

CHINA PREVAILS! WHILE EUROPE is FINISHED?

By Christoph LEITL; ECOWIN Verlag; 166 pages; 20 Euro

Christoph Leidl is a convinced European. He was a member of the Upper Austrian provincial government, President of the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber, and is now President of the European Economic Chamber. This shows: he is attached to his homeland and open to the world. As an entrepreneur and politician, the author is a practitioner; but he is also a visionary. His book is therefore realistic, but also committed. In "China prevails! Europe finished?" Leidl's aim is to show what we Europeans should do to help shape the future, indeed the world, when China will finally be the leading power.

Leidl begins by describing how successful the European project came about, and then goes on to show that Europe today is in danger of slipping into an inferior role: in 1949, states which had been at war with each other since time immemorial founded the Council of Europe. Confrontation turned into cooperation based on the common values of human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The following two generations were able to live in peace.

While these successes became evident, new challenges are difficult to overcome: the gap between generations leads to protest movements; 20 million people in Europe lost their jobs in the wake of the financial and economic crisis; and nationalism, which was thought to have been overcome, comes back to life. At the same time, Europe is not able to "guarantee its own security". The "common foreign and security policy" often consists of empty words. And a monetary union, without the common framework of a political union, cannot exist in the long run!

But the tasks to be tackled in the future are already clear: in 2049 the world will have 10 billion people; Africa's population will have doubled to over 2 billion by then; Europe's population is declining, which makes migration inevitable. Only ten years ago, the United States and Europe together accounted for two-thirds of world trade; today, they account for 50%; in ten years' time, they will account for one-third.

In 20 years time, not a single European country will be among the top 10 in the world economy. Half of the world's steel production and cement production is already in China. In 2050 China will be the undisputed world's largest economy. Leidl's criticism: the world is changing, but we are watching. "The alarm bells are ringing, but they are not heard".

After this sober analysis, the author develops a new vision for Europe and shows how the current difficulties can be overcome: Europe needs more autonomy and more self-confidence, especially vis-à-vis the USA. Europe needs its own security

concept; it needs to regain its internal cohesion; it needs to restore its ability to act; it needs to promote talent through a talent-oriented school system; and it needs to move from the "siding to the fast lane" in research and development.

Leitl wants a strong Europe, but not so that our continent dominates the others, but so that we, together with the USA and China, Russia and India, can solve the problems of the future. This approach is pleasantly different from the warlike sounds you hear from America. There, a book entitled "Destined for War" became a bestseller. And Leitl is also right with another conclusion: European integration cannot be decreed, it must be motivated and incentivised. With "China prevails! While Europe is finished?" this has undoubtedly been achieved.

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