



# Europe is Sleepwalking in an Unsustainable and Fragile World

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## Europe is Sleepwalking in an Unsustainable and Fragile World

**Jean-Yves Heurtebise:** In its blind march towards the abyss, there is nothing more than a thin layer of ice standing between mankind and nothingness in a world that struggles to support our weight. The new epistemological, epidemiological, and energetic state of crisis makes reflection an urgent need. It is an ever-growing emergency in the face of mounting crises, which compound each other and irreversibly weaken the metastability of our human dwelling. However, faced with the violence of the immediate, the brutality of the here and now, time is running out. This is an extremely paradoxical situation: we have a sense of urgency which, by pushing us to respond to the most urgent needs, makes us incapable of confronting the more existential, more global emergency which is threatening us.

**Jacques Toubon:** Multiple, converging, and varied emergencies hide The Emergency, in the singular, from us. If the political system is no longer able to restore its ability to govern, it is because it has been reduced to managing a series of increasingly unpredictable daily crises. What we are missing is the panoramic vision that allows us to anticipate future events. We are living in an era where the “public debate” is in a permanent state of hysteria, though it is no longer really a “debate” because confrontation is favored over dialogue, nor is it really “public” as it is continually spilling over into the private sphere, relying on personal opinions that no longer even seek to be based on truth. The result is a loss of universality due to this so-called realistic discourse which is divisive and prevents

1. The Collegium International is a network created in 2002 at the initiative of Michel Rocard, Milan Kučan, Stéphane Hessel and Sacha Goldman. Bringing together men and women from the fields of philosophy, sciences and the arts, as well as high-level leaders and politicians, its actions are oriented towards fostering a new theory of global governance. At the instigation of the United Nations Office at Geneva, the Collegium proposes to create, in collaboration with the IHEID, a Charter to connect the different components of a fragmented and disintegrated multilateral system, in order to address the current impasse of a world thrown into a maelstrom of growing crises.

the development of a much-needed common solution to this singular and manifold emergency.

**J.Y.H.:** This is especially true if this emergency misleads us into believing that the catastrophe is what will happen soon. Thinking about the catastrophe as what will happen is tantamount to giving ourselves a deadline and falling prey to the collective evil of generalized procrastination: 2025 or 2034 for the Chinese invasion of Taiwan and the beginning of the “third world war” whose rumblings we can already feel; 2030 or 2050 for unbearable global warming with entire countries under water; 2080 or 2100 for the peak in global population of 11 billion inhabitants that will be impossible to feed. By giving a future date for the worst to come we have the illusion that there is still time, that the solution will appear between now and then. But the catastrophe has already begun. What we are seeing are not the warning signs of a future apocalypse but the symptoms of an end that has already begun. This emergency does not stem from the fact that there is little time left to face these crises but from the fact that time itself is endangered and is a vanishing resource.

**J.T.:** The fundamental issue is knowing how to think of a universal concept that would allow everyone to come together in the face of a critical situation. Not only how to define it, but how to disseminate and communicate it. The goal would be to define transnational imperatives that would allow for the development of an open and progressive global governance. The world, and Europe itself, are in a crisis situation with increasingly inadequate governance solutions that lead to the opposite of the solidarity-based governance that we desire, and instead propose “identity-based” and irredentist political projects that base their appeal on the fracturing of the collective. In the majority of democracies and in Europe, we find ourselves in a situation where it seems that what attracts voters the most is this discourse which advocates doing what others do not do, simply because they are not doing it, in order to emphasize one’s own autonomy, by overplaying the opposition and incompatibility between national sovereignty and European objectives.

**J.Y.H.:** It is as if Europe in particular, and humanity in general, had lost the transcendental capacity for tasting what allows one to appreciate the very distinctive flavor of the universal, with our only remaining ability being proprioception. The soul’s satisfaction when in contact with the universal has been replaced by the pleasure of one’s own singular nature: the pleasure of feeling that one is oneself, and especially “not like others”. This is true on all levels: the individual, the group, gender, ethnicity, and the national. There is a total externalization of difference and a total internalization of identity – a radical heterogenization of the other and a radical homogenization of the self. We are no longer in a mindset of equality where we must give an equal place to what is different, but in a mindset of identity where each individual thinks he embodies a self which is so radically different from others that they can

only obstruct his freedom and threaten his survival. This identity-based mindset can take on diametrically opposed political forms, but they all move in the same direction of separation. From the point of view of the “alt-left”, it is no longer enough for the majority subject (the white heterosexual man) to give equal status to the minority “other”; with the understanding that his existence stands in the way of solving the world’s ecological, economic, and social problems, the white heterosexual male must therefore step aside. From the point of view of the “alt-right”, there exists the fable of a majority that has become a minority and which must defend itself against the weak link (instrumentalized from the outside) of globalization: the migrant. From this comes the withdrawal into the group, the nation, ethnicity, and “civilization” that leads to this fragmentation of identity and this global crisis of governance that causes us to move seamlessly and naturally from the Brexit of islanders to the Terrexit of billionaires.

**J.T.:** After the Second World War, the general impression was that the world could no longer continue as it had before. In this spirit of rebuilding, made necessary by the scene of devastation that the world had (already) become, a response such as the United Nations was instituted. This multilateral structure no longer functions efficiently enough to fulfill its original purpose: it is not meant to allow each nation to express its unyielding, sovereign demands, but to facilitate the collective construction of a consensus that transcends national self-interests and strives for the common good. There is no need to argue about who is most responsible for this. China bears a large part of the responsibility, even though, paradoxically, it was the main beneficiary of this multilateral system for several decades. In making China a sort of *deus ex machina* of the United Nations in the context of the Cold War, the West was blinded by a kind of naivety: we were convinced that the fundamental values that had emerged from the Enlightenment through to the Nuremberg Trials would naturally prevail. But this is not at all the case. We must therefore undertake a reconstruction process in order to develop a global governance that will respond to the demands of the current eco-political crisis and define a new common destiny.

**J.Y.H.:** There is the impression that, following the Second World War and with the dissolution of the Soviet Union at the end of the (first) Cold War, Europe allowed itself to be caught up in the fiction of post-history, of post-hegemony. It is a fiction that goes back to the Hegelian philosophy of history, with this idea of a linear history that has certain necessary stages that would end with the German Europe of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The entire globe was supposed to repeat this process in a “natural” way (especially if it was “helped” to go in this direction, first by colonization, then by the IMF’s structural adjustment programs), in order to finally reach the same political and social form as ours.

This narrative of the “end of history”, according to

Francis Fukuyama’s famous expression, crystallized in 1989 with the fall of the Berlin Wall which was supposed to symbolize the total victory of Western liberalism. The ironic thing is that before November 9, 1989, on June 4, 1989 – 200 years after the French Revolution – an event occurred outside Europe that cancelled out all this “post-historical” discourse even before it emerged: the suppression of the student uprising in Tiananmen. Rather than the end of history, 1989 was the beginning of a divergent history that marked the death of universal history under the impact of the fragmentation bomb of ethno-cultural sovereignty, which was taken as the final criteria of political development. Between July 4, 1776 in Philadelphia and June 4, 1989 in Beijing, we witnessed a rise of fundamental human rights whose power of universality would transform the whole world and find its culmination in decolonization – before coming to an abrupt halt before the tanks in Tiananmen Square – which ushered in this new narrative of the indomitable specificity of “civilizational blocs”.

From that point on, what Europe interpreted as the end of history would be seen outside the West as simply marking the end of Europe’s history: the end of its contribution to the history of the world, which would from that point onwards “pivot” towards Asia and China. With the emergence of “Asian values”, the idea spread that freedom would only be an abstract, Western concept whose political overdetermination would deny the primacy of the right to development and the right to satisfying the basic needs of less advanced countries. For the West, what was the end of history has been transformed into a “hunger for history” in emerging countries. But the tragedy is that, on a planetary scale, the emergence of such a counter-narrative comes at the same time as the clear awareness that “our common future”, in the absence of a paradigm shift in our mode of development, is fundamentally threatened by the environmental crisis; this has been the case since 1987 with the publication of the Brundtland Report, and since 1988 with the creation of the IPCC. The necessary overhaul of the global production model was made almost impossible by the fact that such ecological demands were perceived by non-Western powers – first and foremost China, but also India – as a “neo-colonial” strategy aimed at impeding their “legitimate growth”. The West, or more precisely – which is not at all the same – the multinational companies based there, were quite happy with the double-digit GDP growth in this part of the world.

**J.T.:** This is therefore not the end but the beginning of history, a history that leads to an uncertain future. In Europe and in France, we believed that, after 1989, China had entered a new era of reform and openness that would lead it to align itself with “European” values (on the social, political and cultural levels) in the near future. We were under the illusion that economic growth would inevitably lead to liberalization. On the contrary, what we failed to see was that this economic development served to create a system of values that was not only different but

also in competition with ours: the self-proclaimed “Asian values”. What I find most fascinating is this return, whether in Russia or China, to the notion of “civilization”. Aside from the Eurasianism in Russia and the rebuilding of Chinese identity with the return to Confucianism in China, two other examples are worth mentioning: on one hand, in Hungary, there is the desire to return to the dominance of the Magyars; on the other hand – and this will be discussed during the upcoming elections in Spain – there is the Vox party which wants to return Spain to the times of Isabella the Catholic and the Reconquista, and the expulsion of Muslims. There is much work to be done to show that fundamental human rights are not Western but universal and that they can be implemented and effective outside what the rest of the world calls “the West”.

**J.Y.H.:** This return to the theme of civilization in Russia and China is taking place in the context of Marxism’s decline as an ideology as well as in the context of an opening up to capitalism whose State control does not change its productivist and inegalitarian nature. This “civilizationism” lends a traditionalist and localist veneer to the country’s inclusion in the transnational value chains on which it depends for its survival. Furthermore, this civilizational culturalism marks the return to Empire as a central feature of the political imagination. This makes sense, since in order to circumvent the democratic model there is a need to return to the imperial process of dynastic consolidation.

This is also worrisome since an empire, unlike a nation, is defined by the absence of clear borders: its survival depends on its continuous expansion. What is interesting and paradoxical is the fact that while, at the beginning of the twentieth century, modern Chinese leaders had made the Qing Empire of the Manchurians a symbol of corruption, decline, and defeat, contemporary China seems to think that the colonial conquests led by the Qing in Xinjiang (at the expense of the Dzungar genocide, with 80% of the population killed between 1755 and 1757), Tibet, and Taiwan, constitute the country’s natural borders. The annexation of Taiwan, by force, if necessary, is therefore seen as the sign of a successful “rejuvenation”. What this return to Empire and “civilization” also symbolizes is the desire to avoid any form of “decolonization” of the territories annexed by the Empire (Qing or Tsarist), drawing on the narrative that colonialism was uniquely Western.

**J.T.:** The return of Empires is among the Collegium International’s main concerns, specifically that the world’s advancement towards global governance depends on the development of solidarity between democracies and not on solitary, hostile, and supremacist sovereignties, in both the political and ethnic sense of the term. The issue is knowing whether this return to Empire is a fatal obstacle or a necessary step in the social, economic, and global progress that will enable a global political convergence. From this point of view, the curbing of oligarchy in China by the leader of the People’s Republic, Xi Jinping, may also signify the reaffirmation of the paramount value of

politics as the only legitimate vector of governance. This is assuming that it does not lead to irresponsible warmongering in the Taiwan Strait, on the Ladakh Plateau, or around the Senkaku Islands, which would be a suicide mission due to nuclear deterrence.

By placing politics back at the center of things, the imperial desires of authoritarian leaders could, in a new historical irony, lead to the development of a global governance based on solidarity and democracy. Our guiding principles are twofold: on the one hand, multilateralism no longer works; on the other hand, the idea of global governance is not as utopian as we might think. Of course, the resurgence of neo-imperialistic structures, driven by a supremacist “civilizational” narrative which claims “values” that are not compatible with those of others, seems to run counter to such a convergence. At the same time, the desire for a “community of destiny” is also expressed in those countries (such as China) that seem, judging by their actions, to be the most resistant. As Mireille Delmas-Marty says, “the global community will only be united by becoming aware of its common destiny”. How is such awareness possible in the fragmented, splintered, and divided world we live in, where the universal itself has lost its meaning? When all is said and done, wouldn’t these powers that, in general, purport to relegate Europe and the West to a state of “historical detritus” become sources of universalization themselves?

**J.Y.H.:** The question is indeed that of the rebuilding of the universal in the face of separatist, segregationist, identity-based thinking. According to this thinking, the self exists only in opposition to what it is not. Now, what the philosophy of relationalism says is that relation is the primary term, in the sense that the “self” is defined only in its relation to the other, and that, in its attempt to be everything that the “other” is not, what the identifying subject rejects is not so much the “other” as the part of the self that was formed through contact with the latter. Martin Buber stressed this point: “Man is anthropologically existent, not in the isolation of the self, but in the entirety of the relationship of the one to the other.” The “self” and the “other” do not precede the we that places them in relation in the social and linguistic space, etc. Francis Jacques noted in *Difference and Subjectivity*: “It is without a doubt me who speaks; I am the speaker. But strictly speaking, I am not the one speaking: it is we who say.” Speaking or writing for a subject, is not only speaking the self, revealing the foundations of one’s subjectivity; it is first addressing someone, anticipating the answers and modifying one’s words in advance. Furthermore, this co-construction of meaning only makes sense because it refers to a third party, because the “self” and the “other” not only speak of themselves, but of something else that exists independently of them. This is why the identity mindset does not simply lead to denying the other but to denying the real: the narcissistic confinement of the “self” therefore goes hand in hand with the proliferation of the false.

**J.T.:** Europe is the perfect arena for the immediate application of these ideas. On the one hand, countries such as Hungary or Poland affirm that their values are those that they define themselves – without the authority of Brussels – in a gesture of axiological entrenchment that erodes the common European base from within. Germany and France, on the other hand, after having fought each other in 1870, 1914, and 1939, have brought themselves together by drawing on what was left in common and tempering what was still different. It is in this spirit of dual overcoming that the great civilizational spheres can now come together within a new universal which will not be “Western” but, because it is fundamentally human, truly global.

**J.Y.H.:** Transposing to the cultural and civilizational levels this relational and co-constructive approach of the meaning of the self can allow us to understand what happened in Europe between the 16<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries: the creation of a transcultural modernity which, by de-Europeanizing Europe, universalized it. When we want to define “Europe”, we often repeat the story of its dual foundation, its cross-fertilization by Athens and Jerusalem: the Greek *logos* and the Hebraic-Christian *gnosis*. But we must remember that at the time of its construction in the Middle Ages, Europe was situated outside of its cultural sources. For a Frankish king – which is to say, a “barbarian” – Plato and Christ were two figures outside of his culture and geography, having existed far away in the South-East.

As Rémi Brague stated: “It is only by passing through the ancient and foreign that the European acquires what is his own”. But it is what is “his own” that is always already “secondary”. For what is specific to European culture is that its origin merges with a detour. This detour takes an even more radical form from the Renaissance onwards and, with the Enlightenment, ends in a profound cultural shift from which the very idea of the universal emerges. Europe’s encounter with the non-European world in the Americas, Japan, China, and India cannot be reduced to a simple tendency to subjugate, exploit, and eradicate the other. It has also and at the same time had the consequence of radically and irreversibly upsetting the value system of the colonizer. When this process came to an end at the close of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, “European modernity [was] now defined, at least in part, as a scientific, educational, and political project that stood in opposition to Europe’s own religious and cultural heritage” (Joan-Pau Rubiés). If the values of the “Enlightenment” are not only “Western”, it is because they were developed in the context of a relationship between Europe and the other which shook up its definition of itself in a relationship of “cultural thirdness” with Asia which led to the formulation of transcultural universals.

**J.T.:** It would be useful to draw on examples from Enlightenment thinkers in Europe (France, Germany, the Netherlands, etc.), to ask the question of how these changes were transferred from one civilization to another,

to learn how modernity appeared in the world through these cultural encounters of which Europe was the hub of these relationships. Today, it is important to remember this history at a time when Europe is closing in on itself, at a time when certain countries are putting themselves in Europe even from outside of Europe, at a time when certain groups are closing themselves off through identity-based thinking within nations that are increasingly divided and polarized.

**J.Y.H.:** Of all the possible examples, let us use the example of the Jesuit missions in China which began in 1582. If we interpret this event in terms of the conventional categories of post-colonial orientalism, we will only see the doomed attempt of a religious group to impose its monotheistic and “Eurocentric” views on a culture that is several thousand years old. One would conclude (a bit hastily) that interculturalism is impossible. However, this event is significant because of the diffusion of Chinese writings in Europe. Before Leibniz, commentaries and translations of Confucian books were most widely read in France among the Libertines: La Mothe Vayer in 1642 and Simon Foucher in 1688 introduced Confucius as part of a strategy, formalized by Bayle and finalized by Voltaire, aimed at demonstrating that a stable social order and virtuous civic attitudes were possible without religious control of politics. Our separation of Church and State and our idea of an inherent universal that was more universal than that of religions certainly found its basis there. A delightful paradox is that by seeking to evangelize China, the Jesuits contributed to the secularization (confucianization) of Europe, and thus to its universalization.

**J.T.:** To make this irony more striking, we should note that we are now witnessing the opposite trend in China with the establishment of a religion of the State – or more precisely a religion of the Party – which makes any opposition not only dissident but also heretical. If it is true that the introduction of Chinese thought led to a shift away from religion in Europe, the Sinicization of an atheistic ideology, such as Marxism-Leninism, ironically produced the opposite effect: from Mao to Xi Jinping, the cult of the leader is imposed on everyone, both socially and economically. As a result, the Chinese oligarch is now a political opponent, an economic dissident, and an ideological heretic. It is a system of reverse power that destabilizes world governance, undermines the functioning of the United Nations, interferes with WTO conventions, weakens democratic standards at the regional level, and is unnerving because of its return to a nuclear-powered cold war. This latent geopolitical crisis has led to a shift towards the Pacific in terms of international relations. It must be considered as a major event whose repercussions will be felt at all levels. Brexit was only the first step on the path that has led to the creation of AUKUS, which means that the West has been split in two with continental Europe on one side and the Commonwealth sphere of countries surrounding the Pacific on the other.

Throughout this process England has not been a fifth wheel, as has been suggested, but a leader. After all, these countries have common denominators in language, history, religion, common law, and culture which have been intertwined for centuries in such a way that the United States could be considered as part of it. Consequently, Europe is the collateral damage of this split in the West caused by China's accelerated march towards an uncertain future.

**J.Y.H.:** Let's continue to explore this irony by asking ourselves whether Europe is currently more "Chinese" than the neo-Maoist China of Xi Jinping in the sense that, by renouncing the values that it presents as Western (and that it has in fact, through its past influence, helped to produce), contemporary China is cutting itself off from its own potential for universalization. This is also true in the sense that, as Anne Cheng said, the Chinese model of world governance under the name of *Tianxia*, which aims to counteract the limitations of the Westphalian model, is better achieved in European institutions than in Beijing's relations with Hong Kong, Taiwan, or the countries bordering the South China Sea. From this point of view, it is a mistake to think that in order to increase European "soft power", Europe would have to produce a global narrative of itself which, in response to Russian and Chinese culturalist narratives, would affirm its own radical singularity. Indeed, if "Europe" has any kind of connection to the "universal", it is not so much because of specific, "unique" cultural content (Greek immanence, Hebrew-Christian transcendence, scientific rationality, romantic individualism) as it is because of an absence of its own essence other than that which results from its continuous remaking through contact with the other.

Let's not follow Heidegger's proposal take a detour through our origins in order to be even more ourselves (to become Greek so as to be German), or to take a detour through somewhere else in order to achieve a pure cultural identity (to stop being "Asian" in order to become truly European). In reality, for Europe, there is no other origin than the detour, no other term than return. Our belief at the Collegium is that the universal is not what one imposes on others; it is the product of the effort made by each person to shed a little of himself, to yield his own sovereignty (personal or collective). As Jürgen Habermas noted: "Instead of imposing on all others a maxim that I want to be a universal law, I must submit my maxim to all others in order to examine its claim to universality through discussion." Europe has nothing to gain by entering the game of civilizational confrontation through the creation of a meta-narrative celebrating its exceptional cultural uniqueness. This does not mean denying the existence of conflict or forgetting the balance of power but thinking of the universal as the common good resulting from the never-ending process of self-transformation. Let us thereby prevent a misunderstanding: if, by letting go of itself, a non-European culture can have the impression of becoming European-

ized, it is not in the sense that it would adopt "foreign" values (which would be contrary to "their" values that they should strive to preserve in order to preserve their "cultural identity") but in the sense that it repeats this gesture of internal differentiation, of difference from itself, which defines the non-European Europeanity of Europe.

**J.T.:** I would like to conclude by revisiting this theme – which was that of my predecessor as president of the Collegium, Michel Rocard – when speaking of this profound crisis. Indeed, we find ourselves today in the situation presented in his last major work, *Suicide de l'Occident, suicide de l'humanité ?* For Michel Rocard, it was necessary "to emphasize the profound seriousness, which is too often underestimated, of the life-threatening trends that threaten us – humanity – in the long term". Our inability to resolve these cumulative crises is glaring. The absence of common values threatens global management. By not being collectively prepared for global challenges, any accident is potentially fatal. In fact, one could say that the pandemic started before the emergence of COVID-19. Furthermore, the inability to regulate climate change is becoming increasingly alarming.

When the president of the United States gives a speech at the world summit on the environment (COP26) in 2021 using the same terms as his predecessor five years earlier (COP21), the lack of progress is astounding. Meanwhile, the Amazon has burned, Australia has burned, California has burned... And when Joe Biden ends with "God bless the planet", it is to say: *ite, missa est*. The oratory redundancy leads to a flight from policy on several levels. During elections, this is manifested by the plethora of candidates who go on wild goose chases, and by the influx of media attention-seekers with their arsenal of tabloid fodder and carnival-like political tactics. Michel Rocard said: "My job no longer exists".

**J.Y.H.:** When we know that climate change, the loss of biodiversity, air and soil pollution, are all recognized phenomena dating back to the beginning of the industrial revolution and scientifically analyzed over the last 50 years, we can wonder about the darker side of "desire" in the intensification and proliferation of extreme weather events. An emergency that we do nothing, or very little, about is no longer an emergency but an opportunity... On the one hand, we collectively denounce in an informative communiqué the "dramatic melting of ice"; on the other hand, each country is positioning itself to exploit the resources that are now available in the Arctic. Can we be satisfied with the hypothesis of the Accident, of an external event taking us by surprise? A catastrophe that we do nothing, or very little, to avoid is no longer a catastrophe but the expression of an expectation... Jean-Luc Nancy wrote, in *The Truth of Democracy*, "Nothing is more common than the death impulse – and the point is not to know if State technological policies that allowed Auschwitz and Hiroshima unleashed impulses of this magnitude, but rather to

know if humanity, overburdened by its millions of years, has not chosen the path of its own annihilation over the last few centuries”.

Is the Holocaust the sign of the end of the Holocene and the beginning of the Anthropocene, which leads us straight to an “Anthropocaust”? Heiner Müller, on the subject of Nazism, once made this terrible observation: “The Germans are a suicidal people who encountered Jews along the way.” Today, we could say: *Homo sapiens* is a suicidal species that has encountered the Earth along the way. But how can we understand Man’s death impulse, this outwardly suicidal creature who is dragging everything real into his sinking ship? Our inability to act for the better encourages and reinforces our “capacity” to stay on course for the worst. It is, in the words of Nietzsche, more a will to nothingness than a nothingness of will. The Anthropocene is the anthro-obscene: the symptom of a collective symphrophilia whose civilizational crash is the ultimate “nirviagra”. Disgust and fascination mix in our a-porn-ocalyptic society of the spectacle whose only revelation is the staging of its disappearance: from the Romans delighting in the sight of martyrs devoured by lions, to the never-ending stream of news stories showing giant fires and deadly floods, the nature of the thrill remains the same, only the scale of the sacrifice has changed. J. G. Ballard, in the introduction to the French version of his most iconoclastic book *Crash* (1973), offered the following diagnosis: “Voyeurism, self-loathing, the infantile nature of our dreams and aspirations – these diseases of the psyche – have resulted in the most terrifying death of the 20th century: the death of affect.”

Urgency is not just a problem of “speed” and “acceleration”; even more than a constriction of time, we are

witnessing a true constriction of the heart, a crisis of connection. In *Time-Image*, Deleuze asserted that the only solution to the crisis of action, to the paralysis of our reaction, was a belief in this world. However, at a time when the world itself is disappearing, the only answer that remains is faith in others: *I believe you*. But how can we trust the other if “the other” is only defined in opposition to “me”? By forsaking the deadly mindset of solitary ipseity for the life-affirming mindset of solidarity-based otherness. Recreating connection in the co-construction of meaning paves the way towards a transversal whose model is less rational dialogue and more loving contact. This other-than-oneself comes from somewhere far away and is a response to the desire to become other than oneself: one is not born human, one becomes human – when one says to the other: change me!

**Jacques Toubon:** It is as Peter Sloterdijk says in his book, *You Must Change Your Life*. Within the *Collegium*, he has brought the idea of updating categorical imperatives, conditions sine qua non for the preservation of what is going to happen. The overlap and cross-pollination of the political and the philosophical are essential. Indeed, according to Max Weber in *Science as a Vocation* and *Politics as a Vocation* (“*Wissenschaft als Beruf*”, “*Politik als Beruf*”), the subject of philosophical thought and the subject of political action are not supposed to be able to meet. However, the inability for these two activities to converge must be overcome given the extreme crises affecting the world today. Furthermore, as Edgar Morin says, there is really only one crisis: a polycrisis, which produces the polycatastrophe in which we find ourselves. Since its creation, it is in the very DNA of the Collegium International, with its political-philosophical double helix, to bring these two roles together.