

Juri Viehoff: Introduce a European Memory Day

Background information on existing regulations/policy issues/initiatives

Keywords: *European holiday, European celebration; Europe day; European day; EU holiday; EU celebration, official EU holiday, official EU celebration*

Topic: The European Union should institute a Europe-wide holiday to commemorate Europe's past and celebrate the EU's success

Overview

- In order to forge a Pan-European identity, the EU is relying on a number of symbols, including the European flag and the European anthem¹
- There are currently, however, no EU-wide holidays, which could play a similar role in fostering a sense of European belonging and cohesion
 - So far, the only officially recognized day to celebrate “peace and unity in Europe”² is Europe Day, held on the 9th of May, in order to commemorate the anniversary of the Schuman declaration³
 - On Europe Day EU institutions traditionally open their doors to the public
 - However, Europe Day as a day of remembrance does not come with a Europe-wide day off work

In detail

- Europe day was officially recognized by the European Parliament in 2008 along with other symbols of the European Union
 - EP Rules of Procedure, Rule 202a: use by Parliament of the symbols of the Union (2007/2240)⁴
Content: This regulation confirms the European Parliaments recognition of a number of European symbols
Summary:
<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=REPORT&reference=A6-2008-0347&language=EN>

¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Symbols_of_the_European_Union

² https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/symbols/europe-day_en#why_a_europe_day_?

³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Schuman_Declaration

⁴ <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=REPORT&reference=A6-2008-0347&language=EN>

- In its official resolution on Europe Day, the European Parliament has recognized that “national and civic public holidays generally have a dual function of evoking an identity or value that is being remembered, but also of producing and renewing that same identity or value that is then reaffirmed for the future”⁵
 - In the same vein, the resolution holds that the significance of a European celebration day like Europe Day “will only truly take root in the emotional memory of European citizens if the Member States themselves join efforts to this end, recognizing Europe Day as a real European public holiday”⁶
- However, on a critical note, it has been argued that a holiday like Europe Day or any other celebratory event is unable to foster any sense of European belonging, because ...
 - “... the EU cannot refer to a popular, historic founding myth akin to the US Declaration of Independence [...] or Bastille Day. There was no founding moment to define a common, positive and transcendent ideal of what the EEC was about, and what it differentiated itself from.”⁷

Further reading

- https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/symbols/archived-europe-day_en
- <http://www.euronews.com/2018/05/09/what-is-europe-day-and-is-anyone-celebrating>
- <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32017D0217%2801%29>

⁵ <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=REPORT&reference=A6-2008-0347&language=EN>

⁶ See above

⁷ <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.546.1873&rep=rep1&type=pdf>