perhaps you will learn, perhaps you will already know or share some viewpoint. However, the main aim of this essay is obviously not to bring solutions. It is more to show that many people are feeling concerned about this question of the place of citizens within the European society. They are feeling concerned about the strength of culture and arts. Furthermore, to show to the broadest public, what the ideas of "simple" citizens are. Moreover, all this ideas and viewpoints are visions that are absolutely achievable.

First, let me introduce those 9 people to you:

Vanessa Foray and Ludivine Zambon

Jobs: Communication officer and Project manager

Place: *La Villa du Parc*, Annemasse, France

La Villa du Parc is an exhibition venue for contemporary visual arts situated in Annemasse. A small French city at the border to Switzerland.

The centre also promotes the artistic works by supporting them on both financial and technical levels.

By inviting many artists, developing a policy towards education (with lots of partnerships with schools) and organising vernissage and meeting points, the centre is a real pillar for the cultural and artistic life of the city and the region.



Vanessa (right) and Ludivine (left)

Artistic work: « Where is the wolf », Neil Raitt 2017

Lorin Rats

Place: Leuven, Belgium

Lorin studies biology at KU Leuven and is currently writing his thesis for his master degree.

Kathrin Deventer

Job: General Secretary



Place: *European Festivals Association (EFA)*, Brussels, Belgium

EFA is one of the oldest cultural networks in Europe. It is a network for arts festivals that exist for more than 65 years. It is composed by different members (individual and collective) that are all arts festivals. *EFA* is a cross disciplinary network. It also proposes further activities in order to enlarge the festival community. In this sense, *EFA* organises different trainee programmes for young festival makers and managers.

Jean-Claude Crespy

Job: Director

Place: *Alliance Française Bruxelles/Europe*, Brussels, Belgium

The *Alliance Française Bruxelles/Europe* is a European centre for French language skills. The aim is to teach French to different individuals with different levels of language. However, the teaching is always related to culture.

Culture with the language, and language for the culture. Thus, the institution is also viewed as a co-producer and a facilitator for cultural activities.

Cansu Azak

Place: Berlin, Germany

Cansu has graduated from the Goethe University (Frankfurt am Main, Germany) in Geography and English. She is going to become a teacher the next academic year.



Elena Polivtseva

Job: Communication officer

Place: *International Network for Contemporary Performing Arts (IETM)*

IETM is an international network of organisations and individual members working in the contemporary performing arts all around the world. It is one of the oldest international cultural networks. The aim is to empower the value and the place of arts and culture in the society of today through international connections and means of exchange (forums, conferences...)

Peter Hess

Place: Frankfurt am Main (Germany)

Peter is currently studying arts history at the Goethe University (Frankfurt am Main). He also has a part-time job in a museum.

Philipp Schulte

Job: Chief Executive Officer

Place: *Hessische Theater Akademie* (Frankfurt am Main)

The *Hessische Theater Akademie* is a theatre academy which proposes 11 different programs for theatre education at a university level.

It is mainly supported by the government which gives money to both theatre and students in order to initiate a real dialogue and collaboration between them.



Throughout this journey, I realised that many of the interviews agreed on same concepts regarding the shaping of a real European identity.

Thus, I would first like to emphasise on five notions which appears extremely important for people I worked with.

- A need for more diversity
- A need for more dialogue, communication and interaction
- A threatened democracy and a greater fear of nationalism
- The good time to rethink Europe
- The role and importance of the young generation

The nine participants did not meet each other in real. However, without knowing, they shared positions, they agreed, they initiated new debates and thus they cooperated and communicated.

I wanted a real dialogue for the first part of this essay. I wanted all the participants to argue and discuss on these five notions.

Then, let's start this interaction! :)

A need for more diversity

Is the shaping of a European identity possible thanks to more diversity?

Indeed, in this process, it appears extremely important to accept this diversity. Europe is a diverse continent. First, geographically speaking because it is huge and vast and also because of all the different cultures it is composed by.

The most important thing we have to do is to accept this diversity. This identity will be possible when people will understand there are different identities.

As Philipp Schulte said: *"I don't think that one European identity exists but different identities exist."* By accepting all the different cultures we would be stronger and more efficient.

"There are traditions and ways of doing something or not doing something" (Cansu Azak).

The word *"traditions"* has a very conducive meaning in this context. Indeed, traditions are habits which are part of the culture and often linked to the past. There are symbols and they are strong. They can totally help us and we need to protect them.

The acceptance of all these differences would help us in the shaping of a European identity and thus help us to solve some problems. *"I don't think that as one nation we can really solve problems"*. Here Lorin Rats is emphasising a relevant point of the need of an identity.

The latter would be found in an important movement of cohesion, and this cohesion would be deeply beneficial for all the European countries. *"The strength of Europe is the diversity"* Lorin adds. I do think it is essential to see this diversity as a strength. A strength in which we need to trust.

This acceptance is also a way to understand and define what the identity of each country is and thus European identity. Indeed as Jean-Claude Crespy noted: *"There is no identity outside people who perceive your identity. No identity without the other."* This is a relevant vision because the identity is also built and created by the comprehension of the other and how people are perceiving a foreign country. Try to identify yourself comparing to this country, sharing this culture with your own one. For me, this is also a part of the European identity.

In the field of arts and culture, this diversity is also essential. Arts offer this possibility to think differently about one precise thing. This is a permanent open space where people can add their point of view and their feelings.

“Arts and culture can definitely create a space, a space where differences can coexist. Contemporary arts have this capacity to make people more open minded to accept diversity around them.” (Elena Polivtseva)

Arts are pillars in the development of new kinds of relationships.

Relationships between people, between minds... This is the perfect place to express personal and common ideas. The place where personal and common vision can also intersect. In the field of an identity, arts are where people give a part of themselves to the others. I do think it is important to see this identity in the unification between different ways of thinking and between different human-beings. Arts offers the possibility for everybody to share the same value. Everything needs to be considered because everything could have an importance. Thus, step by step, everybody is giving appreciation, members of the audience or artists. Elena Polivtseva, explains that people can become more open minded. Being more open minded helps us to accept the others and thus understand that all together we would be able to build a European society closer to citizens and human-beings.

“Arts allow people not to see the same things and let them become aware of that”, Vanessa Foray said. Indeed, arts also help us to accept those different ways of thinking regarding society.

Moreover, by saying that, Vanessa Foray is introducing the next concept. In order to be able to accept this diversity it is also important to impulse and create dialogue between people and cultures. Arts play another very important role here.

A need for more dialogue, communication and interaction

In the frame of the European identity, the term identity defines a common sense, something which could be shared. Culture and arts seem to be the best place to share, to discuss, to interact between each other and thus to learn from each other. All those values are key points in the shaping and the research of a European identity. Indeed, the diversity of the content cannot be considered and accepted without concrete forms of sharing. Those forms could be simple dialogues between people with different nationalities, who travelled a lot and interacted with many people, arguing on an artistic work...

“It could be interesting if every people between 16 and 20 years old have access to a funding which would give them the possibility to travel. Of course, certain people would just go to Prague in order to buy cheap alcohol but at least they would meet new people. I don’t care, even that is a cultural experience!” (Philipp Schulte).

This is a relevant statement pointed out by Philipp Schulte. First, he focuses on the importance of travelling in the concept of communication and interaction. He is also mentioning the need of a real interaction it means by travelling and thus being part of another culture and by meeting new people in real in order to exchange, discuss and argue. All of these processes are key pillars in the greater dialogue we need. Every human-being bears more in mind a real human experience rather than something they heard, they listened to or watched.

As Philipp Schulte says, although there is perhaps a lack of state funding in order to help young people to travel and discover people and cultures in reality, there is a great opportunity to travel in Europe when you are European.

"I do feel European. Being able to have the freedom to really communicate with European people, have the freedom to travel. With the German passport you can go everywhere."
(Cansu Azak)

"I really enjoy the possibility to travel without passport and meeting other people from other places." (Peter Hess)

Those two statements are extremely important because they focus on concrete things. When you are European, it is easy to travel bureaucratically speaking.

Cansu Azak also emphasises something else. The fact that you can travel everywhere with the German passport. Indeed, as a European it appears easy to travel and not only in Europe. This is also an interesting point because it shows how this sense of European identity (culturally speaking) could be spread all around the world. And this is a way to improve and express this identity, showing to other people what a European is. What it is but also show in which sense European people are diverse. Indeed, a German would perhaps not act like a French during his/her trip.

In this concept of interaction and dialogue we also have to bear in mind, the importance of relationships. According to Jean-Claude Crespy the European identity is *"composed by habitus, something you can share, you can create thanks to relationships."* This statement means that there is no identity without habits. Habits are composed by all human-beings but above all by human-beings who are acting together. Those who are sharing, who are giving part of themselves to the other. In that sense, communication and interaction play a great role. Indeed, they initiate and are the roots of habits and habitus, which are key pillars of the European identity. We can find those communicative behaviours in for instance great European cultural events, but also in political events. As soon as people can meet, express and discuss, there is a dialogue. Habits are necessarily created by the meeting of different people.

Moreover, I would like to emphasise the fact that the ability to create those communication forms have to be initiated by people. In other words, it is us, who need to have the will to change things for progress in every aspect of life. I do want to share with you what Kathrin said to me during her interview: *“I think that everybody can choose to make a difference, for your own life, for somebody else and thus, bit by bit, this group will increase and a more open-minded one will emerge. A society of movement, which will connect people rather than divide them.”* I directly found this sentence, first interesting but also extremely deep. Here Kathrin pointed out something extremely relevant. Of course, there are lots of new things which could be done and achieved. In particular, at a political level or institutional level but we deeply need to bear in mind that we as people and human-beings are the roots of change. What is worthy in Kathrin’s statement, is the fact that she does not see those steps forward through great events such as demonstration or whatever. No, it starts from tiny things in the daily life and above all from the will of people. And those things are small but really intense and influential. They reveal the intensity of the person and thus in a sense his/her identity. At least a part of the identity. It brings another aspect to our purpose of the European identity. Identity is also something extremely personal and belongs to the person as a human-being. We cannot speak about European identity without thinking about this notion of different people composed by different personal identities. This is how it works, the sharing of several identities, the interaction and thus step by step the shaping of a European identity, at least the meeting between lots of identities. Dialogue and communication are cultural key points. Thus, cultural behaviours have a great importance in the concept of the European identity.

Furthermore, it is easy to find this sense of dialogue and interaction in the field of arts. This is another type of dialogue, sometimes deeper, or simply with another meaning. *“Artistic practices can bring some confidence, some dialogue and more understanding between people.”* (Elena Polivtseva) In the artistic practices, people are developing other parts of themselves and also using other tools of dialogue and other types of languages. It can be voices, but also bodies or just a glance... Being part of artistic practices allows people to discover more of themselves. A deeper language is engaged and let people interact differently. Identity is about sharing and arts bring this sensibility of a new manner to share. I do think that this sensibility and this notion of the abstract is important in the process of identity. Indeed, there is also this abstraction in the concept of identity.

“Arts let people getting contact to each other and think about a common thing.”
(Philipp Schulte)

“Art is a tool to communicate with other people without languages and is also a means to transfer information without writing down.” (Peter Hess)

In order to interpret and explain those two statements I would like to share with you a personal experience. As I was in Frankfurt (Germany) in order to interview some people, I went to the theatre with some German friends. The play was *Medusa*. Of course that was a classic play in German, thus it was difficult for me to understand everything. However, it was a great artistic experience which testimonies of the power of arts. That was a deep and strong play in which the stage design and the commitment of actors were outstanding. It was difficult to get all the information through the text because of the foreign language, however, bodies on the stage, expressions on faces showed such a lot of the text. And what was also amazing and intense, was the discussions we had after the performance. That was the perfect description of the power of arts in telling and sharing things without languages. And all together, we shared our point of view but above all our feelings, in which sense we were touched. During two hours, we all focused on the same thing but by seeing different things. We gave a part of ourselves, thus a part of our personal identity. A deeper language was engaged. A human language connected to feelings and sensibility. We all let it go and enjoyed a common moment. We were people from different countries but we exchanged and discussed thanks to those other forms of dialogue and we tried to make some connections between the play and our European society. Indeed, we are part of a European society and perhaps there is a lack of consciousness about it which does not help in the shaping of a European identity.

A threatened democracy and a greater fear of nationalism

In recent years, one of the most important word in the field and the question of the future of Europe, is the word “Eurosceptic”. Of course, it implies a political dimension but also a cultural one. And I think that this ‘movement’ has an impact on the notion of European identity. Indeed, it is easy to understand that people who do not trust in the European project, will not believe in a common identity.

With all these nationalistic movements, the principle of democracy seems to be threatened. *“Democracy is not possible without plurality and without listening to people. Arts help people to reflect such a space.” (Elena Polivtseva)*. This statement emphasises the fact that arts initiate a more open-minded dialogue.

As Elena is saying a “*space* “ where people are able to accept more. More plurality, diversity, cohesion, communities... Aspects and values which are real pillars in the European project. As Kathrin says “*We are afraid of results of elections because of the fear of nationalism.*” At that moment of the European history, it is difficult to think about identity or whatever because there is this fear of the end of what the European project was. In that sense, it is perhaps the right moment to think about a “new” Europe and create something closer to citizens.

“If we could show what all the EU offers, there would be less nationalist movements. “

(Peter Hess)

What Peter says is interesting because it focuses on one of the main reasons of nationalism. The fact that people do not really know what the EU corresponds to. In order to have an EU with citizens who are feeling more concerned by the latter, it is now time to redefine it and think in another way.

The right time to rethink Europe

The lack of consciousness regarding the principle of European identity, is perhaps due to a lack of awareness of Europe. Perhaps it is also time to rethink the EU. And thus, in that frame, people would feel more concerned by the latter and would consider it differently.

“*We have to make people aware of what Europe is, to understand this sense of European identity. We have to speak to them and to make them understand what the benefits of the EU and feeling European are.*” (Cansu Azak)

The main goal is trying to let people think they have a power and a weight in the European process. It will lead to a change of behaviour from citizens regarding Europe. According to Lorin: “*with more power to citizens, we will be able to build a real community*”. This a relevant statement which emphasises the general idea. Indeed, citizens deeply have to feel that power in order to act and start thinking together. The power they have as human-beings and as citizens. Politically speaking, I do think it is important for people to have the possibility to recognise themselves, in terms of ideas, in a European party. To feel that they can take part in political and ideological viewpoint as far as the EU is concerned. I also agree with Cansu’s vision on that purpose: “*In the voting process, there is a lack of participation because people don’t trust and don’t believe that they could really have an impact on the society. However, if the institutions would make citizens feel that they are being heard and respected and related to their needs more often, the latter would be more volunteer and active in European society.*”

Here, she focuses on another aspect, the fact that it is now time to make people exist. European citizens need to feel that they are taken into account in the European process. They want to be respected and heard. It would initiate more cultural ties around the notion of Europe. Something in which people trust and want to defend because they are European citizens.

“This feeling of links for other countries should come from certain activities and not from strict guidelines made by policy makers.” (Elena Polivtseva)

Links between people and countries are also possible thanks to *“certain activities”*. Artistic practices are also a great means. In a time of the rethink of Europe, what policy makers should have done, is trying to make the empowerment of artistic cooperation more possible and to strengthen European cultural networks. To link people by their creativity and artistic sensibility is the key pillar of the future of Europe.

The role and importance of new generations

Nowadays, the digital technologies play a great role in our daily life. The young generation is extremely connected to each other and extremely connected to lots of international and European events. This is an important cultural fact and era in the shaping of a European identity. Actually, it is not unusual for young people to travel a lot in order to be part of big European events such as festivals. People from different nationalities and different backgrounds can meet, talk and share. This is cultural experience, which makes this generation aware of the existence of a European community. As Philip Schultz says *“A generation which would never go back to a national identity.”* This European cultural consciousness is totally part of this generation.

When I was a student at Cardiff University, it was the time of the Brexit referendum. I worked with students as a French language assistant and I had conversations about the Brexit with them. And what was often pointed out was the conflict between them and their grandparents. For them, it was so important to stay in the EU because they felt European and they had friends all over Europe. They did not share the nationalist point of view of the seniors.

Exchange programs, such as Erasmus strengthen the will for discovering other cultures and also the European consciousness. *“All these things that Europe makes possible, for example Erasmus brings people to each other.”* (Lorin Rats) Erasmus allows people to discover and share memories with other European people.

Another important fact is the use of social networks. By using them, people can get into contact with each other, can meet and can participate to events. Things that link people to each other. Thus they create an identity without knowing it. And this is extremely important. *“It is possible to get to know all other people, for instance with the help of Facebook.”*
(Peter Hess)

For the second part of this essay, I would like to analyse two of the statements of each of my partners. Indeed, they all gave me lots of content and I deeply would like to share them in this essay. I do not want to say a lot about these statements because they are open and it is also important to let you readers think about that. I will share what I think but the most conducive is just to make your own opinion.

Elena Polivtseva

“I don’t think that arts have to improve themselves in order to play certain roles. Culture is not there to be an instrument of anything, especially of any political projects.”

This statement is deeply interesting. Indeed, culture and arts are already performant weapons. It is unnecessary and not possible for them to be improved. They have their own impact on society. A huge one because they can tackle so much. People receive what they watch, listen to or perform. It goes beyond only an information or a statement. Arts and culture allow people to express what they think. They do not have to be linked to any political purpose.

“Arts should be less self-referential, meaning more open to different communities.”

Unfortunately, it is difficult to say that in the present-day society, lots of different communities take part in artistic and cultural events. In the process of creating a European identity and with a strong emphasis of arts and culture in that process, this is perhaps the moment to try to reach other audiences. Of course lots of effort is already made and I have no concrete solution to propose but I do think it is important to empower contemporary artistic works and also to think intelligently. Especially, in the time of the expansion of new technologies, digital devices could be linked to arts and thus be presented in another way. Referring to this idea, I can draw a parallel with the project *I love transmedia* launched by *La gaité lyrique* in Paris. I experienced a whole week-end of artistic and cultural experiences through digital arts. As part of my course of sociology, I analysed the participation process and the audiences. I was positively surprised to meet lots of families, and people who were not used to come to such places. I asked them why? And the answer was quick and easy. Because of the digital aspect.

Technology is now part of the daily life and thus it is easier for the people to recognise themselves. They feel in a secure area. And thus, they are visiting an important *parisien* cultural and artistic place. They had a look at the program and hopefully will come again. It is a smart way to democratise arts.

Philipp Schulte

“Theatre is something which provides different means. Language is one of them.”

Philipp focuses on the power of theatre here. Of course the power comes from the language. But this is only one aspect amongst many others. Theatre goes beyond and allows people to experience many other things. It is a place where both, actors and audience express a part of their identity. They are sharing so many things and are experiencing something at one moment all together. This is beautiful and so important!

“Arts could help us to learn how to deal with things we can’t deal with.”

It emphasises Philipp’s first statement. The fact that arts have a power that no other thing has. The power of arts to let you think about things you cannot deal with influences daily life. Sometimes it could be in a tough and hard way, sometimes in a soft one. You can dream about something, you can cry, you can have difficulties to sleep after a play. Your identity is touched and you can share that with other identities. This sharing of identities is the most expressive in artistic practices.

Peter Hess

“I feel as somebody who lives in Germany but who is part of a greater part.”

Peter tackles a relevant aspect. One has to be aware of the existence of the other in order to think in a European perspective. It is not possible to be self-centred if you want to feel the European identity. This is the first step of the shaping of a European identity. Peter is not thinking in terms of nationalities but in terms of geography. He is living in a place but he knows that there are lots of other places with lots of other fabulous people.

“Everybody can be part of a bigger identity because every individual is different.”

Everybody has his/her own identity, and there is a place for each member of the society. For each identity. All those identities are unique and important and part of the European identity, too.

Cansu Azak

“We always have to look how society develops itself but also have to keep in mind that you can’t immediately change the institutions and the system in which a society is living.”

It is conducive to insist on the fact that it is not possible to change a system and a society immediately. It needs to be step by step. And I think in that process the most important aspect is to be aware that a change is needed. It would be a great starting point.

“Human being would even feel more respected with a real voice.”

I can draw a parallel with what I would like to call the first step of the change here. We need to have a society which is feeling concerned by the situation. For that reason, we have to rethink things in order to let people have the feeling to have a real voice. That they are heard. Perhaps in an easier way. Arts and culture do have a role to play in that purpose.

Lorin Rats

“I see the EU as a very essential thing in our life.”

What is interesting here, is the word « essential ». Indeed by using it, Lorin reveals that the EU is a part of himself. He grew up with it and he is aware of its role and importance. It emphasises another thing in which I trust in. I do believe in my generation. We have this sensibility and sensitivity regarding Europe.

We are people who like to travel abroad in order to meet other people and discover other cultures. All together, we are fighting for this European identity.

“Art can help in making that identity which is necessary. Art is important in asking critical questions.”

The parallel between the notion of identity and the need to ask critical question is deeply relevant. In order to build this feeling of identity, it is effective to rethink the purpose of the EU by asking critical questions. Those questions are present in arts and that makes them real key pillars in that process.

Kathrin Deventer

“We have to always be attentive and careful and responsible in the use of our time, of our money, not just in France where there are elections or just in Turkey where there is a crisis but on a daily level. It starts with your own life, your own neighbour, your own difference you can make to this world and to this life. I would always start with the individual level.”

This wonderful statement insists on something which is extremely essential to me: human-beings and individuals. We all have a great role to play, we all have a deep voice, because we are all human-beings. Different individuals with different pasts, presents, characters. However, we have to be aware of our own worth and know that only by living on our own way we are important for the society.

“Art has to do with us and our perception of life. As people, as human-beings. It allows ourselves to look at things that let us grow and let us learn.”

According to Kathrin, everything starts with the individual level. Art is the best means to allow people to develop themselves. To learn and discover. This energy of individuals and arts are essential in the shaping of a common identity.

Vanessa Foray and Ludivine Zambon

“Arts bring innovative viewpoints and the possibility of a new dialogue. Maybe political leaders lack of creativity. We could initiate a new dialogue by listening to the voice of the artists and then try to integrate the artist on the political stage.”

Vanessa and Ludivine are here pointing out an important fact. The dialogue between political leaders and artists or cultural managers. How it is possible to argue with them. With more dialogue, it would be easier to integrate arts and culture in the political landscape. In that case, arts and culture would be more considered by decision-makers and thus be a priority in the European agenda.

“Arts allow us to develop our own critical sense. Some artistic work could be a mirror of ourselves, of society, of the others. In arts you can find people who share your own feelings.”

Once again, they emphasise on the personal development through the arts. Moreover, they also highlight the fact that arts are also the place where you can get to know each other. Or get to know yourself thanks to each other. It is the place where people can experience and share. The common identity is also about spreading different identities.

Jean-Claude Crespy

“Europe is our natural place of fulfilment. Here we created stories with our way of thinking.”

Culturally speaking, one needs to bear in mind the importance of heritage. Heritage is created by history. Jean-Claude mentions that in his statement since he focuses on the role of history in our European identity. All what happened to Europe in the past is now linked to all of the European citizens. There is also a historical identity in the European identity. An identity that we cannot change and which is part of ourselves. A history which leads to all what we are today.

“Arts and culture are at the centre of civilisation and human-beings. People who do not have arts in their life are not totally human. The creative activity is a way to challenge all the life intensity at every moment.”

According to Jean-Claude, art goes far beyond simple practices. It is part of the individual. One requires the creativity in order to be able to challenge life. Art helps us to be human and to be able to make some statements of our lives. With arts, we are always developing ourselves because it can challenge many things very quickly. Arts and culture are required in this European identity. Actually, just like arts, the identity is fluctuating.

To conclude, what is important to remember, is the fact that the concept of European identity goes beyond something you can reach, analyse, and then abandon. In this notion, there is something which is constantly creating itself. Because of all the human-beings, the European society is composed by. Culture and arts of course have a role to play in this path towards a common identity because they are always there. They are present in the daily life and are helping everywhere.

What we need to do is to trust in people, trust in the other and accept him. And thus, without knowing it, we will create this European identity.

I would like to say thank you to the ENCC's team. They helped me a lot with this project, which was really important for me.

Thanks to all the participants and all the readers.

I hope this reading will give you the will to commit yourself in different projects. As far as I am concerned, meeting all this passionate and devoted people was intense and worthy. I am 20 years old, and I want to work in this field and sustain the place of arts and culture in Europe. It is so pleasant to see all this passion in the eyes of those I will work with in a few years.

Long life to arts and culture, pillars of our society!