



“Bonn Declaration” Anniversary Declaration: 50 years of EIRENE

50 years of EIRENE gave an important impetus to the work for peace and the development work. More than 1 700 volunteers have accomplished a service for peace abroad within this period. Hundreds of partner organisations have been supported in their work for peace and justice. The personal contact lead to a better mutual understanding. Besides the cooperation in the field of development work, an exchange program in the industrial nations and in Eastern Europe emerged in this context, which is up to now unique in Germany.

Despite this success, the world is still very far from being a place where humanity can live in peace and with justice. The worldwide expenditure on armaments (over a trillion dollars in 2005) far exceeds the amount that is being invested in the countries of the world in measures for development work and work for peace (about 5 per cent of military expenditure). Military thinking still takes precedence over civil non-violent means of conflict management.

In many regions of the world, the discrepancy between poor and rich people is clearly increasing due to the economic globalisation and targeted deregulation. The diverse lifestyles of people, their work and ways of life, their mindset, customs and cultures are made subordinate to the logic of the ‘free market economy’. Even in the so-called developing countries, we are establishing the exclusion of more people from wealth, they have to live a partially inhuman existence on the edge of society.

Religious and ethnic conflicts are more and more being exploited according to the concept of the enemy and escalate to local and regional wars, it is primarily the civil population that suffers from the consequences. In most of the cases, one-sided economic interests form the pivotal reason for social injustice and violent conflicts. The control of international groups concerning the respect of social standards and the taxation of international foreign currency transactions are prerequisites for the successful realization of efforts for development in the South as well as in the North.

Unfortunately, politics and economy set limits to our work. We have to clear this hurdle and in this context, we demand:

- Reduction of the investment in military structures as well as the rededication of means to measures for preventive and non-violent conflict management.

- Ban on weapons exports.
- Independent control of investment projects in the free market economy, regarding the respect of social and ecological standards.
- Recognition and promotion of non-violent social groups that are working for self-determination, equal opportunities and participation, as well as the support of democratic decision-making processes on the political level.
- Ostracizing violence against women and creation of the structural prerequisites for a comprehensive equality between men and women that enables mainly women to have access to production goods, loans, land and work.
- A fairer distribution of worldwide resources. The world produces enough to enable all people to live a life in dignity. The distribution is merely underdeveloped.
- A strategy of economic development, which is oriented towards sustainability so that the world has a future and remains worth to live in.
- Freedom to travel for people not only for goods. We are against this increasing policy of separation of the rich countries of the North. The bureaucratization of the visa procedures does make the exchange with our partners more and more difficult; this applies for this conference too, where mainly our guests were concerned.

We, who have come together in Bonn from Nicaragua, Chad, Burundi or Niger, Romania, Northern Ireland, France, the USA, Morocco, from Germany, Switzerland, Austria and the Netherlands, to think, with EIRENE, about our future cooperation, have learnt: Our individual experiences with economic globalisation make it clearer than ever that we all live in One World. With combined effort and mutual support, we want to promote stronger networking between one another in order to enable a bottom up globalisation that contributes to a more peaceful and just future for all.

As members of our different societies, we are aware that we are all enmeshed in the structures of injustice. This does, however, not stop us from naming those who are mainly responsible and those structures causing injustice. For that reason, we are appealing at this point to the representatives of the great economic powers of the world, at their G8 summit in Heiligendamm, for the introduction of measures, which, in the coming years, will make a considerable reduction in world poverty possible.

Bonn/Neuwied, May 23rd, 2007