

Prof. Dieter Senghaas

Dear Mayor,

Dear guests,

Dear Gert Krell,

Dear Hans Günter,

When I received the news about the academic award for my life's work, I was very impressed and would like to express my sincere gratitude. It was also the first time I had encountered the term “life's work,” so to speak. When I looked up the Hans Günther Brauch Foundation[\[h1\]](#), which states that it is about global thinking, local action, local learning, and global research, I thought about how this lifetime achievement that is being honored relates to the world I have lived in. And so I reflected on my life's journey. I grew up as a child, or rather, I lived as a child in a small village in the Swabian Alb in southern Germany. In the local dialect, you would call it a Dörfle. There I learned about a traditional society. There were few farmers and few craftsmen. There was a school.

My father was the teacher. And there were school lessons for the villagers and for a neighboring village. And you could also see what a traditional society meant there. Namely, there were eight classes. Grades 1 to 4 and grades 5 to 8. And there were two rooms. Namely, for grades 1 to 4 in one room, for grades 5 to 8 in another room. And there was one teacher. Unimaginable today, but back then it was part of traditional society. So it wasn't just about farming and the like, but also about what I just mentioned. When I looked at the Hans Günter Brauch Foundation again on the internet, it was about global thinking, local action, local learning, and global research. And I thought, something about local thinking and local action in combination with regional action and thinking. There was another experience I had as a child or as a student or even as a high school student at that time.

Namely, no longer in a small village Unterdrackenstein, but in the south, in the southwest of Germany, in the town of Biberach. That was the French occupation zone, and there was a very intense discussion about how we could build a bridge, a political bridge, a bridge of understanding between the local population and France. And this discussion ended or led to a town twinning between Biberach and a town in the south of France, namely Valence. And it wasn't just this partnership; there was also the idea and implementation of a student exchange program, which still exists today, between students from France—just a few, maybe 10 or 15 students, a small school class—who came to Biberach and were accommodated by the parents of German students. And vice versa, German students went to France and were accommodated there.

And this local, truly fundamental local experience was combined with an experience at a higher level, namely at the regional level, when Adenauer and de Gaulle attempted to achieve mutual recognition. And all of this basically took place just 15 years after the Second World War. So here I found exactly what the Hans-Günter-Brauch Foundation had called for: thinking locally, acting locally, but also building bridges from the local to the regional and global levels. That was an experience that had a fundamental impact on my life.

Then another experience was added. When I started studying in Tübingen, two or three semesters, I realized that I was focusing entirely on national contexts, i.e., West Germany, France, and the like.

But international politics, international society, global society, as we say today, played no role. And I realized that this was indeed being researched in the USA. So I applied for a scholarship, which I was awarded, a Fulbright scholarship, and that's how I ended up in Amherst. When I came back, I tried to present some of what had been done there here as well. When I returned, my dissertation dealt with the East-West conflict. The very program that is still the subject of controversial debate today played a major role, namely *si vis pacem para bellum*. If you want peace, prepare for war. My dissertation was about nuclear deterrence strategy. I discovered that this deterrence strategy does indeed have something to do with the dynamics of armament. In other words, attacks were expected from the other side, and countermeasures were prepared and put in place. And these countermeasures were perceived by the other side as possible attacks by the opposing side on their own side. That is the arms race. And in my further own research, which focused primarily on countries, development processes, and the like in Europe, but also in the world as a whole, I realized that this concept of peace was completely inadequate, that it was wrong. It was about peace within society, and the following dimensions emerged that were now relevant to the concept of peace. Firstly, protection from violence, namely the monopoly on the use of force that should be achieved. Then the protection of freedom, underpinned and institutionalized by the principles of the rule of law.

Thirdly, protection from hardship, namely efforts to achieve distributive justice, which is essential for the development of a peaceful order. Finally, the protection of cultural diversity. This was particularly impressive in southern Germany, of course in relation to its neighbor, Switzerland. Where there were not only an incredible number of cantons, but also links to Italy, Germany, France. And today, one would probably add that it is also about the protection of nature, which is essential in view of the climate. And from these protective measures, the efforts to achieve them over time, the aim was to create a political culture in countries that was conducive to constructive conflict management and constructive peace-building on the ground.

The crucial thing, however, is that this always has to be worked out in an incredibly intense and controversial way, even fought for, if you will. Because all the things, including the fundamental rights that we refer to today, were fought for. Just think, for example, how long it took to establish women's rights, voting rights for women, and the like in Germany. If I remember correctly, that was only the case in 1919, for example, after many years of debate. So everywhere it was a clash within civilization, as the title of the German book says, *Zivilisieren wider Willen*. It has often been assumed that what has developed in our society would develop necessarily, because there is something like a political or cultural DNA that develops gradually, etc. That is completely wrong.

Because, as I said, the development always caused a lot of controversy until, gradually, over time and after decades, in some cases centuries, what we now take for granted in our country became established, but not in other countries and other cultural locations. The conclusion is therefore what has actually been stated in the Hans-Günter-Brauch Foundation. Act locally, learn locally, and I would add, of course, not only act globally, but also act regionally and conduct research accordingly. So there were learning processes that shaped me in the political, economic, social, and cultural spheres of life, in my own sphere of life. And it was

indeed a matter of translating these experiences into research in all these worlds and making them fruitful.

Looking back, this interplay between my life and my life's work was very decisive for me. And I am therefore very grateful for the award I have received from the foundation.

Thank you very much.