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Serge Gordey

Asked about the question of Hong Kong's identity, the dissident explained that *'it is a very important, unique and crucial component for the resistance because it reflects values and an understanding of History in the face of the orthodox narrative of Beijing and the authoritarianism of Xi Jinping.* He added that *'it's a difficult identity to define, but we resist when China tries to erase it.'*

These images aren't allowed to be shown there because of the heavy censorship

Nathan Law

for 150 years before being handed back to the People's Republic of China in 1997.' But while *'the contract stipulated that Hong Kong would remain autonomous until 2047, China broke it by stepping up its repression of this special region, most recently in 2019-2020.'*

Nathan Law, leader of the 2014 Umbrella Movement and now in exile, is an embodiment of Hong Kong's troubling identity, caught between a desire for freedom and Chinese origins. The activist, who explained that *'a lot of films have been shot in Hong Kong to talk about the 2019-2020 protests but these images aren't allowed to be shown there because of the heavy censorship'*, admitted that *'watching this film was very difficult.'* Indeed, *'it brings back traumas from the events of 2014 and 2019; I witnessed terrible acts, friends were injured and arrested.'* Fortunately, *'this film shows important people from the resistance movement, it's important, it helps to understand the situation.'* Nathan Law asked the audience: *'What would you have done if you were from Hong Kong?' 'These films are essential for understanding the sacrifices made by our people'*, he said.

Having left Hong Kong in 2020 because he knew he was *'wanted and risked several decades in prison'*, Nathan Law reflected on the difficulty of resisting China from abroad *'because you have to mobilise crowds locally.'* *More and more people have left the country in the last three years, almost 20,000 for political reasons,* he lamented. *The United Kingdom is helping Hong Kong refugees and we can organise events to ensure that China does not succeed in erasing our history.'* Before concluding: *'Even if the situation isn't going in the right direction because so many people are in prison, I remain optimistic; there's no point in despairing, you have to remain courageous even if 9 out of 10 social movements are going to fail.'*

THE NORMANDY INDEX: UNDERSTANDING THREATS TO PRESERVE PEACE

28 September 2023, 10.30 a.m. - 12 p.m., Azur Room



Branislav Staniček, Elena Lazarou, Bénédicte Feuger, Valérie Drezet-Humez and Salomé Limery

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Multiple threats, universal peace

The three moderators working for Europe Direct, co-organisers with the European Parliament of this youth event based on the Normandy Peace Index, a tool *'used to*

guide the actions of the European Union, to decipher what's happening in Ukraine and to understand the threats impacting states and populations', introduced the discussion in the form of an interactive workshop, giving the high-school students in the room the opportunity to express their opinions via a live digital quiz.

MODERATORS:

Ophélie Bouin, Head of Communications
CRIJ Normandie

Salomé Limery, European Projects Officer
Maison de l'Europe de l'Eure

Bénédicte Feuger, Head of the Carrefour
Rural Européen des Acteurs Normands
(CREAN)

SPEAKERS:

Valérie Drezet-Humez, Head of the
European Commission Representation in
France

Elena Lazarou, Head of the External
Policy Unit, European Parliament Research
Department

Branislav Staniček, European Parliament
External Policy Researcher

With 78% of them admitting to being unfamiliar with the index, its creator Elena Lazarou set out to explain this indicator *'which measures threats to peace and democracy around the world.'* *'It was launched in 2018 thanks to an agreement between the Normandy Region, the European Parliament and the Institute for Economics and Peace in Sydney'*, she continued, *'it's an index based on the European definition of peace found in the 2016 EU*



Bénédicte Feuger, Valérie Drezet-Humez and Salomé Limery

The question of enlargement makes it possible to renew the importance of the democratic fundamentals of the EU

Valérie Drezet-Humez

Global Strategy. The strategy sees 'peace and security as holistic concepts' and therefore includes eleven main criteria: 'Violent conflict, terrorism, crime, cybersecurity, state fragility, energy insecurity, economic crises, the democratic process, weapons of mass destruction, disinformation and global warming.' These elements are evaluated in 136 countries in addition to the EU (counted alone) 'every year and available to all online.'

Asked about the position of the EU – 7th in 2023, while it was in 11th place in previous years – the European researcher noted that 'it isn't just a question of war, as the improvement is explained by the positive trend among European States on

energy, climate and cybersecurity issues among others'. In response to the public's surprise at this improvement in light of the rise of the far right on the Old Continent, Branislav Staniček pointed out that 'the index doesn't look at political trends, but rather at fundamental freedoms and economic and social reforms.' The European researcher also noted that 'the top 5, robust democracies and economies, and the flop 5, unfortunately, remain static in the rankings.'

Branislav Staniček then looked back at the trends of the indices for Russia and Ukraine since the tool was created in 2019. He noted 'slight improvements at the beginning. Russia had stabilised its budget with the increase in the price of raw materials, while Ukraine, with the election of Zelensky, promised to manage the situation in the East of the country.' Both countries have 'obviously fallen sharply, especially Ukraine, which has lost 38% of its GDP, 20% of its territory and nearly 7 million inhabitants as a result of the mass exodus that followed the invasion.'

When asked about the apparent contradiction of a Europe at peace but actively supporting the Ukrainian war effort, Valérie Drezet-Humez explained that 'the Russian invasion is a violation of international law and the EU is responding within the legal framework of that law by helping to rebuild peace through this unprecedented strategic aid.' Faced with the 'myth of European disunity', the international diplomat recalls 'the eleven unanimous votes of the 27 to impose economic sanctions on Russia', before emphasising that 'the question of enlargement makes it possible to renew the importance of the democratic fundamentals of the EU' and to call on the young people in the room 'to inform themselves so they can have all the facts in mind as the 2024 European elections approach.'



Watch the full debate on YouTube

YOUTH SEQUENCE

THE COMMITMENT OF WOMEN TO A MORE INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE SOCIETY

28 September 10:30 a.m. – 12 p.m. – Nacre Room



Zoé De Mones et Ludivine Delaite

Women must decide for themselves

To open the debate, moderator Lauriane Clément asked Nicole Ameline, President of the International Institute for Human Rights and Peace, to take stock of the inequalities suffered by women around the world. She pointed out that only 25% of the world's parliamentarians are women. This means that they have little say in the decisions that affect them, and yet women are among the main people affected by climate change. Nicole Ameline explained that her role at the UN is precisely to drive this change and create a requirement for parity everywhere. 'Women must be able to decide for themselves, that's the first freedom', she explained.

MODERATOR:

Lauriane Clément, head of the news section for Phosphore magazine

SPEAKERS:

Nicole Ameline, President of the International Institute for Human Rights and Peace, member of the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Zoé De Mones, high school student, participant in the ecHo programme

Ludivine Delaite, former member of the Conseil Régional des Jeunes de Normandie who helped formulate the project on training eco-delegates

Delphine O, ambassador, Secretary General of the Forum génération égalité.