

CELEBRATING CONNECTEDNESS - TOWARDS A MAY 9 MOVEMENT - JEFF FOUNTAIN

1. Robert Schuman: 'a community of peoples deeply rooted in basic Christian values'

The spirit of populism: 'me first', 'my country first'

Healthy identity: *autonomy & connectedness*

Individuals - relational beings, belonging to families, communities, nations...

National celebrations:

France - Bastille Day, German - Unification Day, Netherlands - Koningsdag...

Yet no nation is fully independent; *interdependent, connected, member of the European family of nations*

2.

How to encourage an awareness of our *interdependence*?

'Too far from my bed?'

We love: *Italian pizzas, German cars, Swedish furniture, Norwegian salmon, Belgian beers, Swiss chocolate, Dutch cheese, Irish rock bands, Spanish wines, French cuisine, British detectives...*

We enjoy vacations on: *Austrian ski slopes, Norwegian fjords, Croatian coastline, Portuguese beaches, Finnish saunas, Hungarian hot baths ... visiting cities like London, Rome, Paris, Amsterdam, Berlin...*

3. We benefit from: *Europe's fast rail networks, Europe's motorway systems, Europe's air traffic connections, Europe's open borders*

We enjoy: *Europe's castles and palaces, Europe's rivers and canals, Europe's cathedrals and churches, Europe's mountains and valleys...*

We are enriched by: *Europe's art and music, literature and theatre, history and culture..*

We are privileged with: *Europe's political stability, Europe's rule of law, Europe's values of equality, human dignity, freedom and human rights*

4. Yet we are tempted to take this for granted, to look after ourselves first, to say 'our country first'...

But we are better people when we seek the welfare of others first.

We are better nations when we seek the common good.

This is what Schuman called '*the spirit of Europe*'

So...

5. Why not *a day to celebrate our connectedness,*

to *reflect on belonging* to the European family of nations,

to *express gratitude for living* in this special region of the world?

An *Interdependence Day!*

Actually, there is such a day. It's *Europe Day, May 9.*

One of Europe's best kept secrets...?

6. • A bottom-up, grass-roots, people's movement,

• decentralised, non-political, non-religious

• expressed at local, national and European levels



7. Ideas for local celebration:

- *progressive dinner* with different national foods (musical themes - discussions about places you want to visit one day...)
- *wine and cheese evening* with friends/colleagues
- *beer* from different countries
- *cafés and restaurants* - *Europe Day* theme
- *musical concert*
- film evenings
- local radio programmes
- flash mobs in stations, malls - *Ode to Joy/churches, youth groups, clubs, students*
- ecumenical vespers, e.g. Utrecht Dom/Cathedrals...

8. Ideas for national celebrations:

- **consultations:**
- *what kind of Europe? walls or bridges?*
- *living with differences*
- *who won the peace? (the Schuman story)*
- *What would you like to say to our politicians?*
- *foundations for unity with diversity?*
- *specific challenges: migration / trafficking / environment / populism...*
- *secularism, spirituality and sustainability*
- *We say 'yes' to Europe*

9. Ideas for national celebrations:

- op-ed articles
- *radio & tv programmes*
- *prayer day for Europe*
- *evangelism: the message that changed Europe - 'love, truth and justice'*

- *jog memories, stir conscience, awaken imagination!*

10. Ideas for European celebrations:

- *State of Europe Forum* (www.stateofeuropeforum.eu)
- *contribute to Brussels events?*

Coming soon: a place for ideas and resources:

www.may9.eu

