

Press information

Consensus.

Europe's culture of political decision-making

10 May to 8 July 2018 in the European Hanseum

Press preview on 8 May, 2.00 pm

Fourth temporary exhibition by the European Hanseum turns the spotlight on consensus as a decision-making principle – Link between the Hansetag in 1518 and the work of today's European Council – Strategy games allow visitors to try finding consensus themselves – Exhibition is a contribution to the European Cultural Heritage Year, SHARING HERITAGE 2018

Lübeck, 8 May 2018 – The subject of the exhibition is apparent even in the entrance area: in the form of the heads of state and government in the European Council, who are shown here as life-size silhouettes: 28 women and men with 28 opinions and interests. During the meetings they come together and attempt to reach consensual decisions. Opposite their silhouettes are two objects: a historical exhibit and a contemporary document. The exhibit is the 500 year-old Hanse recess from Hildesheim, which is kept in the city archives there to this day and has travelled to Lübeck exclusively for this exhibition. It is accompanied by what are known as conclusions; the final records of the meeting of the European Council in December 2017, translated into 24 languages. So even before the exhibition starts, the recess and the conclusions are evidence that consensus is possible.

“Consensus. Europe's culture of political decision-making” is the fourth temporary exhibition by the European Hanseum and was jointly curated with the historian Dr Tillmann Bendikowski from Medienagentur Geschichte. It makes a bold link between the Hansetag in 1518, when representatives of the Hanse towns convened in Lübeck, and the work of the European Council in the current day. At first sight the two assemblies have little in common. And yet they are linked by a European heritage: consensual decision-making.

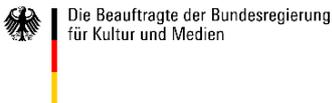
Different stations in the exhibition illustrate the often tortuous process of negotiation and the mechanisms of political decision-making, as manifest in the discussions that take place in the background and the visits to the antechamber. The plenary session is the heart of the

exhibition and consists of two monitors that present more detailed information about the work of the two assemblies. It symbolises a space that is not open to the general public, neither then nor now.

Consensus is also a visual presence in the exhibition room: a video installation developed especially for the exhibition approaches the subject from an artistic and sensory perspective. Five monitors at a height of four metres show gestures and facial expressions that translate the progress of negotiation into body language and make it tangible.

The exhibition is taking place as part of the European Cultural Heritage Year SHARING HERITAGE 2018, which is also about conveying the idea of a common, everyday European heritage. With two specially developed strategy games, based on the Hansetag in 1518 and the European Council, the project also makes a contribution to political education. The games give school classes and student groups an opportunity to gain active insights into the possibilities and difficulties of consensual decision-making and to try to reach a consensus themselves. The games are aimed at young people from age 16 and upwards, the participation is free of charge. A catalogue in German and English can be purchased for €11.80 from the museum shop. An extensive programme of accompanying activities continues the museum's investigation of the subject.

The exhibition is sponsored by:



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