

PARTAGE CITOYEN

“Partage citoyen means realising the absolute necessity of sharing: sharing the world's public resources: water, air, wealth, knowledge, health, education...”

The concept of ***Partage citoyen*** was validated by a Commission of twenty European experts brought together in Paris on 14th March 2007 for the Treaty of Rome 50th anniversary celebrations, under the guidance of the European Council and the Ministry of Culture and Communication, headed by Mrs Catherine Lalumière, President of the Maison de l'Europe in Paris.

Humanity was made up of 250 million Human beings at the time of Jesus Christ, one billion in the 18th Century. Now, there are 7½ billion of us. But at western standards of living, the planet can only feed one billion people. There is no historical precedent to help us face this situation. Also, whenever there is a crisis, mankind's violent and aggressive nature comes to the fore, despite the fact that it is just at that moment that he is more responsible than ever for the survival of humanity. How can we help bring out the positive values that mankind has invented (democracy, love, friendship..) and his solidarity, his empathy? Through ***Partage citoyen***.

Partage citoyen is an innovative concept which attempts to bring people together, regardless of their differences, for a common goal: the sharing of resources, knowledge, values... urgently, in order to preserve humanity. Faced with the challenge of globalisation, demographic expansion and the threat posed to the planet's ecosystem, sharing has become more than a moral necessity: our very survival depends on it, not just in Europe but worldwide. Necessary for communication between different cultures and generations, ***Partage citoyen*** spans the sharing of water, food, the environment and wealth, as well as universal spiritual values and sharing between cultures.

Partage citoyen precedes sustainable development, as mankind's nature is to treat our planet irresponsibly. The notion of sustainable development is not something that comes naturally to him, whereas he has an innate capacity for sharing. When making a civic gesture, mankind is automatically sharing, whether consciously or unconsciously. Above all, ***Partage citoyen*** takes into account the human dimension.

According to statistics, nearly a billion human beings in the world live in absolute poverty. With technological progress and developing communications, we can no longer ignore living conditions on our planet. No two countries are at the same level, no two people have the same chances, the same standard of living, so it would seem necessary for us to share resources more fairly and rethink our attitude to others.

However, in order to do this, shouldn't we first consider how we can integrate sharing into our daily lives? Sharing on a daily basis is above all an attitude that comes from inside. It's sharing without haste, and on a long-term basis. It's what will allow us to become citizens of the global village that the world has become, a village where we all depend on one another.

Today, sharing means also having to think about things as a whole, leading to a change in the way we act, in order for mankind to survive. Local poverty, just like worldwide misery, is one of the reasons that ***Partage citoyen*** is necessary, without depriving he who gives or indebting he who receives. The challenge of our age is to develop a sense of sharing, of brotherhood, justice and respect for others which will help people be actively implicated in society and more open to the world. Whilst knowing that we can't simply solve the world's problems, we also realise that our daily actions, what we manufacture, consume and waste, all contribute to the deterioration of the planet.

Seventeen centuries after saint Martin's universal act, sharing has taken on contemporary form. It's a new sharing, responsible and militant, with wider implications: *Partage citoyen*.

Today, it is more important than ever that we once again learn what it is to share, how we can do it in our daily lives, encouraging greater sharing, participating in education programmes about sharing, and in this way perpetuating saint Martin's act of kindness for the benefit of future generations.

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EUROPEAN VALUE

In an ever-changing world, Europe must think about new economic and cultural models, and a new way for us to work together. Globalisation has brought up questions about the future, such as protection of the environment, worldwide commerce, communication between religions, education, culture... In this globalised universe, Europe must create policies that correspond to its new values.

Within these values, one of the essential ones – sharing, symbolised by Saint Martin's universal act of kindness – now takes on a wider form: *Partage citoyen*, a real challenge for the future. Saint Martin's act of kindness is one of them. Europe should be the linchpin of this tireless struggle for a cultural value that has been forged through a common history, through social and religious exchange, with the co-operation of intellectuals, the consciences of our times and those who confront inequity daily. Europe has a responsibility to participate in passing on these values to future generations.

THE FOUNDATIONS

Partage citoyen integrates an ecological, economical and sociocultural thinking whose roots are to be found in the history of economic and social ideas and actions. It is no longer just an act of generosity from one who has to another who has not, but takes into consideration that which belongs to us all, and that we, the billions of individuals that make up humanity on this Earth, should share. There are all the gifts of nature, water, air, earth, mineral and energy resources. There is also education, culture, learning, knowledge, health... We must also imagine sharing 'immaterial' things such as access to information, schooling... As soon as one of these things becomes essential for a group's survival, through globalisation, through the advances in technology that make us dependant on one another and blur the boundaries between nations, it becomes one of the world's public resources. We have to eradicate not only all rivalry regarding its acquisition, but also all exclusion. A public resource should benefit all, without rivalry or exclusion. Sharing all essential public resources is thus a major challenge, both locally and on a worldwide scale.

Sharing public resources means that no-one around us has them already. The notion of human rights is thus imperative: the right to housing, the right to food, the right to an education, the right to health... The fact that certain parts of the population are actively excluded from having access to water, the way in which others have no basic medical care, is often the fault of international regulation policies or an excessive assertion of nationalism that is still present. It would seem necessary to set up an international body that could act worldwide to share out equally the planet's global natural resources.

Above all, *Partage citoyen* concerns our future and our children's future. It means sharing on a much wider scale. Up until now, we haven't realised the incredible interdependence that exists between all men, both present and future.

The real challenge behind *Partage citoyen* is co-operation. On the one side are governments, an extremely strong economy, and on the other enthusiasm, things that are difficult to accomplish, and a huge amount of motivation. *Partage citoyen* is above all about making these two spheres co-operate and share responsibility in their actions. Realising the importance of sharing means opening one's horizons, both geographically and figuratively. It is the sharing of an idea, an objective, and the means for obtaining it all. People co-operating with each other will allow everyone to participate in collective ventures for achieving a common goal. The idea is to give the utmost importance to human interaction, by encouraging co-operation. Companies, institutions and the general public will be able to do this during the European Days of Sharing. The European Federation of Saint-Martin Cultural Centres has created a Prize whose function is to promote initiatives that concretely express *Partage citoyen*.