

Policy Perspectives

International Policy Fellowships Program • 2006



Islam and Tolerance in Wider Europe

- Europe's Transforming Identity
- Ethnic Relations in the Caucasus
- Political Ideology and Religious Tolerance in Russia
- Political Identity and Human Rights in Turkey
- Islam and Policy in Central Europe
- Lessons from the Post-War Balkans

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Policy Perspectives
**Islam and Tolerance
in Wider Europe**

Europe's Transforming Identity

What Values for Europe?

Michael Emerson

Pages:18-24
June 2006

Collected articles available at:
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What Values for Europe?

Michael Emerson

This is not to compete with Moses, whose Ten Commandments addressed the domain of personal morality and have earned the respect of Christians and Muslims alike. Here the concern is for the values and system of the European public domain. Nor does the present contribution claim originality, since it is based on the content of the draft European Constitution.¹ But the European Union would do well to follow the example of the universally honored prophet in offering a clear, concise presentation of message. The Constitution was meant to do this, but its ten commandments are to be found literally all over the place in the 481-page draft, which is indeed more of a bible, open to various interpretations. To be carved into a tablet of stone, brevity is required:

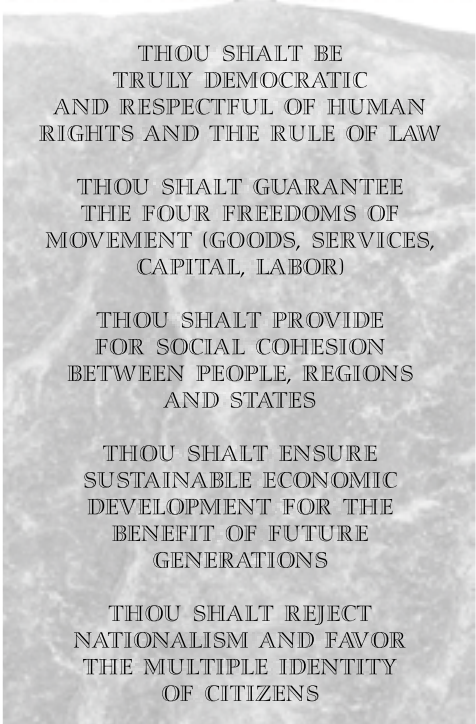
The Ten Commandments of the European Union

The ten commandments set out herewith are an entirely Euro-centric personal attempt to capture what currently seem to be the values and ideals of the European Union. This of course does not imply that the system of EU values is better than others, simply that these values are all either explicit or implicit somewhere in the draft Constitution.

The European Union considers itself to be values-based and driven. Undoubtedly the dominant gravitational force on

Michael Emerson, IPF Group Advisor for the Wider Europe working group, is Senior Research Fellow at the Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS) in Brussels. From 1991–1996 he served as European Union Ambassador to Russia.

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THOU SHALT BE
TRULY DEMOCRATIC
AND RESPECTFUL OF HUMAN
RIGHTS AND THE RULE OF LAW

THOU SHALT GUARANTEE
THE FOUR FREEDOMS OF
MOVEMENT (GOODS, SERVICES,
CAPITAL, LABOR)

THOU SHALT PROVIDE
FOR SOCIAL COHESION
BETWEEN PEOPLE, REGIONS
AND STATES

THOU SHALT ENSURE
SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT FOR THE
BENEFIT OF FUTURE
GENERATIONS

THOU SHALT REJECT
NATIONALISM AND FAVOR
THE MULTIPLE IDENTITY
OF CITIZENS

the European continent, the EU has quite surprisingly become the world's most powerful magnet, with strict conditions for membership based on values that have transformed the periphery in line with the model of the center. Former communist states in Central and Eastern Europe have looked to the EU as the fastest and surest way of achieving the transition into the modern world of liberal democracy and open society. Yet the EU draft Constitution was rejected in the May 2005 referenda in France and the Netherlands. The negotiation of the draft by an impressive constituent assembly was still a major achievement, and its rejection in the referenda was for a host of reasons. But were some of these reasons signaling rejection of some of the proclaimed values? To this we return later.

The draft Constitution devoted its Article 1–2 explicitly to ‘The Union’s Values.’ But this turns out in any case to be a disappointing text, with a whole dictionary of words, as follows:

The Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. These values are common to the Member States in a society in which pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between men and women prevail.

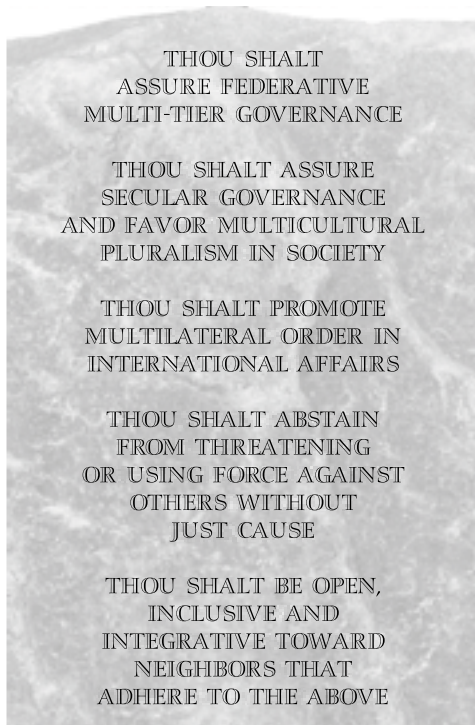
Values of the EU vis-à-vis the other global powers

Let us go through the draft Constitution articles briefly, one by one, and consider how the other global actors—the United States, Russia and China—rank by the same value-

based criteria. This could be a guide to the possibilities for harmonious foreign policy, or to the difficulties that will have to be managed.

The Preamble to the draft Constitution starts by clearly marking out commandment 1 about *democracy, human rights and the rule of law*. Here the US is on the same page. Russia, as Council of Europe member, should also be on the same page, but in practice it is currently de-democratizing and performing poorly on the rule of law. China makes no pretence to being a Western democracy.

The four freedoms of movement (commandment 2), are provided under Article III-130 of the draft Constitution. The US is on the same page again. Russia and China would say the same, but in Russia there remain some residual restrictions—such



as the *propiska* system of residence registration—on the freedom to choose where to reside.

Social cohesion, whether it be economic, social and territorial (commandment 3), can be pulled out of Article 1–3. The US, Russia and China would all say they provide for social cohesion. The US certainly has a more austere regime of social security and higher interpersonal inequality, but would argue that the EU on the other hand has an unsustainably heavy system, and will therefore converge more toward that of the US in due course. Russia's system of social security, be it at the interpersonal or interregional levels, is in a state of virtual ruin. For China the phenomenal rate of economic growth is the mechanism for lifting people out of poverty.

Sustainable economic development for the benefit of future generations (commandment 4) comes from Article 1–3. In practice the Kyoto protocol represents the EU's leading contribution for trying to save the world from global warming. Russia has signed on to this. But the US has famously rejected it, while continuing to be world's most extravagant CO₂ polluter. China cites the need for economic catch-up as the reason not to join Kyoto at present.

The abhorrence of nationalism (commandment 5) is implicit in the Preamble of the draft Constitution, where it emphasizes the need to overcome bitter experiences of the past and look forward to a common destiny while remaining proud of national identities. This is reinforced in Article 1–2 which underlines tolerance, non-discrimination and pluralism; and in Article 1–10 which is explicit about citizenship of the Union complementing national citizenship. Nationalism becomes worrying when it invokes patriotism

to the point of justifying intolerant discrimination at home and threatening policies abroad. Post-9/11, the patriotic political discourse in the US has registered a distinctly nationalistic tone, but this is quite mild compared to Russian or Chinese nationalistic discourse.

Multi-tier governance (commandment 6) is explicit in Title III with its detailed provisions governing the distribution of competences between EU and member states—between the exclusive competences of the Union, shared competences and those where

the Union is only providing coordinating or complementary action. This is reinforced in Article 1–11, which enunciates the principle of subsidiarity. The US is, for its part, one of the classic federal democracies. Russia, on the other hand, is currently de-federalizing, as part of its de-democratizing tendency. China can be considered as tending toward an asymmetric federation, with a variety of regimes, from the extreme case of Hong Kong to the substantial degree of autonomy of many provinces.

Secular governance and multiculturalism (commandment 7) seem to flow from the reference to pluralism in Article 1–2, elaborated in the preamble and inspired by the cultural, religious and humanist inheritance of Europe. The debate during the Convention was far more explicit, with serious tensions over whether there should be references to God or Christianity. The Pope himself intervened, strongly supported by several de-

During the debate on the Convention the Pope himself intervened in support of references to God or Christianity. However, support for uncompromisingly secular governance prevailed.

voutly Catholic states, including Poland. However the weight of opinion in favor of uncompromisingly secular governance and not referring to just one religion prevailed. Turkey's candidature will be the real test, with ominous indications from leading politicians in Germany, France and Austria that would exclude Turkey from full membership. Meanwhile the ethno-religious violence of 2005, from suicide bombings in London to the burning banlieues of Paris, convince most Europeans that they must try harder to make a success of multiculturalism. Everyone except far-right sympathizers understand that the immigrant communities will never return home. The US is arguably succeeding better at multiculturalism than the EU, but its secularism is slightly colored by the apparent political influence of Christian evangelist movements. Russia is certainly secular and substantially multicultural, but the relative harmony between mainstream Russia and the Volga Muslim communities stands in contrast to the deepening conflicts and ungovernability of the Northern Caucasus. China is officially secular and multicultural, but Tibet exemplifies authoritarian rather than democratic multiculturalism.

Multilateralism (commandment 8) is explicitly endorsed by the European Security Strategy adopted in 2003/4, while the Constitution in Article I-3 commits to the strict observance and development of international law. The US is clearly resistant to any multilateral legal encroachments on the sovereignty of Congress. Russia's idea of the multilateral order is strongly related to its role as permanent member of the UN Security Council, giving its exceptional diplomatic leverage to require consensus on given issues. Yet Russia's role in the OSCE and Council of Europe reveals its disinterest in values-based multilateralism. China's position is similar to that of Russia.

Commandment 9 about *the use of force* is not explicit in the texts. There is a normatively neutral remark in the European Security Strategy: "we need to develop a strategic culture that fosters early, rapid and when necessary robust intervention." But it is evident enough that the EU collectively would not achieve consensus to go to war without an indubitably just cause. Individual member states may be more willing to go to war where the justness of the cause may be more controversial, as Iraq has shown, but at the EU level the requirements of consensus to undertake forceful action will continue to be very strenuous. As for the US, the post-9/11 environment has seen a revision of security strategy in the direction legitimizing preemptive action, justified by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction combined with the new hyper-terrorism. However the Iraq war was highly contested according to 'just cause' criteria. Russia has shown a continuing inclination toward unprincipled pressurizing behavior with its former Soviet Union neighbors, but without threatening war. China openly threatens to use military force to take Taiwan, which the West does not consider to be a just cause.

An inclusive and integrative European Union (commandment 10) follows from Article 1-58 of the Constitution, stating that the Union shall be open to all European states which respect its values. In addition Article 1-57 envisages special relationships

Europeans must try harder to make a success of multiculturalism. Everyone except far-right sympathizers understand that the immigrant communities will never return home.

with neighboring countries. Even if the EU's further enlargement is now on slow or stop, its new efforts to develop a neighborhood policy is fashioned as a mechanism for extending the EU's values. The US, on the other hand, does not have the same possibilities to integrate its neighborhood, apparently because its political structure and own demos is too strongly formed to make the progressive integration of its neighborhood feasible for either party. Russia wishes to reintegrate the former Soviet space to the maximum extent, but lacks normative political attractiveness at least to its European CIS neighbors to do this, as recent developments in Ukraine have shown. China develops a Greater China concept in east and southeast Asia, but since China is not democratic it had to find alternative methods to promote bottom up rather than top down integration through deepening trade, investment and personal relations between mainland China and the Chinese diasporas in the region.

What values for Europe?

What picture do we have then of EU values compared to those of the US, Russia and China? A simple count shows the US sharing 6 out of 10 EU values. Russia's showing is very bleak, with unqualified commitment to hardly any of the commandments. China is more convincing on a few accounts. But does the EU live up to all the ten commandments itself? On two accounts—multiculturalism and openness for further enlargement—there are now some doubts, to say the least.


Of course this has so far been an utterly Euro-centric approach to matters that are to a degree only subjective perceptions, and the rest of the world can indeed claim that they have indeed a different value system, without that meaning a lesser one. This is a question that we must now dwell on.

It is not clear whether the US has any new instruments of leverage on authoritarian Arab regimes or Putin's Russia. Nevertheless an EU and US 'good cop, bad cop' act can indeed work, as long as both cops are working from the same rule book.

The US parts company with the EU on four accounts: lesser commitment to multilateralism in general and to sustainable development, a greater preparedness to use force, and a lack of an integrative regime for including the neighbors. The US can certainly and does make the argument that its lesser multilateralism is just a reflection of the impracticability of much of the UN system, with its membership crowded with so many weak states. It also argues that its greater preparedness to go to war is no more than facing up to the world's actual security challenges, which the EU runs away

from. Finally the US can point out that lack of an integrative regime is hardly a lack of values, but just a structural political fact. Together these arguments can be a rebuttal to European sermonizing about their superior value system.

That is not an end to the story, however, since the question remains: **Which system is going to attract more support in the world?** Whose is the closest to what may become the global reference model? The US weaknesses, according to our Euro-centric



reference, are part of the explanation why the US's international reputation as global actor has suffered serious damage under President Bush. Polls show this clearly, and the US is obviously uncomfortable with it. The message of the second Bush administration appears to be softening the anti-multilateralism at least in diplomatic tone. Whether the Iraq war has surely stiffened domestic political resistances to embarking on risky wars is not yet known, and as of now it is also unclear whether the military option as a possible ultimate response to the growing Iran crisis is on the table. The other side of this coin is the evident success of EU integrative policies in achieving the democratic transformation of the former communist states of Central and Eastern Europe. President Bush makes striking speeches about the cause of global democracy, but it is much less clear what the instruments are to be. The war in Iraq has been too costly and uncertain in its consequences to be presented as a model. Elsewhere it is not clear whether the US has any new instruments of leverage on authoritarian Arab regimes or Putin's Russia. Nonetheless the combination of the very different strengths and slightly different values of the EU and US can be seen as complementary assets. A 'good cop, bad cop' act can indeed work in practice, as long as both the cops are working from the same rule book.

The very poor Russian performance according to the EU system of values poses a different question, namely whether the present Russian political regime is sustainable alongside that of the EU. Russian political discourse is all about the pursuit of Russian national interest, rather than 'obeying the West' as they say happened in the early post-Soviet years. Maybe Russia can conceivably turn in on itself for some years at least, just selling gas to the EU, and buying consumer goods and holidays in the sun in exchange. But there is also the question whether Russia's current foreign policy priority, to secure reconsolidation of the post-Soviet space, is sustainable. In recent years, Russia's diplomacy has lost one goal after another, as clumsy pressurization of its neighbors drives these states even faster in a West European direction. Russia may choose for the time being a very different values system for its 'near abroad' foreign policy, based on a restrained realpolitik. It is restrained in the sense that no-one expects Russia to invade Ukraine or Moldova to get the leaderships it prefers. Yet the combination of clumsy realpolitik without a credible threat of invasion is a sure loser. Since the neighbors know that they will not be invaded, the pressurization only pushes them away even faster. Russia's choice of a divergent value system in its near abroad policy, compared to that of the EU, is working contrary to its declared national interest.

These considerations bring us back to the question whether the EU's set of values—the ten commandments—is just the preference of one region of the world. Or is it more than a parochial West European affair, gaining increasing weight and recognition as a pre-eminent global reference? At least this proposition is now being discussed.

**Which system is going to attract more support in the world?
Are the EU's set of values gaining increasing weight and recognition as a pre-eminent global reference?**

Note

- ¹ The draft Constitution has been ratified by about half the member states, but rejected in referenda in France and the Netherlands in May 2005, and therefore not adopted. However for the purpose of this article the draft Constitution, prepared by a lengthy Convention of political representatives, is taken as giving indications of European values.



Policy Perspectives: Islam and Tolerance in Wider Europe offers a refreshing new look at the complex interplay between religion, nationalism and expansionism in an increasingly globalized world, as revealed by a new generation of open society leaders working to build a more tolerant Europe. The authors are fellows and colleagues of the International Policy Fellowships program—an initiative of the Open Society Institute that has attempted to combat 'brain drain' while developing policy research capacities, initially in emerging democracies of the former Soviet sphere where concepts such as 'policy' and 'fellowship' were virtually untranslatable. Since its establishment in the late 1990s, some 250 of its fellows have grown into a network of open society leaders spanning more than 40 countries on nearly every continent.

Each chapter—focusing on Western Europe, the Caucasus, Russia, Turkey, Central Europe, and the Balkans—includes several essays by different authors, all of whom are actively involved in the dynamic policymaking processes transforming their respective countries. Their policy perspectives benefit from a uniquely 'inside out' rather than the usual 'outside in' orientation found in most English-language information about their communities. Taken as a whole, the compilation offers insightful insider stories and comparisons across countries and regions. The results are illuminating.