



COMMON UNDERSTANDING

We need a narrative which connects us as Europeans. In contrast to national narratives it can hardly be based on a shared language, historical events, culture, religious ties etc. since these features are very diverse across the EU and Europe. However, the fact that we all share certain values can provide a narrative. We want European values to be the common ground to foster a European identity. This European identity shall not replace but complement other identities e. g. national identities.

We don't want European values to be exclusive; they shouldn't be a tool to define the borders of Europe in order to keep "others" out of the EU. We need to get over an exclusive interpretation of European values. All these values could principally be acknowledged everywhere. The fact that all EU member states share these values and that the EU refers to shared values gives them a European dimension. No country can belong to the EU if it doesn't recognise these values. Also no citizen can belong to the European community she/ he doesn't recognise these values.

A certain value is used in very different ways even contradicting ways. As a consequence there are conflicting interpretations of certain values, in other words: 'the translation into practice' of a value can be very different. We need to make sure that we come to the core of these conflicting interpretations of certain values.

We want to be ready for an open debate and want to provide an open learning space. We need to accept that there are different ways of interpretation and different ways of putting values into practice as Europe is diverse. We commit ourselves to open-mindedness with respect to the common base and each other's opinions and respect for diversity!

National differences may affect our way to develop methods. We may not need different material for each country, but we do need to be prepared for different answers and reactions to our methods in each country.