



The acceleration of worldwide exchange processes affects goods and people. Cultural value systems also vary their area of application among people – and to a lesser extent with goods – when they are confronted with different values. The import and export of expertise entailing the transfer of groups of people who possess different, culturally determined understandings of values and law is not taken into account by the standardized benchmark of price in the global marketplace. The coexistence of different value communities requires, however, language as a means of exchange for a mutual understanding of the other. To the extent that values ultimately manifest themselves in action, and therefore always culminate in the form of a political question, the dialog gauges itself according to the common denominator of agreement on the cultures of the dialog.

The European tradition can provide a valuable contribution to this dialog. In Europe, there is a diversity of cultural identity found in a small area. At the same time, the development of specifically European thought and discussion paradigms that, against the background of European migrations, shape world views up until today. In the European process of enlightenment, a concept of thinking that is characteristic of Europe developed that acts under the assumption of the critical, self-reflecting consciousness of the individual and establishes the dialog as an open process, one that is oriented toward the object, for a collective epistemic process. For this reason, the approach of the enlightenment makes a culture of dialog available even beyond Europe. Cognizant of the fact that the exterior views that look upon Europe always serve to form the self-image of the Europeans and their value systems, it becomes possible to reach an intercultural understanding of commonalities and differences in cultures of thought and dialog.

Oftentimes, the central role of language as a medium is presupposed for this type of understanding and for understanding in general with an implicitness that causes one to forget that language forms and deforms content, and therefore, time and again, determines

realities. For this reason, based on the insight that different contents be subsumed under one concept, it does not suffice that we settle on one shared content and limit meaning; rather, it is especially true for the intercultural dialog that a feeling for the linguistic connotations in other languages be developed and the diversity of meaning and associative links that results from this variety of linguistic connotations be preserved. The emotionally formed and stored memories in the connotations of a concept point – beyond the individual – to a cultural, linguistically conceived memory out of which the value system of a culture is formed.

The reflection of dialog and language provides the point of departure for the discussion about the specifics of the universe of values in Europe and the confrontation of value systems that differ in their characteristic way of thinking within our cooperative project “Worlds of Values” (*“Wertewelten”*). In the framework of the project, the tolerant interaction with the values of other cultures will be dealt with not only as an academic inquiry that serves as an examination of one’s own culture but also it will allow us to experience that tolerant interaction, one that reaches beyond one’s own understanding of values. It is only against the historical background of various cultures, a background that is necessary for the conception of the complex contexts in which values and the realization of them arise, that points of convergence – but also potential divisions – between the cultural groups can be identified without monolithically confronting their systems. In this way, differences for concerted, responsible action can be harnessed.

To this end, the project that is being funded by the Ministry of Science, Research and the Arts envisages the creation of a new network of renowned universities in the most diverse cultural areas. Within this network, the overarching subject of communities of values requires interdisciplinary collaboration between the humanities and the cultural sciences – especially the legal sciences. Furthermore, representatives of the economic sciences will be included in the discussion in order to supplement the differing perspectives on the concept of the value with the less unclear aspect of the material. While literature provides models for cultural thought paradigms without subjecting them, in a generalizing manner, to the arbitrariness of theoretical deliberations, the legal sciences concern themselves with systems of rules that organize cohabitation and defend as well as alter values.

In cooperation with the Franco-German Institute in Ludwigsburg, under the direction of Prof. Dr. Frank Baasner, the University of Tübingen has organized two multi-day colloquia per year in which the partners in the project will be able to together debate questions regarding a thematic area. The participants are asked to present the findings that result from the colloquia in contributions written from their own cultural perspective and then published in an anthology of articles. Furthermore, young academics will be incorporated into the network and supported by means of scholarships. First and foremost, however, young diplomats and doctoral candidates should introduce their ideas and questions in the dialog. The first colloquium was held in mid-November at the University of Tübingen and treated a question of fundamental importance to the thematic area, namely, the possibilities of realizing the dialog. Further workshops are planned at the different locations of the partners in the project in order to facilitate a real change in the perspective and a true cultural exchange. The project is coordinated by Prof. Dr. Jürgen Wertheimer of the German Seminar at the University of Tübingen who is working in cooperation with Prof. Dr. Heinz-Dieter Assmann of the Faculty of Law of the University of Tübingen and Prof. Dr. Frank Baasner from the Deutsch-Französisch Institut in Ludwigsburg.

Prof. Dr. Heinz-Dieter Assmann
Juristische Fakultät
Wilhelmstr. 7 | 72074 Tübingen
Tel: 07071/29-72696

Prof. Dr. Frank Baasner
Deutsch-Französisches Institut
Asperger Str. 24 | 71634 Ludwigsburg
Tel: 07141/9303 0

Prof. Dr. Jürgen Wertheimer
Deutsches Seminar
Wilhelmstr. 50 | 72074 Tübingen
Tel: 07071/29-78441