

The Brussels Declaration

The EHF endorsed two statements produced on the occasion of the 50th anniversary in 2007 of the Treaty of Rome, the founding treaty for the European Union. The 'Brussels Declaration' sets out fundamental social values and is backed up by a lengthier supporting statement 'A Secular Vision for Europe'.

These were produced by a small working party, initiated by Humanists but including people representing liberal Christian and Muslim views. The text of the Brussels Declaration was subject to very wide consultation before reaching its final form. It was launched at a meeting of the European Parliament All Party Working Group on Separation of Religion and Politics on 27 February 2007.

The Declaration attracted wide support from politicians, intellectuals and ordinary citizens throughout Europe – it remains open for signature at [its own website](#) where more detail can be found, including translations of the Declaration into many languages.

Work on the Declaration was initiated in the autumn of 2006 in response to a major campaign backed by the then German Presidency of the EU Council of Ministers to get Christian values written into a proposed statement of European values to be issued to mark the 50th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome. In the event, the "Berlin Declaration" failed to attract support and did not include such a reference.

Although the Brussels Declaration and its supporting statement may not express in full the humanist or secularist standpoint, they demonstrate the breadth of agreement that is possible on practical matters despite underlying disagreement on fundamental questions.

"We, the people of Europe, hereby affirm our common values. They are based not on a single culture or tradition but are founded in all of the cultures that make up modern Europe.

We affirm the worth, dignity and autonomy of every individual, and the right of everyone to the greatest possible freedom compatible with the rights of others. We support democracy and human rights and aim at the fullest possible development of every human being. We recognise our duty of care to all of humanity including future generations, and our dependence on and responsibility for the natural world.

We affirm the equality of men and women. All persons regardless of race, origin, religion or belief, language, gender, sexual orientation or ability must have equal treatment before the law.

We affirm the right of everyone to adopt and follow a religion or belief of their choosing. But the beliefs of any group may not be used to limit the rights of others.

We hold that the state must remain neutral in matters of religion and belief, favouring none and discriminating against none.

We hold that personal liberty must be combined with social responsibility. We seek to create a fair society based on reason and compassion, in which every citizen is enabled to play their full part.

We uphold both tolerance and freedom of expression

We affirm the right of everyone to open and comprehensive education.

We reject intimidation, violence and incitement to violence in the furtherance of disputes, and hold that conflicts must be resolved through negotiation and by legal means.

We uphold freedom of inquiry in every sphere of human life, and the application of science in the service of human welfare. We seek to use science creatively, not destructively.

We uphold artistic freedom, value creativity and imagination, and recognise the transforming power of art. We affirm the importance of literature, music, and the visual and performing arts for personal development and fulfilment.”

Made this 25th day of March 2007, being the 50th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome and the foundation of the European Union.