

20 Years Globethics – Handover Ceremony Geneva 4 Sept 2024, afternoon

Global Values for Life. Inspire. Innovate. Integrate

Prof. Dr Dr h.c. Christoph Stückelberger

Globethics Founder, outgoing President, incoming Honorary President



This is the third and last handover in my twenty years of Globethics. The first was 2008 when I changed from being founding president to becoming Executive Director and Ambassador Walter Fust accepted to be my President. The second was 2016 when I retired as Executive Director and handed over to Prof Obiora Ike, myself becoming again President. The third and last one is now to handover Presidency to the new President Prof Dietrich Werner as of next Monday, 9 September, after the meeting of the International Board during the coming two days.

1. Thanks

I start this speech as Founder and outgoing President with profound, manyfold thanks to thousands of people along the way of these twenty years: from the colleagues of the founding workshop 2004 to former and current Board members, from the small staff team of two part time juniors to a global team on all continents, from the thousands of participants in conferences, workshops, trainings to teachers and experts of our courses, from the hundreds of authors of articles and books in our 350 Globethics books published to the media journalists, from the over 200 institutional partner organisations to academic, private and government sectors, from the City and Canton of Geneva, and Grand-Saconnex, to the national Swiss government for their always very supportive accompaniment and foundation supervision, from the important technical developers and support companies to advisors, from all active persons to passive users of library and publication services, from the many friends and my family, especially my wife, who had to bear many of my absences while I was travelling throughout the continents for the Globethics mission. I profoundly also thank the former Executive Director Prof. Obiora Ike and the current Executive Director Prof. Fadi Daou for their impressive, strategic strong leadership and Deputy Executive Director Lucy Howe Lopez and the Academic Director Prof. Amélie Ekue for their high commitment. Last but not least I warmly thank Walter and Walter: Ambassador Walter Fust, the then Director General of the Swiss Development Cooperation SDC and later my president, and Walter Linsi, the main sponsor, strategic advisor and long time Board member, who both supported my idea of Globethics even before its birthday, when the idea of Globethics was still in an embryonal stage. Together with Rita Astfalck, very long time the General Secretary of the Linsi

Foundation and also our Board member, you have been the Godfathers and Godmother of Globethics.

2. Motto and Core Values

The Tagline of my personal website (www.christophstueckelberger.ch) is “*Global Values for Life. Inspire. Innovate. Integrate*”. This motto with the triple I (Inspire, Innovate, Integrate) can be also seen as my motto for Globethics during the twenty years of existence. Globethics is all about global values enhancing a life in dignity for all. This needs contextualised values. The instruments are inspiration from inner spiritual sources and outer sources of diversity. Innovation includes the courage to cross borders of thinking, economic constraints and political polarization. Integration as goal means to be inclusive in language, culture, religions, gender, political world views and economic systems.

The new Globethics Motto “*Navigating Life*” refers also to life. Enabling, enhancing, protecting, empowering, improving life of humans and of non-human beings is the broader objective of Globethics. Navigating Life is a careful expression to steer, to govern, to direct life through extremes and temptations by values-driven orientation.

In addition, the focus of Globethics during the last twenty years was and is on leadership: *responsible leadership*, ethical leadership, values-driven leadership are terms we used and use. It means Globethics supports, trains and strengthens current and future leaders, from students to senior executives, from self-leadership to government officials.

The *current Globethics Core Values* are *Justice, Peace, Dignity, Inclusiveness, Quality, Sustainability, Integrity and Responsibility*.¹ These values have been the foundation for twenty years. One or two may have been adapted in working but the identity remains the same. An example is including male and female. From local teams to the international Board we always had and have a female/male ratio of about 40 to 60, 60 to 40, means at least one third of the other gender. Core values are not like clothes that one changes according to seasonal fashion. Core values build the identity of a person as of an institution. This stable foundation of Globethics values allows credibility in its continuity. It then also allows innovation, adaption and some pragmatism without losing track. This is part of our DNA.

I described the core *DNA of Globethics* at the 10-year jubilee 2014 with the following *ten characteristics. Values, Partners, Inclusion, Innovation, Networking, Service, Support, Entrepreneurship, Governance and Growth*.² I quote these ten characteristics here to show credibility by continuity and stability of the fundament.

The key element for Globethics is now the balanced relation between these values. Individual freedom needs to be balanced community orientation. justice/equality needs to be balanced with peace etc. If this is not the case, the extremist liberalism or the extremist totalitarianism grow. This is my concept of *Globalance*³, which is deeply rooted in Globethics.

¹ <https://globethics.net/about-us>

² Speech Christoph Stückelberger at the 10th anniversary of Globethics 2014.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G5y8gHpLGM&feature=youtu.be>

³ Christoph Stückelberger, *Globalance Towards a New World Order*, Globethics, Geneva 2022 2nd edition, 850 pages, free download www.globalance.world.

3. Core Spirituality

Another core aspect of the identity of Globethics is spirituality. Religions and spirituality help humans to live values and virtues from an inner centre, inner conviction. This gives strength, energy and orientation. 75-85% of the world population identify themselves with a religion! We welcome spirituality not in a way of converting others but engaging with the different religious and non-religious backgrounds and bringing them to the community in an authentic, respectful and inspiring way. I say it as an ethicist and as a protestant pastor. Therefore, we are an interfaith community on all levels, from the Board with Christians, Muslim, Hindu, former a Buddhist and a Jews including non-faith-based members. The same on the staff level, in the regions and partner institutions. The opening reflexions in the Board meetings by a Board member is then done once by a Hindu chanting, next time by a Muslim or a Christian prayer or a humanist and philosophical reflection. When our late Buddhist Board member from Thailand offered her 'ohm' with a singing bowl, everybody was touched and felt united.

This spiritual openness allowed Globethics also to be very outspoken in conferences, publications and actions against hate speeches, fundamentalisms and extremisms, which destroy mutual respect and hinder cooperation. Globethics is also critical when governments, multilateral organisations, or NGO's want to exclude religion with the argument of neutrality and laicism. Exclusion of spirituality and religion is one reason for fundamentalisms, a reason why we rather integrate it. Globethics was and is involved in various efforts on religion for inclusive development and peace to strengthen the constructive and defeat the destructive role of religions.

4. Institutional Instruments

With this strong centre of global values (differentiated in manifold ways to contextual values) we then are free and strong to adapt our institutional, structural, technical and methodological instruments according to needs and circumstances, without losing our identity. I like dancing and dancing like art are expressions in our conferences and activities. I learnt from professional dancers: A dancer needs to be stable in the belly of the body. Only then she/he can turn and move fast without falling. The dancer then is free to use the arms and legs as needed to perform. Like the dancing goddess Shiva in India. When we are strong and stable in our core values, the 'belly', we can and need to be innovative, creative, pragmatic, adaptive in our instruments, our arms and legs. Examples: Globethics developed the first global online library on ethics 17 years ago. The goal was to strengthen accessibility to books for inclusivity of underserved students and teachers in the Global South. Now in the age of chat GPT and easier access we have to rethink the instruments for the same goal of inclusivity. Our new focus on Artificial Intelligence Ethics serves the same value, to reduce exclusion, discrimination, marginalisation, which now happen under new premises. The stability in the values gives us the flexibility in the instruments.

A real challenge is to *remain open and ambitious for new ideas and at the same time focused and modest*. Globethics has very limited financial means with a global budget of only around 3 million Swiss Francs per year. So Globethics is not a dancing Shiva with ten arms, 'dancing on all stages'. We constantly have to focus: four thematic areas and four instruments in the

current strategy 2023-2027. Our main supporter Walter Linsi with the Linsi foundation constantly and persistently reminded us of the need to be focused. Each of us has only two legs and two arms. But we are thousands of humans, means thousands of legs to walk and arms to act.

The other big challenge remains *funding*. Globethics had the chance to have its own main funder for twenty years, the Linsi Foundation and a number of financial project partners. Now it is a high priority to enlarge the funding partners.

5. Handover as Joyful Transition in Leadership

This is my last speech as president of Globethics. Some of you may ask yourself: ‘Will Christoph be able to give up, as he is still so committed? Others told me already some time back: “We can change the foundation statutes so that you as founder can remain longer than the limit of eight years in the Board and as president.” I refused without hesitation. One of my leadership principles, which I also train in the manifold leadership trainings on all continents, is: Responsible leadership means you plan your departure/succession when you start a new position. I speak about elected positions. It means I proposed for the Board in the statutes a term of two years, three times renewable to maximum eight years in total. Why? Because an institution needs renewal, continuity in renewal. I also resisted from the beginning to define Globethics as a Stückelberger foundation. Not my name, but the mission must be in the name. This is our Swiss way, in distinction of other ways where often the founder’s family name is the name of the foundation.

I am proud to say that I founded in the last 45 years seven foundations and associations, all of them live, without me and the last two I hope to give up next year. We all know the disaster of the trend of autocrats who change constitutions to remain ‘eternal’ leaders. This is unethical. My constitutional succession planning started with adopting the statutes, my concrete handover planning almost two years back in a collaborative and careful way.

And that is why I am handing over the presidency now to my successor Prof. Dietrich Werner with deep appreciation and honestly with great joy. I will not have any governing responsibility. If I can serve with speeches or publications or as door opener on request, I am happy to consider it.

6. The Future of Globethics

What does all this mean for the future of Globethics? What is my legacy as Founder and leader in different roles? Let me summarize it in ten short sentences of hope:

I hope that Globethics

1. Remains faithful and strong in its core values and virtues;
2. Remains innovative in its instruments in responding to new challenges and needs;
3. Is a global community of people, living unity in diversity and diversity in unity;
4. Is engaged in resisting extremisms, violence and polarization;
5. Is courageous in crossing ideological, religious, social, gender, economic, political and military borders;

6. Gives space to and is inclusive in religious-spiritual depth;
7. Can increase its impact by strategic interventions on global policies in the multilateral organisations;
8. Remains strong in its focus on ethical leadership through higher education;
9. Is attractive with its vision and its solid structure for new donors who join Globethics by saying: “Yes, I want to substantially support and accompany this vision and wonderful global community of people”;
10. Remains a hopeful and joyful global community of people, who do not give up!

I believe that this will be the successful path and future of Globethics, being in the good hands of its new President, Board members, Executive Director, dedicated team and all of you. I close with my profound thanks to all of you as expressed at the beginning. God bless you.
