

countries. The countries of the South became trapped into a system of having to exploit and sell their primary resources in order to pay for machinery and technology.

**all different
all equal**

? *Many countries are in the very difficult position of paying huge proportions of government income to service their foreign debt. Who do you think is responsible for such situations? What do you think of the global campaign to "Drop the Debt" - which would mean cancelling the foreign debt of the world's poorest countries?**

**For more information on worldwide debt see: www.jubilee2000uk.org*

Basic inequality of the economic system, civil wars (Rwanda, El Salvador...), environmental disasters (desertification, earthquakes), famine and a strong increase in the level of population (particularly in Africa) all combine to produce a dramatic situation. Increasing numbers of people have been forced to take a painful if not traumatic decision: to leave their homes, emigrate or seek asylum. They do this to survive, despite being aware of the difficulties involved in living in a foreign country.

? *What do you think is the difference between "a migrant", "a refugee" and "a displaced person"?*

In January 2004, the number of people "of concern" to the **United Nations High Commission for Refugees** was 20,556,781 (in 1974 the figure was 2.4 million) – that is roughly one out of every 300 people on the planet. Can you imagine what these figures really mean in terms of human tragedy? Increasingly, in the North, our attention has been diverted away from the South: particularly in Europe we have been looking at ourselves.

**köik erinevad
köik võrdsed**

East - West: The New Search For Balance

The changing faces of Europe

What is Europe? Where does it start? Where does it end? How many countries are there in Europe? Who can claim to be a European? Is there a European culture? Who cares? Attempting to answer such questions has become much more complicated since the end of 1989. No more Soviet Union; years of war in what was Yugoslavia; the unification of Germany; independence for the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic; enlargement of the European Union to 25 members - the consequences of these transitions have been massive.

? *What have been the most important changes in the country where you live since 1989?*

Although Strasbourg is geographically closer to Prague than to Paris it will take time to reduce the distances in our minds. Such monumental changes provoke many emotions: hopes for a "Common European House" with open borders; fears of massive waves of migration; hopes for new nations; fears of more conflict. Relationships between states and peoples which once seemed fixed now have to be re-negotiated. (Even that statement can be pulled to pieces if you look, for example, at the history of Cyprus, or

Northern Ireland since the 1960s). How we see each other is made more complicated by the different versions of "Europe" which are being constructed.

Different Europes

It is no secret that the forces in favour of European integration are facing great difficulties. There is a growing realisation that countries are made up of people, with differing histories and values. They are not just economic units to be brought together for the benefit of economies of scale. Enlargement, for example, of the European Union has not proved to be as simple as had once been expected

? *A majority of voters in Norway (1972 and 1994) and Switzerland (1997 and 2001) have rejected membership of the European Union in referenda – why do you think they did this?*

The Council of Europe is now a truly Europe-wide organisation; its membership jumped from 23 to 45 States between 1989 and 2003. Serbia and Montenegro is the most recent member, having joined in April 2003. These changes produced a new political climate and a rethink of the organisation's role. So, at the Vienna Summit in October 1993, the Heads of State and Government cast the Council of Europe as the guardian of democratic security - founded on human rights, democracy and the rule of law. Democratic security is an essential complement to military security, and is a pre-requisite for the continent's stability and peace.

? *What do you think are the reasons for the USA, Canada and some Central Asian republics belonging to the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), which now has 55 members?*

Not only governments and industry are increasing the intensity and forms of their co-operation across Europe. Trade unions, youth organisations and cultural projects work with their members to bring a human face to Europe.

? *What other forms of European co-operation do you know? What successes and what problems do they have?*

Interestingly enough, not every inhabitant feels like a European. We will talk about identity later in Chapter Two, but here it is worth posing the question: is it possible to have a European identity? The co-operation referred to earlier between some countries leads logically to the exclusion of others.

As the border controls disappear between certain European countries, the barriers increase to those outside of these areas. An example can be seen in the immediate effects of the Schengen Accord: this is an inter-governmental agreement which seeks to abolish border controls between the countries concerned, harmonise policy on visas, co-ordinate crime prevention and search operations, and exchange information on asylum seekers. At the time of writing the agreement had been ratified by the parliaments of Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Finland, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Italy,

Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain and Sweden, with the ten new members of the EU preparing to join. On the day when the Accord came into force early in 1995 there were 24-hour queues at the German-Polish border.

? *As the external borders of Europe are strengthened it could be argued that a form of "fortress Europe" is being built. How far do you agree with this analysis?*

Having sketched some of the major developments on our continent and its relations with other parts of the world, it is time to examine closer what is happening on the ground.

Minorities in Europe

Attention! A minority in one place can easily be a majority in another place.

? *When is a minority not a minority? When it is a powerful elite! Do you agree?*

Local Minorities

In nearly every state there are "traditional" minorities: ethnic groups who have been present for centuries but who have different characteristics, manners, habits and ways of life from the majority. Multitudes of examples could be cited; here are some, you can find many more. European history is littered with expansionist movements, trading relations, religious and military conquests. All of these have provoked movements of peoples, of cultures. The eleventh century Norman knights managed to set up dominions as far apart as Britain, Spain and Sicily; the forces of the Ottoman Empire reached the walls of Vienna in 1529 and again in 1683; Lithuania was the biggest state in fourteenth century Europe. (We have to be careful with historical "facts" like this; for instance, depending on your point of view, the biggest state in fourteenth century Europe could be described as Polish, not Lithuanian - this difference in analysis is a matter of controversy even today). Many places have seen terrible times; as Richard Hill points out, the town of Ilok now on the eastern border of the independent state of Croatia is an illuminating example. At the time of the Ottoman Empire, Ilok was a Muslim settlement. Before that it was Catholic. In 1930, many of the inhabitants were German and Jewish. In 1991 it counted 3000 Croats, 500 Serbs and 1900 Slovaks descendants of migrants from the 19th century. A year later, in 1992, the population consisted of 3000 Serbs. Since the war finished, the majority population is once again Croat.

? *Does a town near you have a similar history?*

For Spain these traditional minorities are, mainly, the Roma and Sinti (or Gitanos) people, who are also an ethnic minority in many other countries, and the Muslim, Jewish and Hindu communities residing at Ceuta and Melilla. In Sweden there is a sizeable Finnish