

Where does Europe end?

By Meri Telunts, 18

Europe is a collection of free countries Douglas Feith

The geographical definition of the word “Europe” says; a continent which consists of developed and advanced countries. At first glance that location is bordered by the Atlantic Ocean and it ends with the frontiers of Asia. This data and much more you can find in Wikipedia but when you start to see things “at second glance” you will find that Europe is much deeper concept.

Europe is a community where freedom is worshiped, where a single person has unlimited opportunities of creating new and extraordinary things, when a person can express his/her ideas freely without any fear. Europe is a mentality where universal values dominate and by the way you do not have to be European in order to accept and adore them. For me Europe does not start wherever the borders of Asia end, it starts when countries and nations start to share the kindness, peace and humanity. Europe starts when people of different orientations, beliefs and nations begin to think about not only their personal problems and profits, but also about global issues. Europe is a society of equal people; members of that community have the same rights and responsibilities regardless their gender, religion, skin colour, financial status, etc. Europe is a culture of creativity; in that society innovative ideas are being supported and the key of development is the educated youth.

As I said, having European origin is not mandatory to accept European values and their unique culture of peacefulness. There are a lot of similarities between Europeans and Armenians. For me, as a part of new generation of Armenia, European culture and the way of thinking is very acceptable, respectable and maybe even preferable, but I have to admit that in my community there are some stereotypes about Europe that certainly are not true and they are even confusing. I believe that positive things are meant to be spread out of physical borders of Europe and now they are being spread step by step. The only needed thing is proper awareness about those European ideas. To be more clear the most common obstacle of misunderstanding the European values is the lack of information. Unfortunately not everyone who lives in not well developed countries like Armenia have an opportunity to get access to reliable information sources. They need to have the answer of different questions such as “what is Europe, and what are their values”. To make European culture more common for Armenians we need to give them the necessary information by organizing different informative discussions with locals by sharing our personal experience, by giving them a chance of travelling and discovering Europe. I know that the Delegation of the European Union to Armenia always organizes different events for our community. The targets of events are different Armenians and the purposes of the programs are informing and supporting. Those who have participated in at least one of

those events became more open-minded and developed. From my own experience I can surely say that by being a part of EUROCLUBS or another project that is supported by the EU I became more caring about others. The most valuable thing that I have learned is that my welfare depends on others welfare because I cannot live well while my neighbours are sick and poor. When I help them to improve their lives I surround them with kindness; it would be very tough to live around wicked and selfish people, right? So in order to create a community full of kind people, we should spread our own kindness. So by being kind to them, I increase not only my but also their inner peace, and decrease the possibility of being caught in conflicts. The principle is the same with countries too; it is said that countries are like big families and if countries help each other the world will become more unified and a better place to live. In my opinion those projects which are aimed to integrate Armenians in European culture must be done more, in order to give that chance to more people. I am sure that in that way we will make mentality gap much smaller.

Through whole history of humanity the experience has proved that collaboration is the shortest and the best way to solve local and global problems. Nowadays there are a lot of global problems such as religious intolerance, wars, gender inequality, racism, rich-poor gap, etc. In order to solve those problems we need to be consolidated, so it is very important to make one united community. Collaboration is aimed to solve those problems. Within EU people not only co-operate in their countries but also out of their physical borders. European Union gives the opportunity to combine patriotism with opportunities to work in different countries. In this way people get to love each other and do not forget their roots as well; I believe that diversity is just awesome. This is the result of the democratic principles of European Union which also gives an opportunity out of EU borders to join the system and overcome the challenges together. Global problems are called global because they are spread in all countries equally. European Union does everything so that all countries put their all efforts to overcome these difficulties. It is vital that people in non-EU countries realize the importance of united efforts. The more people are educated, the faster we can find the solutions. I am thinking of making Armenian youth more involved in the process of solving those problems; maybe EU also should help them to receive proper education. With the help of EU, Armenians will understand that if we ignore those problems the world will be an awful place to live.

So we can understand that Europe is not limited in geographical borders, but it actually starts where there is democracy and ends where ignorance and intolerance starts. Europe starts when people respect each other and it ends when people do not care about each other. Europe starts when people smile to differences and it ends when discrimination emerges. And Europe starts when liberty is natural and ends where conservatism dominates. Do not let Europe end...