



ACADEMIA ENGELBERG

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Academia Engelberg: Successful Completion of the 8th Dialogue on Science

“There are no universal solutions”

The Third World is most affected by violence. Violence is often the cause and consequence of underdevelopment. During the 8th Dialogue on Science, experts showed the possible ways of how violent structures in regions at risks and in human society can be broken.

Roughly 130 representatives from science, industry, politics and society from 10 different nations have intensively discussed the causes and prevention possibilities of violence. Klaus Hug, president of the Academia Engelberg Foundation, mentioned in his closing speech at the end of the conference: “A variety of presentations by highly qualified experts gave us all new insight into violence in human society; with their reflections, young scientists shared with us the view of the future elite.” He called on the participants to get rid of anxiety regarding violent conflicts, to show compassion with victims and to use their creativity to solve the issue of violence. All presentations and discussions are available at www.academia-engelberg.org.

No day without war

Angelo Gnaedinger from the International Red Cross (ICRC) talked about ICRC missions in conflicts in regions such as Israel/Palestine, in the Balkans, Sudan and Afghanistan. With only a few exceptions, the wars were fought between ethnic groups and not between countries. Despite international guidelines – which have been accepted by almost every country – civilians still suffer most from these conflicts. Additionally, Fabio Segura from Youth Encounter on Sustainability claimed: “The termination of conflicts goes beyond ceasefire. Especially the war in Bosnia showed us that people’s attitude has to change. It is not enough to fight against violence without examining the causes. Future outbursts of violence can only be stopped in such conflicts if all ethnic reservations are overcome”

**Violence hinders regional development**

Roughly 1.2 billion people live in regions threatened by violent conflicts. Thomas Greminger, director of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs and diplomat, is confident despite almost daily reports on violent conflicts: "The international community has become aware of the fact that armed conflicts have negative consequences on development perspectives of the affected regions. Armed violence is the cause and consequence of misguided development. Such development has to be tackled as a whole and long-term strategies have to be applied; actions need to be coordinated on an international level. In order to avoid future conflicts, not only potential armed power but also structural risk factors have to be taken into account. This includes in particular education and training possibilities in regions at risk. But many issues remain unsolved and a lot has to be done to sustainably change the livelihood in all affected regions."

Creation of a pool of ideas

At the end of the 8th Dialogue on science of the Academia Engelberg Foundation, Professor Jakob Nueesch, president of the program committee, urged the conference participants to take concrete actions: "A lot has been done, but much more has to be done! Don't tell it – do it!" Participants and those interested in the conference issue are encouraged to collaborate in follow-up conferences. „We will establish a pool of ideas. All of you are invited to present proposals. We will pool and analyze your ideas. Afterwards, they will be turned into concrete projects which can be carried out in a sustainable, long-term and results-oriented manner."

Intense debate

The interdisciplinary dialogue was split into three parts: On the first day, Professor Kurt R. Spillmann, Professor Josef Reichholf, Professor Gerhard Roth and Professor Peter Meyer examined the causes of human violence together with the audience. The second day was aimed at violence in families, violence among youth and against women and resorts to it. On the third day, the conference focused on causes and consequences of armed conflicts. The focus of this year's conference lied on the intergenerational dialogue. Young students of the Swiss Study Foundation and future scientists from Youth Encounter on Sustainability YES presented their reflections regarding the presentations. As for the propositions, the two speakers on the stage and the audience did not always agree.



Bridge between science and society

Fundamental scientific findings are likely to meet strong reservations and encounter mistrust among the general public. The Academia Engelberg Foundation contributes its share to the creation of a new foundation of trust through interdisciplinary dialogue between the scientific community and the general public. Every autumn, personalities from science, industry, culture, politics and society meet in Engelberg, Switzerland.

www.academia-engelberg.ch / Video transmission of the congress at www.academia-engelberg.org.

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Images, this press release and further information on the conference are freely available at http://www.academia-engelberg.ch/2009_1.php5

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