

SOLIDARITY IN CRISIS: THE BRIDGE TO BLISS. INFORMATION SAVES, DISINFORMATION KILLS



- 3 CONTINENTS
- 14 TIME ZONES
- 10 SPEAKERS
- 2K+ UNIQUE VIEWS
- 10K+ REACHED

The event - held simultaneously in 14 different time zones over 3 continents gathered statesmen, scientists and influencers for global exchange of best practices and lessons learned. They discussed the scientific and political ramifications of the ongoing COVID-19 crisis. The experience of U.S., Europe, Israel, India, Taiwan, South Korea was extracted in a live debate.

Health Shield Europe
Initiative

#HeShEu





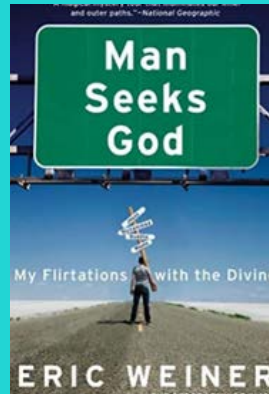
Happiness in The Time of Coronavirus? How to redefine happiness in post-corona times?

What are the origins and genome of the corona virus? How the U.S. fights against the pandemic?

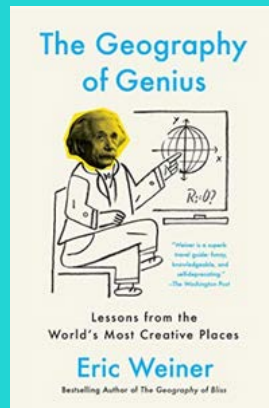
What global solutions would prevent future relapses of disasters like COVID-19 and how important is the open innovation in resolving such crisis?

Best practices from South Korea: How South Korea protects its citizens from the COVID-19 and is it winning the fight against the pandemic?

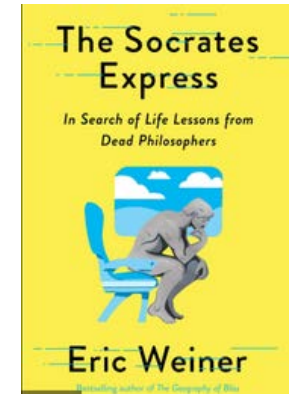
How disinformation aggravated the crisis and how to fight fake news?



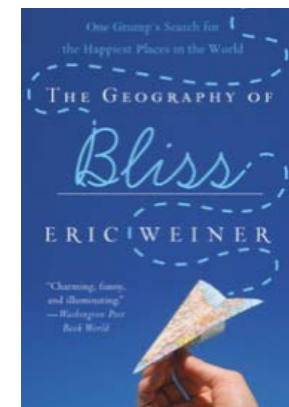
IS CORONAVIRUS A PUNISHMENT FROM GOD – “MAN SEEKS GOD”, “IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE WORD”, BUT NOT THE FAKE WORD!



**“THE GEOGRAPHY OF GENIUS: A SEARCH FOR THE WORLD'S MOST CREATIVE PLACES”
BEST ANTI-COVID PRACTICES**



**“THE SOCRATES EXPRESS: IN SEARCH OF LIFE LESSONS”
PREVENTION: THE FUTURE OF GLOBAL SOLUTIONS – THE BITTERMOST LESSON LEARNED**



**“THE GEOGRAPHY OF BLISS”
POST-CORONA HAPPINESS: THE CATACLYSM AND THE NOAH'S ARK**



Thorsten Geißler, Head of Konrad Adenauer Foundation Office in Bulgaria

We are currently confronted with two pandemics: one of them is the coronavirus pandemic, the other one is the disinformation pandemic around the coronavirus pandemic. The coronavirus can be fatal. The disinformation pandemic around the coronavirus pandemic can be also fatal.

(...)

If we as humans do not change how we interact with wildlife, future pandemics will become very likely. Scientists say that 70% of emerging infectious diseases in humans are of zoonotic origin and nearly 1.7 million undiscovered viruses may exist in wildlife. The global wildlife trade worth billions of dollars. Agriculture intensification, deforestation and urbanization are bringing people closer to animals, which provides the virus with the perfect opportunity to infect us.

(...)

All these measures were necessary. If they had not been taken, the death toll would now be much higher and more people would have died and more people would have suffered.

I think the government in Bulgaria reacted quickly, the measures were sharp and they showed a positive effect.

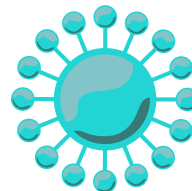
For sure a lot of mistakes were made but first we must be fair. Let us always look what information did we have access to when the decisions were taken and second, what are we willing to sacrifice.





How and why we got a lockdown under a tiny virus-like SARS-COV-2 in the world of modern medicine, in the era of genome studies and artificial intelligence? This is a stress test and we believe that it is a stress test for Humanity, for science, for education, politics and economics and it depends definitely on the genius to exit successfully with the best lessons learned.

Assoc. Prof. Milena Georgieva, Laboratory for Molecular Genetics, Institute of Molecular Biology, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Academic Advisor at ENAGO Academy, USA



Don't you think that part of the reason for that fear (from the coronavirus) is that the coronavirus is related to a deep sense of guilt that many of us feel? The globalization, the mass migration, the independence were already provoking intense trouble to our inner world.

Can you name one good thing that happened to you during the lockdown and that was revelation either for your character or inner thoughts, for your family or for your close ones?

Konstantin Valkov, Journalist





COVID-19 epidemic in Korea has seen a significant slowdown in newly confirmed cases. The average number of new cases per day had fallen to around 6 in the first week of May.

Currently, nearly 90% of all confirmed cases have fully recovered. Despite the encouraging trend, we have remained vigilant. Our response to COVID-19 has been fine-tuned to minimize the detrimental impacts on the livelihood, the economy, and our interaction with the world.

(...)

What is most remarkable is that we have civic voluntary engagement that is flattening the curve on the COVID-19 epidemic. Korea has relied heavily on civic engagement participation and partnership with the people, the public as a whole.

(...)

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic is an unprecedented global crisis with far-reaching impact. It has resulted in closing borders, severely undermined global mobility over people and goods, disrupted the global supply and distribution network chain, and spread panic and fear.



**Dr. Chun Beeho, Ambassador of Korea to Bulgaria
(2010 - 2013) and Mexico (2015 - 2017)**



Prof. Harsh V. Pant, Director, Studies and Head of the Strategic Studies Programme at Observer Research Foundation, New Delhi

As ground realities continue to evolve, it is clear that there is no alternative to global coordination when it comes to emergencies like Covid-19. India, from the very beginning of this crisis, has underlined that the world needs greater engagement, not less, in tackling this health pandemic. New Delhi not only proactively engaged its neighbours in a regional outreach but also called for a virtual meeting of the G-20.

For India, the message from this crisis is quite clear that existing institutional frameworks are ill-equipped to deal with contemporary crises and that the parameters of economic globalisation need re-framing so that there is no overdependence on any one entity. As a new world order emerges, India hopes to play a significant role in shaping the new rules of the game that favour greater equity and stability.



Hans van Baalen, President of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe Party, MEP (2009–2019) MP Dutch Parliament (1999–2009)

The most important thing is that when the crisis is gone or it is contained or we have a vaccine that we really learned from it based on objective data.

(...)

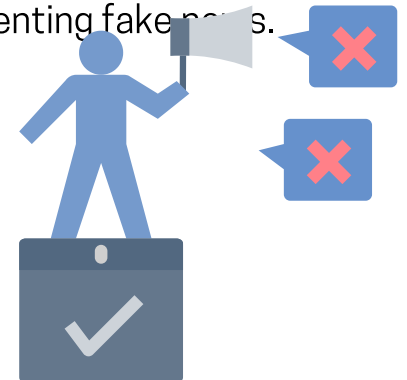
There has to be an independent investigation: what happened with COVID, where did it come from, when was it first seen, by whom, what was the role of the Chinese authorities? Not to blame them but just to have the simple facts from which we can learn. This is also something that we, representing the free world, have to demand from the World Health Organisation.

(...)

We have to define what is disinformation, what is fake news. We have to train people to be critical of what comes to them as news from all sides. It is extremely hard to fight fake news and disinformation.

You can not fight fake news with five to ten people, you have to invest in researches, data analysis and you have to spend money for it and not to fight fake news with fake news. We have to involve journalists, they have their own role in preventing fake news.

It is an ongoing uphill battle !



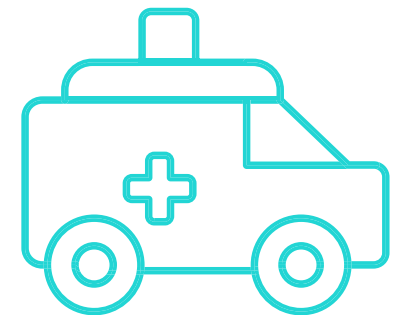


Ko Wen-Je, Mayor of Taipei, Taiwan

Fortunately, Taiwan's rapid response has allowed the country to get ahead of the outbreak and avoid the extreme lockdown measures that many countries now face. We only have 440 confirmed patients and I believe that Taipei's progress may be a valuable reference for global epidemic prevention.

Transparency is the bedrock of our COVID-19 strategy. It took us about 40 days to collect epidemic prevention information and resources from different departments of our administration and translate them into English for our sister cities.

Our standard operating procedures includes epidemic prevention strategies, implementation SOPs, creative measures, and the advantages of Taiwan in fighting the virus. Through sharing our expertise and best practices, this information provides the global community with comprehensive picture of our successful experience in combating COVID-19.





**Kuan-Ting Chen, Chief Research Officer and
Deputy Spokesperson, Mayor's Office,
Taipei City Government**

Our city of Taipei has worked diligently to minimize the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic from the beginning of this year. I am proud to report that our efforts have proven to be successful. The number of confirmed cases remains low, and we halted community transmission.

...

Taipei City Government ensured that the public stays informed about all the latest developments. Apart from regular press conferences and strengthening my social media presence, we also sought to ensure that we cater to the needs of our diverse, multilingual citizenry. This is not to say that Taiwan is fully resistant to disinformation. As we were busy containing the coronavirus outbreak, our country also witnessed a surge of coronavirus disinformation on popular social media platforms. This has kept our Criminal Investigation Bureau on its toes. Up until today, 210 people have been prosecuted for creating or reposting misinformation on social media platforms and online forums.

According to the investigations conducted by the bureau as well as the Taiwan FactCheck Center, an overwhelming majority of disinformation campaigns originated from the People's Republic of China.

Together, we will overcome this crisis.





**Dr. Chang-Hui Shen, Professor and Chair,
Biology Department, College of Staten
Island, CUNY, Biochemistry and Biology
Ph.D. Program, Graduate Center, CUNY,
New York**

The world was not prepared for this pandemic because:

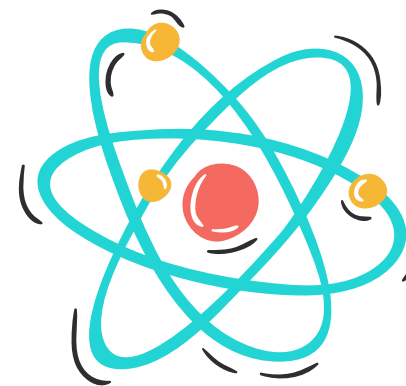
1. Slow Political leaders' response to the COVID-19
2. Government's response to COVID-19.
3. General public's awareness in the COVID-19.
4. Underfunded government budget for preparing the biological risk.

(...)

The Chinese government has been displaying a powerful narrative to deflect responsibility and disguise its accountability for the outbreak and covering up the information.

(...)

We should recognise that the science played a very important role in protecting public health in the face of the pandemic and governments must invest in biological research. Scientific institutions should be protected from political interference. Governments should create an environment in which the scientists are free to communicate evidence-based factual information without fear of retaliation or retribution.





Dr. Itai Pessach, , Director of The Edmond and Lily Safra Children's Hospital at Sheba Medical Center, Israel



We have to maintain two efforts: one treating COVID patients and the other one is continuing to offer our services to the population that really needs them.

Training programs: We developed very quickly programs that we call “just-in-time” training programs. This is part of our emergency preparedness protocol. Unfortunately, Israel is a very experienced country in emergency preparedness and we are used to train people very quickly. We created very quickly based again on collaborations with institutions and pear around the world training sessions for to train our people in personal protective gear use, in treating ventilated patients in triaging coronavirus patients.

Medical team safety: Another point I want to touch upon is the subject of medical teams and medical team safety. I think this is one of the key elements that helped us face this challenge. The fact that very early we put a lot of emphasis on protecting our medical teams.

Innovation: We teamed up with a lot of startup companies, with the industry and with the universities. We have created teams, about 40 or 50. Each of them aimed at solving one of the problems that we face when we treat corona patients.

My take-home message from this whole epidemic: I think in the end the keyword is here is: 'mutual responsibility'.



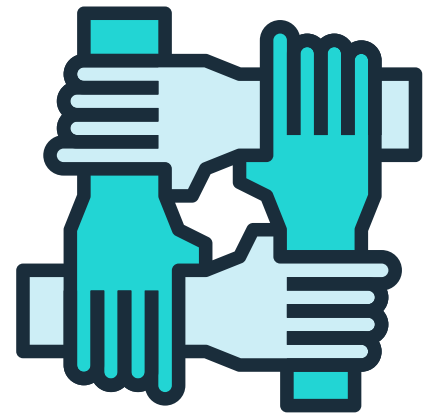
**Martina Kaiser, Global Health Policy
Advisor, Konrad Adenauer Foundation**

The German Chancellor Angela Merkel and French President Emmanuel Macron have presented the French-German initiative for the European recovery from the coronavirus crisis and this initiative does not only provide concrete ideas on how to tackle the Corona crisis and its negative impacts on the EU or at EU level. It is also a strong political message and commitment towards European solidarity.

The initiative proposes the development of strategic health sovereignty and strategically positioned the European health care industry. In detail, Germany and France propose among others to increase European capacities on research and development for vaccines and treatment where the short term goal is to develop and produce a corona virus vaccine within the EU and make it globally feasible. They also want to establish common strategic stocks of medicines and medical product and encourage production capacities of the products. They furthermore intend to set up an EU health task force within the European center for disease prevention and control and mandated it together with national health institutions to develop prevention and reaction plans against future epidemics. Finally, they want to establish common European standards for health data interoperability.

(...)

We also need to strengthen international solidarity in particular with regard to the poorest countries which are not able to tackle the impacts of the pandemic by themselves.



The COVID- 19 presents at first and foremost a public health crisis and economic crisis, a technological one to some extent but really it is a human crisis, a philosophical crisis in a way. The pandemic is a stress test for societies, it is also a stress test for marriages.

(...)

I think there will be some changes but we also may gain a greater appreciation for what we had all along, which is human to human contact, the ability to be in the same room, to shake hands, to hug each other. I think we will see a growing appreciation of that. I also think from a humanistic point of view the crisis is in fact very humbling.

(...)

What is going to get us through is the kind of moral leadership that hopefully we will see.

(...)

I think this fear of contagion disease is something that is really hard wired into our reptilian brains. We always fear dirtiness and contamination.... The biggest factor is the fear of the unknown. There is so much that we don't know about this disease and we are still learning about it.

(...)

By closing the schools you are teaching a lesson to all the students. You are staying at home because the virus might affect your grandparent or your friends and they might die. By closing the schools, you as a society, are saying to children, we value every life and that is the thing we want to say, we can't put a price tag on life.



**Eric Weiner, Author of Geography of Bliss,
USA**

I think that the corona experience and the lockdown educated all of us on the modalities of friendships. Zoom played the major role of nourishing personal communication.

The corona was a whole new creature like a wild animal running free in the streets.

(...)

Coronavirus created a spike in collaboration and innovation. People from the grassroots were coming together to solve a problem. You can find today in the web free designs of ventilators which young people created. It showed again the power of the wisdom of the crowd, the power of the open innovation.

We don't hear enough voices about how every big opportunity, at least from the last 60-70 years, makes the strong stronger and the weak weaker. I read yesterday that in the world 60 million people will get into poverty. We see that the weak kids are losing on remote education and that remote education is good for sophisticated kids which have the skills to work with computers. The privilege of the few is not the privilege of the masses and this is a big problem that is much bigger than the coronavirus.



Dr. Yossi Vardi, Investor and Entrepreneur, Israel



Dr. Solomon Passy, The Atlantic Club of Bulgaria President, Foreign Affairs Minister of Bulgaria (2001 – 2005) and Signatory of Bulgaria's EU&NATO Accession Treaties

What we suggest: to build our society with better “proportions between the height and the foundations”, to upgrade the free movement of people, good, services and capitals with safety protocols and to preserve human health and lives.

COVID -19 showed that the so called "cheap labor" in China is not so cheap but rather expensive and we are paying the price now. COVID showed also that we need standardized best practices to address the emergency when it occurs. We would suggest adopting the Health Shield Europe initiative.

Health Shield Europe
Initiative

#HeShEu





АТЛАНТИЧЕСКИЯТ КЛУБ В БЪЛГАРИЯ
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