

Schicksalsgemeinschaft

An inherent characteristic of the German language, which I believe renders it unique, is the fact that many concepts can be covered by a single compound word.

My expanding waistline constrains me to include a couple of examples relating to food. *Futterneid* means that one realises, after ordering a dish, that what our dinner companion has ordered looks more appetizing and inviting. There is also *Kummerspeck* which relates to the act of eating in order to find solace and consolation when one is worried, miserable or unfulfilled.

Schicksalsgemeinschaft on the other hand may be translated as community of fate. In my opinion it aptly captures the essence of human evolution. This word has been repeatedly trumpeted in Nazi propaganda; and it has also been courageously advocated by great German leaders. Indeed, this 22-letter word has been echoed by the likes of Angela Merkel and Olaf Scholz, but its significance extends well beyond the German territory.

This community of fate has been championed by some member states, osmotically taken up by others, but resisted by specific ones (such as Poland). The seemingly reluctant assimilation by the latter category has been sweetened by events primarily stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic. I am specifically referring here to the EU's vaccine joint purchase and logistics agreements. Malta has also benefited from this agreement, as evidenced by the political surveys which have been commissioned in view of the upcoming general election.

I am discussing *Schicksalsgemeinschaft* here, because in hindsight, the pandemic has made us aware of our obligations to, and reliance on, a wide network of people, which extends beyond family, friends and tribe. It has also made us aware of the 'invisible' workers who enabled us to survive. Sanitation workers are one example. Indeed, coming to terms with, and expanding, such a community of fate involves a cognitive informational process. It essentially requires the internalization of norms of justice and equity into one's thinking and practice, as antidote to political polarization, and any sclerosis which stems from this.

We discussed briefly the relation between *Schicksalsgemeinschaft* and the pandemic. However, other important areas relating to Sustainable Development Goals, such as climate change, must also be tackled at such a supranational level. Truth be told, we may well edge nearer to such behemoth targets - jotted on paper during conferences by enthusiastic champions - through seemingly small events. As an example, I can mention Greta Thunberg. This Swedish teenager mobilized young people across the globe to speak truth to power about climate change, leading to a butterfly effect.

I wish to conclude this editorial by auguring that such community of fate attempts to bridge the R&D gap relating to medicines in the EU, particularly paediatric medicines and orphan medicines. Let us not forget that we stand on the shoulders of giants!

Pan Ellul

