

MANIFESTO

Preliminary Remarks:

This manifesto is in no case to be understood as a manual in the sense of a to do list, because this may be felt as being coercion. A Humanist would never submit to authoritative commandments, because he, as an individual, decides what is important and right for him. Therefore, this manifesto is a short description and display of what the humanistic view of life contains, so that outsiders who, more often than not, have wrong impressions of humanism, are able to inform themselves and, if need be, can wholly or partly adapt these basic perceptions for their own lives.

1. Being human for mankind

Humanists are constantly in search of answers to the question 'How can a human being be human to mankind?' They thereby put their trust in the natural, through evolution developed ethic, which is to be found in all cultures in a more or less large extent, and reject referring to dogmatic religious directives or political ideologies. Their guideposts are more so reason and science.

2. Human rights apply without exception to all people.

Humanists respect their opposite as an equally sentient and rights-demanding human being, independent of their ideological conviction. They assume that dissenters show the same tolerance and do not try, with missionary zeal, or even by violence, to dissuade them from their stance. There can, however, be no tolerance for intolerance. Humanists respect all their fellow men, regardless of their biological features or sexual orientation.

3. Animals are sensitive fellow creatures

Humanists also accept the non-human creatures of surrounding nature that are equipped just the same with sensitivity for pain and joy in well-being, so that humanists feel obliged to treat them as gently as possible. The human being is neither the "Image of God", nor "The Crown of Creation", but rather one evolutionarily originated species amongst many. Because of its intelligence, it has more power than the other types of animal. Wherefrom, however, it does not follow that their well-being and suffering should account for less, because physical and mental weaknesses are no reason for debasement.

4. Social skills make us human

Humanists know that the basic social skills of mankind – like helpfulness, sense of responsibility, ability to cooperate and altruism – have as much a genetic, as well as beyond that, a hormonal basis. They are therefore scientifically researchable in their material foundation, justifiable and culturally further developable. This goes also for those least social attributes of mankind, like the ability to lie, to defraud, commit malice and felonies.

5. „Good“ and „Bad“ have no metaphysical reference points

Humanists reject the claim by religions of a monopoly on morals. Humanists represent a secular, meaning ethics based on reason. The assumption "Without God everything is permitted" is just as much a fallacy as the assumption "With God, everything is moral". The former is refuted by science and the everyday life of millions of people, the latter is so obviously belied through the history of religion and recent past that examples can be dispensed with here. Remarkable is: Predominantly non-religious societies like for instance Sweden are conspicuously often considerably more philanthropic in their social systems than more religious societies like for instance the USA.

6. Mankind is the measure of all things

For Humanists, mankind is a self-determined and at the same time social being, which frees itself of metaphysical representations of moral values of a merely alleged authority above it and which orientates itself in its moral-ethical decisions directly on the interests and needs of their fellow human beings. Conflicts of interest between people are solved under the criteria "fair" and "unfair", in the evaluation of scientific and technical developments, the only relevant question is, whether they serve the long-term improvement in the quality of life of people and not, however, whether a religious law is violated therewith.

7. Religion and ideology are a private matter

Humanists essentially base their ideologies upon a scientific image of the world and therefore consequently reject the following of self-proclaimed priest or shaman castes with their metaphysical orientations. This kind of attitude demands a religiously neutral state that largely sees the ideological views of its citizens as a private matter and which does not prefer, nor even financially support any religious community.

8. No religious indoctrination in schools

Humanists live their humanistic world image as model, but without missionary zeal. For this reason, they also reject indoctrinating lessons in schools, as is presently offered as religious instruction at childhood age and partly as biology lessons interpreted as religious, because such lessons divide, rather than unite. By this method, aversion, and in the worst case, hate towards people of a different faith is caused, where actually a peaceful co-existence in a culturally increasingly varied world would be called for. Some humanists therefore advocate the widespread establishment of a teaching subject, in which values and norms should be conveyed. Others reject this form of conveyance and prefer the use of expanding history and philosophy lessons, for comparison of different ideological positions.

9. Science-oriented thinking is open-ended

Humanists feel committed to reason and science, which they see as pillars of their ideology. New facts based on scientific perception continually change our understanding of the world and of human beings and therefore our image of the world. Because humanists do not represent any absolute truths, adjustments to the continually changing circumstances are to be made. Outdated religious and rigid ideological theorems and doctrines have no place in this view of the world.

10. The human being determines the meaning of life

Humanists assume that they are more than likely given only this one life in which they can realise their visions

and desires. Characteristic of humanistic way of life is therefore a strict here and now orientation for the realisation of their own visions and desires. Humanists aim to lead a fulfilled and possibly happy life and to campaign so that as many fellow human beings as possible succeed in this. It is a matter for the individual to give his life a personally chosen meaning. Prefabricated religious or worldly ideological interpretations are rejected.

11. Self-determination is the central principle of life

Humanists accept limitations of freedom of the individual only insofar as they serve the upholding of a peaceful co-existence in society. They emphatically reject societal or political currents that counteract this target. The idea of the liberal, social, and religion-neutral constitutional state comes closest to the humanistic perception. This means granting each human being as much opportunity for personal development as is possible without limitations on their fellow man.

12. Without freedom of opinion, human rights wither

In the framework of general human rights, humanists rate the right to freedom of expression as a high value (socially viewed, even as the highest). Is the freedom of free expression of opinion damaged, all other human rights soon suffer under emaciation or distortion. They therefore broadly reject limits to the freedom of opinion. Statements detrimental to human co-existence beyond the aim of informance or expressions of opinion - like for instance calls to violence - are, however, not affected.

Epilogue:

Humanists do not immunize themselves against criticism. On the contrary: honest and constructive criticism is seen as a gift, which quite generally may serve to improve the life situation of mankind. Therefore, we are thankful for suggestions that could, at a later stage, serve to further specify and, if need be, supplement our concept.

Approved by the Facebook-Group [Initiative Humanismus](#) on 15. March 2012.

This manifesto (in German) as Pdf-File for downloading: [Humanismus-Manifest-01.pdf](#)

Note: This manifesto may also be distributed without express permission, but quoting the source. This is in our interest and supports a better knowledge of humanistic principles in society.

Discussions about this manifesto (in whatever language) can be held [here](#).

We owe the English Translation of the original „Manifest der Initiative Humanismus“ to Ringo Caderousse, member of he Initiative. Many thanks for the excellent work.



INITIATIVE Humanismus

Weltliche Menschen für eine menschliche Welt