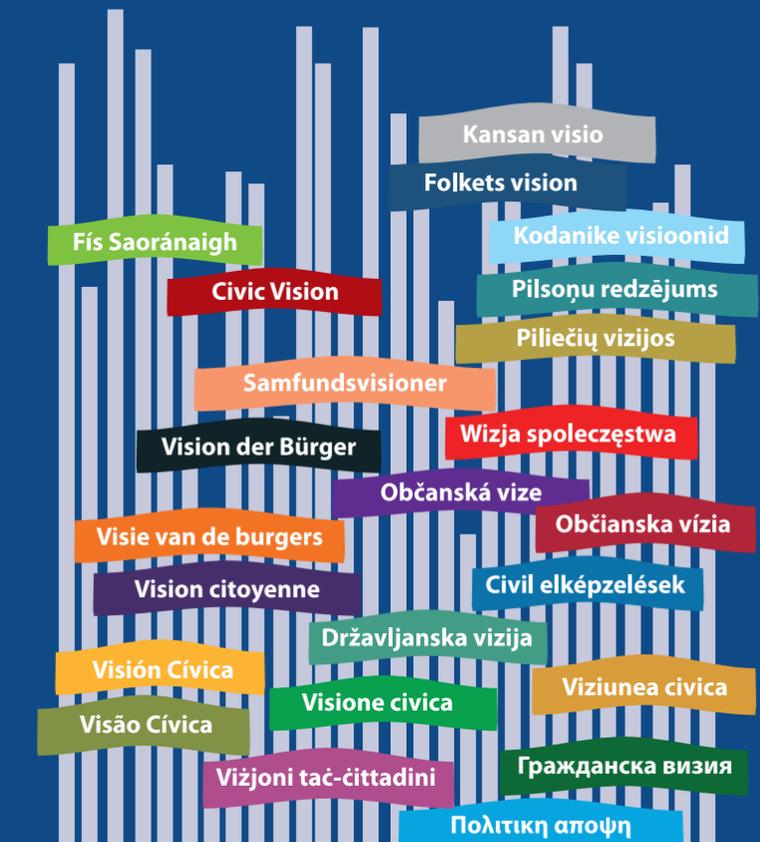


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CIVIC VISION



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INTERACTING WITH THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

The communication campaign "Interacting with the European Parliament" is implemented by The European Institute, The Centre for Policy Modernization and Europe Gateway with the financial support of the EP's DG "Communication"

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EUROPE 2020 - CIVIC VISION

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INTRODUCTION



INTRODUCTION

The beginning of the 21st century found Europe at the height of the realization of the biggest peaceful unification of states of all times. The enlargement of the European Union to 27 member states marked the end of Europe's separation. Faced with the challenges of global-scale dynamic changes in economy, demographics, climate change, energy supply, new threats to security, as well as with the need for strengthening democratic legitimacy of European institutions and their methods of operation, the European Union started large-scale reforming of its institutional framework in order to consolidate the foundations of the major values and to provide efficiency in the operation of its institutions. After the French and Dutch rejections of the European Constitution in 2005 and a two-year period of consideration, in the end of 2007 the leaders of the European states signed a Reform Treaty of the European Union, known as the Lisbon Treaty. The Treaty of Lisbon amends the existing legislation regarding the European Union and the European Communities, without replacing it. The goal of the Lisbon Treaty is to provide the Union with the legislative framework and tools, necessary for responding to future challenges, to the expectations and demands of the European citizens. Following an arduous procedure of ratification, the Lisbon Treaty came into force on December 1st, 2009.

2010 is the first year after the coming into force of the Lisbon Treaty reforming the European Union. At the end of 2009 the first permanent President of the European Council and the first High Representative for the Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of the European Union were appointed. The new college of the European Commission launched a new ten-year strategy for development of the European Union.

Thus the year 2010 has all the good reasons to remain in history as the beginning of a new stage in the overall development of the European Union and its member states.

What would the European Union be like in 2020?

The world, the European Union and the member states are all experiencing the consequences of the first global economic and financial crisis of the 21st century. European governments and institutions are put to a real test. Regardless of the fact that the measures for coordination of the actions against the crisis and the achievements of the European Union - the single market and the Euro, mitigated to a great extent the blow and protected the European citizens from the worst, the crisis clearly defined the need for reinventing and rationalization of our values - freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law as well as respect of human rights, including the rights of minorities.

The way out of the crisis is irrefutably the short-term priority for the European Union as well as for the member states. Despite the first signs of recovery of the economies of the member states and of coping with the consequences of the crisis, the recovery of the European economies will be a lengthy process.

However, the European Union needs a long-term perspective for its development not only as an economic and social union, but also as an actual union between the peoples of Europe. The European Union gives its citizens rights, protection and opportunities on the market, but also beyond the market. The Union unites the people using Europe's rich cultural vari-

ety as a powerful channel for communication. The principles of free movement and equality of the EU citizens should transform into reality for the everyday life of the citizens. As the President of the European Commission Jose Manuel Barroso said, Europe should come out of the economic and financial crisis stronger. EUROPE 2020 - A Strategy for Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Growth provides the framework for development of the Union for the next 10 years. The Strategy for the European Union in 2020 counts on differentiated national goals which are to be coordinated with the European Commission but the decision on which would depend on the governments of the member states.

Effective overcoming of the crisis includes, in addition to pragmatic solutions which are gradually being implemented on a European, as well as on national level, making fundamental changes in our ways of thinking, our behaviour and our communication as citizens of Europe.

Broadened possibilities for cooperation between European citizens and European Union institutions should find their adequate forms, including a more effective use of the possibilities provided by modern information and communication technologies. The contribution of civil society in defining the goals for development of the Union and in accomplishing these goals could be the new engine of the European project. Thus we need to be committed enough and brave enough to express our opinion and our positions before governments, as well as before European Union institutions.

EUROPE 2020 - Civic Vision presents a summary of the two-year campaign for promoting the interaction between European citizens and the European Parliament – the only directly elected European Union institution. In the frameworks of the debates about the future of Europe, the ambition of this book is to contribute to paving the way forward and to highlighting the role of citizens and of civil organizations in the process of building a united Europe. We firmly believe that defining the long-term perspective of the European Union involves realistic evaluation of the present and of what has been achieved so far while shared responsibility for the future is a basis for the achievement of our common goals.

Defining and especially accomplishing the vision for the future of Europe is a continuous process which will be the focus of the interactive platform for civic participation <http://parliament.europe.bg> that will continue to provoke civic activity regarding all issues of interest on the European agenda.



The European Union in 2010



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THE UNIFYING OF EUROPE

The idea of a unified Europe traces its origin back to the history of the various states on the continent. For more than half a century European citizens have been simultaneously participants in and viewers of the implementation of an unprecedented process, and despite the doubts, insecurity and contradictions, *this project is already a part of the everyday life of four generations of Europeans*. The approach for achieving European unity is fundamentally new - negotiations, coordination, reaching balance among the different countries. The system of institutions, built on the basis of the Schuman Declaration of May 9th, 1950 was both revolutionary and well considered. The system established noted one essential fact - that nation states are a factor for division but at the same time they are an element of the European identity. Therefore, the system is founded upon the central role of states and upon the established relations among them.

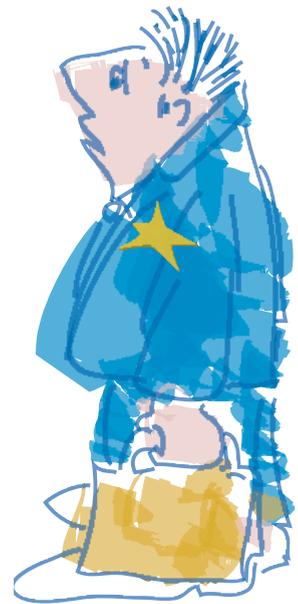
Today's Europe is a unique formation in which the separate states unite, expand and build up their sovereignty in many areas of great significance to their citizens. The fundamental principles and standards for the European alliance have developed over the years and now find their expression in a series of treaties, often carrying the names of the cities they were signed in: *Treaty Constituting the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), signed in Paris in 1951 (known as Treaty of Paris); Treaties establishing the European Economic Community (EEC) and European Atomic Energy Community (EAEC) in 1957 (known as Treaties of Rome); Single European Act of 1986 (Luxemburg); The Treaty on European Union, Maastricht, the Netherlands, 1992; Treaty of Amsterdam of 1997; the Treaty of Nice of 2001; the Lisbon Treaty, 2007*. These treaties indicate the various stages and the dynamics of European integration - they outline the expansion of the process and the development of the goals set by the states in this process.

With entering into force of the first treaties, establishing the European Communities, the founding member states set the goals for the first stage of their economic integration. The success of the first common actions motivated other countries to join the three communities. The first enlargement, when the member states became 9 instead of 6, took place in 1973. Encouraged by the appeal of the Community, the political heads of the member states then defined a new goal - additional economic cohesion by creation of a monetary union. The introduction of the European Monetary System in 1979 stimulated European Communities member states to observe their common interests in implementing monetary and fiscal policies, establishing discipline in their economies. In 1981 Greece joined the Communities, followed by Spain and Portugal in 1986. The Communities established a Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP).

In 1985 the President of the European Commission Jacques Delors published a “White Paper”, containing a concrete schedule for the final construction of a Single European Market until January 1st, 1993. The European Communities accepted this ambitious plan and bound it legally by adopting the Single European Act which was signed in 1986 and entered into force on July 1st, 1987.

Meanwhile the Fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the Cold War created in the beginning of the nineties an expectation for a large-scale unification of Europe.

In December 1992 in Maastricht, the European Council reached an agreement for a new treaty. It was this treaty that created the European Union.



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The Treaty on European Union which entered into force on January 1, 1993 also set new goals for the member states: building a monetary union until 1999, creating a European citizenship, new common policies, including a common foreign and security policy (CFSP).

On January 1st, 1995, three new countries joined the European Union: *Austria, Finland and Sweden*. The Schengen Agreement entered into force during the same year while the first countries from Eastern Europe applied for membership in the European Community.

The Treaty from Amsterdam was signed on October 2nd, 1997 and entered into force on May 1st, 1999. It introduced significant changes in the Maastricht Treaty by increasing the powers of the Union. The new fields of united sovereignty included more civil rights and closer cooperation in social policies and employment policies between member states. The provisions of the Amsterdam Treaty allow for the very first time for a group of countries to use the common institutions with the aim of narrowing cooperation through the so called enhanced cooperation. It also widened the powers of the European Parliament, by increasing its supervision functions and by providing for the co-decision procedure. „*The road is clean*“ for the process of enlargement of the Union. Meanwhile it became clear that there was no institutional framework, adopted for the major enlargement ahead of the EC which could allow for the effective functioning of a Union with more than 27 countries.

The idea behind the Treaty of Nice was to eliminate the defects of the Amsterdam Treaty by finding a solution to the institutional problems, related to the enlargement. It deals with the make-up of the Commission, the weight

of votes in the Council, and with widening the areas where decisions can be made by qualified majority voting. The Treaty of Nice amends the rules facilitating the implementation of the enhanced cooperation and makes cooperation in the field of justice and home affairs more effective. The European Charter of Fundamental Rights, prepared in advance by a special convent, was adopted during the summit in Nice by the presidents of the European Parliament, the European Commission and the Council but did not become a part of the treaty.

By the year 2001 when the Treaty of Nice for reform of the institutions was signed, the aggregate of legislative acts and of the EU was based on eight treaties and more than 50 protocols and annexes. The treaties not only modify the founding treaties for the European Community, but also „produce“ new legislation regarding these treaties. The combination of all those treaties makes European structure ever more complex and difficult to understand for ordinary citizens.

However, it was clear that the Treaty of Nice was just a temporary compromise and even in the time of its adoption it was obvious that the architecture of the Union had to undergo a fundamental reform to guarantee the normal functioning of the Union after the enlargement. Modernization and reform of the Union were necessary for the Union in order for it to fulfil its potential.

During the last decade the European Union has been looking for ways to optimize existing instruments and to strengthen its capacity to act. It became aware of the need for: greater efficiency of the decision-making process; more democracy through increasing the role of the European Parlia-

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ment and of national parliaments; consolidated external coherence. These necessities motivated European leaders to prepare the European Union for better defending the interests of the citizens.

To avoid a paralysis of the decision-making system and to build a European Union closer and easier to understand for its citizens, a Union with effectively working institutions, good governance and capacity for efficient actions, a unique institute was created - the European Convent which was to prepare a project for a European Constitution.

The Intergovernmental Conference (October, 2003 - June, 2004) adopted The Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe, signed in October 2004. In order to include to the greatest possible degree all citizens of the Union in the process of constructing the new legal framework of unified Europe, it was unanimously decided that all countries must adopt the Constitutional Treaty with a referendum.

The idea for creating a European constitution failed because of the negative votes in the referenda in France and the Netherlands in 2005. Obviously the enthusiasm for unification of the political leaders could not motivate and include the citizens in the process, despite the numerous communication campaigns. Europe was slipping. In spite of the statements of the leaders of the member states for resuming the ratification procedure, it was clear to all that the constitution of Europe was dead. After two years of reconsideration, on June 23rd, 2007, European Union leaders agreed on a mandate for a new Intergovernmental Conference tasked to prepare a Reform Treaty by the end of 2007. On October 19th, 2007 the informal European Council in Lisbon agreed on the final text of the treaty. Heads of state and govern-

ment of all 27 member states of the European Union signed the Treaty of Lisbon on December 13th, 2007. This time it was decided for the treaty not to undergo obligatory referenda in each member state, but only in the countries where the constitution requires a plebiscite. Each member state decided whether the ratification would include a referendum or a parliamentary procedure. Ireland was the only country which decided to hold a referendum on the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty. And the result ... turned out to be negative. Germany, Poland, the Czech Republic and other countries also expressed their scepticism regarding the future of the Treaty. This put the EU in a new and deeper crisis.

This time around the member states decided to use all possibilities available for the reanimation of the ratification process and after lengthy negotiations and compromise, the member states guaranteed certain concessions to Ireland, followed by accepting the Treaty in the second referendum and its entering into force.

Thus in practice, by the end of 2009, the enlarged European Union of 27 member states functioned according to rules, created for a Union of 15 countries.

Europeans move slowly and insecurely, but steadily on their way to economic and commercial unity. Strengthening of the positions of the Single Market put an end to customs wars and protectionism, the introduction of the single currency gave new stamina and opportunities, originating from integration and from the scale of the economy of the Euro zone and increased the effectiveness of the Single Market. Ten years after its introduction, the Euro proved to be the second most actively traded currency on

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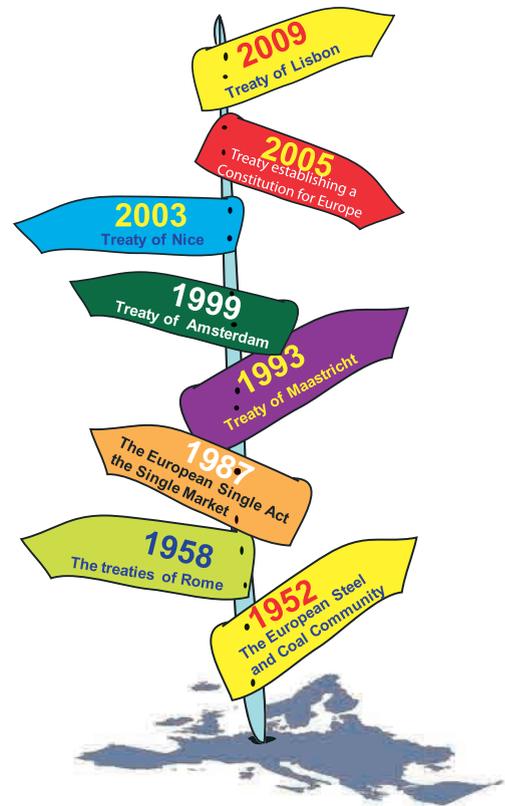
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international exchange markets. The status of the Euro as a world currency, combined with the size and the economic importance of the Euro zone provides the European Union with a more powerful position in the world. Besides an engine for further economic cohesion, for a great number of the European citizens the euro materialises the benefits from European integration.

Europe is both a concrete reality, a part of our everyday life, and something forthcoming. The European Union is unique with the fact that it already has history, but is still a project. Therefore, for the construction of our mutual European home we need the energy and the will of European citizens, but also the efforts of the institutions for the improvement and development of the legal basis of the states which form it and a number of actions and activities which create actual solidarity between the Europeans.



THE LISBON TREATY

The Treaty of Lisbon entered into force on December 1st, 2009. The Treaty of Lisbon amends the existing legislation about the European Union and the European Communities, without replacing it. This treaty marks a new era in the process of building an ever closer union between the peoples of Europe, a union in which the decisions are made by respecting to the fullest the principle of openness and as close to the citizens as possible. The development of European unity does not happen at the expense of member states, on the contrary: the European Union complements the actions of its members when they cannot reach their objectives by themselves. With the Treaty of Lisbon, the two major treaties of the Union are renamed to **Treaty on European Union** and **Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union**. Both treaties are equally significant and have equal judicial authority. The Union obtains legal personality by replacing that of the European Community and becoming its assignee.

The Union has an institutional framework which aims to promote its values, to pursue its goals, to serve its interest, the interests of its citizens and those of the member states, as well as to provide coherence, efficiency and consistency for its actions and policies. The Treaty creates the basis for more decentralised and transparent approach to the implementation of European Union policies and guarantees that decisions are made as close to the citizens as possible. It brings local and regional dimension into the legal framework of the European Union and stipulates that the Union must respect national identity of the member states, typical and characteristic of their key institutions, including regional and local self-government. The Treaty simplifies the allocation of powers between the Union and the Member States, by clearly defining “*who does what*”. Now there are fewer areas, causing confusion and doubt.

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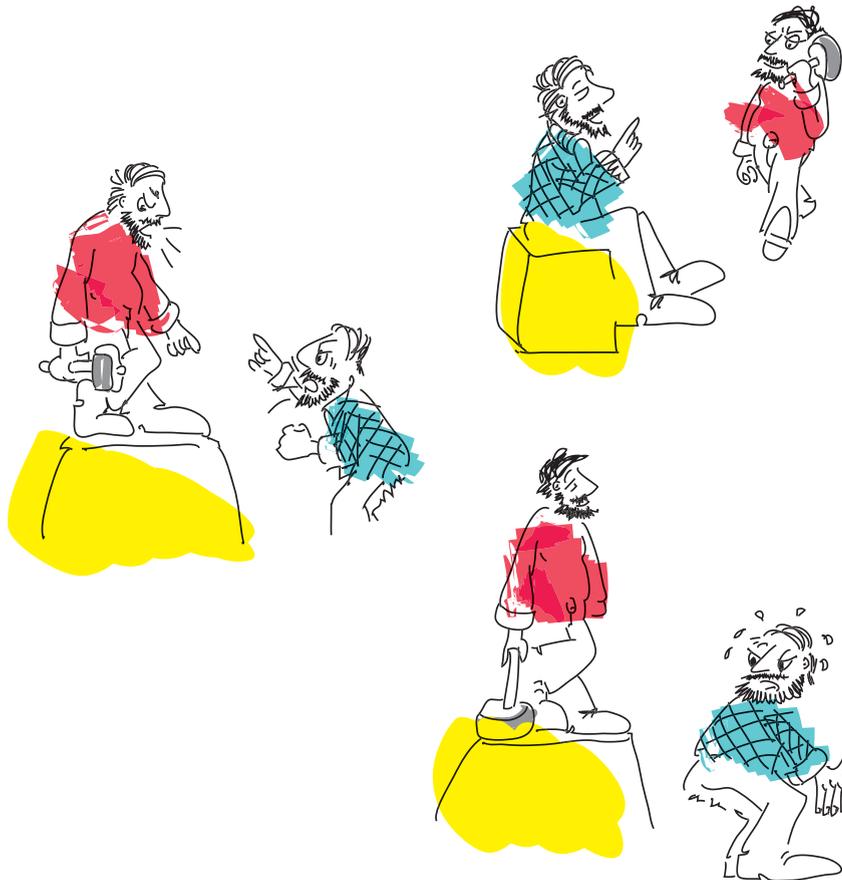
More democratic and more transparent - one Europe with a stronger role of the European Parliament and of national parliaments, with more opportunities for the opinion of the citizens to be heard and a clearer idea about who does what on European and on the national level.

More effective - a European Union with simplified procedures and methods of work, rules for voting, efficient and modern institutions for a Union of 27 member states and increased capacity for action in the priority areas.

Europe of rights and values, freedom, solidarity and security, promoting the values of the Union, including the Charter of Fundamental Rights in the primary European legislation, introducing new mechanisms for solidarity and guarantees for better protection of the European citizens.

Europe as a global power will be achieved by unification of the tools for European foreign policy in the development of new policies as well as by making decisions about them. The Treaty of Lisbon clarifies Europe's position regarding its partners all over the world. It uses the strong sides of Europe's economy, humanitarian area, politics and diplomacy in order to assert European interests and values globally, and at the same time respects the specific interests of the member states in their home affairs.

The Treaty of Lisbon serves as legal framework of the European Union, defining the development of the Union at least for the next 10 years. Today the Union has at its disposal the necessary legal framework and contemporary instruments to respond to future challenges and citizens' demands. This is the treaty which determines, to the greatest extent the parameters of Europe we would live in 2020. Thus, we can say that a new era in the development of the European Union has begun.



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COMPETENCES OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

The Lisbon Treaty expands, specifies and categorises the competences of the European Union. The areas of, delimitation of and the arrangements for exercising the competences of the Union are stipulated by the provisions of the Treaty for each specific field of competence.

The exclusive competence of the Union in a specific area means that only the Union can legislate and adopt legally binding acts, the member states being able to do so themselves only if they are empowered to do so by the Union or for the implementation of Union acts.

One of the important achievements of the Treaty of Lisbon is that it makes the voice of Europe in the world stronger. The Union has competences, according to the provisions of the Treaty on the European Union, for defining and implementing common foreign and security policy, including for gradual formation of common defence policy. The common principles and objectives of the external actions of the Union have been clearly defined: democracy, the rule of law, universality and inseparability of human rights and fundamental freedoms, respect for human integrity, principles of equality and solidarity. The actions of the Union on the international scene are guided by the founding principles of its establishment, development and enlargement, principles it aims to promote in other parts of the world. The ambition for finding solutions to common problems on multilateral basis, particularly within the United Nations Organization. Common foreign and security policy is a subject to specific rules and procedures. It is defined and implemented by the European Council and the Council which make unanimous decisions in this area. Adopting legislation in this area is ruled out. The European Court of Justice has no competence regarding these provisions.

The functions of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign and Security Policy are combined with the functions of a Vice-President of the Commission, thus creating a new institutional active personality with two portfolios (High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy/ Vice-President of the Commission.

The High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy presides over the Council for Foreign Affairs. This increases the coordination in the field of foreign actions and improves the image of the European Union in the world, by attaching an authentic face to the Union and making the promotion of “*common European interest*” more popular.

The Council and the Commission, supported by the High Representative of the Union for Foreign and Security Policy, provide coordination between the various areas of their separated actions, as well as between these areas and the other Community policies.

A new joint service is being created to support the High Representative - European External Action Service, consisting of representatives of the Council, the Commission and the member states’ diplomatic services.

The Union has exclusive competence in the following areas:

- *customs union;*
- *the establishing of the competition rules necessary for the functioning of the internal market;*
- *monetary policy for the member states whose currency is the euro;*
- *the conservation of marine biological resources under the common fisheries policy;*
- *common commercial policy.*

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The position of the High Representative does not create new powers, but rather simplifies the external action of the EU by avoiding duplication of functions and confusion. The High Representative acts on foreign policy issues on the basis of decisions, unanimously made by EU-27 by complementing, without amending the foreign policy or the diplomatic efforts of the individual member states.

The competence of the Union in the area of common foreign and security policy covers all areas of foreign policy as well as all issues regarding the security of the Union, including the gradual formation of common defence policy which can evolve into common defence.

The Union has exclusive competence for the conclusion of international agreements when this is provided for in a legislative act of the Union or is necessary to enable the Union to exercise its internal competence, or insofar as their conclusion may affect common rules or alter their scope.

Shared competence of the Union and the member states in a specific area is expressed by the fact that the Union and the member states may legislate and adopt legally binding acts in this area. In this case member states exercise their competence to the extent that the Union has not exercised its competence or has decided to cease exercising its competence.

Shared competence between the Union and the member states applies in the following principal areas:

- *internal market;*
- *social policy for certain aspects;*
- *economic, social and territorial cohesion;*
- *agriculture and fisheries, excluding the conservation of marine biological resources;*
- *environment;*
- *consumer protection;*
- *transport;*
- *trans-European networks;*
- *energy;*
- *area of freedom security and justice;*
- *common safety concerns in public health matters in certain aspects.*

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The Union has the competence, in the European dimension of certain areas to **carry out actions to support, coordinate or supplement the actions of the member states**, without thereby superseding their competence in these areas.

Legally binding acts of the Union adopted on the basis of the provisions of the Treaties relating to these areas shall not entail harmonisation of member states' laws or regulations.

The Union has the competence to carry out actions to support, coordinate or supplement the actions of the member states in the following areas:

- *protection and improvement of human health;*
- *industry;*
- *culture;*
- *tourism;*
- *education, vocational training, youth and sport;*
- *civil protection;*
- *administrative cooperation.*

The Member States coordinate their economic policies and employment policies for whose defining the Union has competences, according to the Treaty on the functioning of the European Union. To this end, the Council shall adopt measures, in particular broad guidelines for these policies.

The Treaty of Lisbon introduces specific legal basis for humanitarian aid. In the areas of development cooperation and humanitarian aid, the Union has competence to carry out activities and conduct a common policy; however, the exercise of that competence may not result in member states being prevented from exercising their competences. This provision emphasises on the principles of international law and on equity, neutrality and non-discrimination. It stipulated for the creation of a European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps.

The Lisbon Treaty also contains a response to the apprehensions of European citizens regarding the double challenge of climate change and energy policy. For the first time the Treaties contain a section on energy, defining the objectives of Union policy in this area in ensuring the functioning of the energy market, especially security of energy supply, promoting energy efficiency and energy saving as well as the development of new and renewable forms of energy.

The Treaty of Lisbon puts freedom, justice and security on top of its priorities. The European Union is now better equipped to cope with criminal groups, trafficking in human beings across borders, to encourage and support activities in the field of prevention of crime and to support combating terrorism by freezing assets. The Treaty reinforces the commitment of the European Union to develop a common immigration policy. The Lisbon Treaty also includes a “solidarity clause”, pointing out that the Union and its member states act jointly in a spirit of solidarity in case any of the member states becomes the object of a terrorist attack or a victim of a natural or a man-made disaster.

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The European Union Charter of Fundamental Rights and the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms as a part of the Treaties, confirm the rights and the guarantees all citizens have at their disposal. The Charter of Fundamental Rights which is legally binding reinforces the fundamental rights guaranteed by international law, as well as by member states' constitutional traditions.

The European Court of Justice guarantees correct implementation of the Charter.

The reforms in the Lisbon Treaty provide the Union with an opportunity for better implementation of its policies, for ensuring economic growth and competitiveness, improving employment and social conditions, increasing personal and collective security, promoting better environment and better health conditions, developing cohesion and solidarity between the member states as well as scientific and technical progress, and finally – improving the capacity of the European Union to act on the international scene.

INSTITUTIONS OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

The European Union unites independent sovereign states. The European Union is not a purely intergovernmental organisation like the United Nations Organisation because the member countries pool part of their sovereignty and thus they collectively become stronger and more influential, than each of them on its own.

The Union has an institutional framework which aims to promote its values, to pursue its goals, to serve its interest, the interests of its citizens and those of the member states, as well as to provide coherence, efficiency and consistency for its actions and policies.

The pooling of sovereign rights means in practice that the member states create joint institutions and delegate to them part of their decision-making powers so that the decisions on specific issues of mutual interests are democratically made on the European level.

Each institution acts within the powers provided by the Treaties, in line with procedures, conditions and goals, stipulated there. The institutions cooperate loyally with one another.

The European Union Institutions are:

- *European Parliament;*
- *European Council;*
- *Council of the European Union;*
- *European Commission;*
- *Court of Justice of the European Union;*
- *European Central Bank;*
- *The Court of Auditors.*

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INSTITUTIONS OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

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of the European Parliament

There are three main institutions which make decisions.

- ◆ The European Parliament, representing the citizens of the European Union and directly elected by them;
- ◆ The Council of the European Union, representing individual member states;
- ◆ The European Commission, representing the common interests of the Union.

This institutional triangle makes policies and laws, implemented in the whole European Union. As a rule the European Commission proposes new laws while the Parliament and the Council adopt them. Afterwards, the Commission and the member states enact them and the Commission implements them.

The Lisbon Treaty increases the democratic control over the European Union by a stronger role of European Parliament and of national parliaments. It establishes a clearer allocation of powers between the Union and the member states which has to make it easier for the citizens to keep track of „*who is doing what*“.

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

The European Parliament consists of representatives of the citizens of the Union. Their number does not exceed seven hundred and fifty, plus the president. Citizen representation is regressively proportional with a minimal threshold of six representatives by a member state and the maximum of ninety-six seats.

The European Parliament performs, together with the Council, legislative and budgetary functions. It performs political control and has consultative functions according to the conditions, stipulated in the Treaties. **It appoints the President of the European Commission.**

The Treaty of Lisbon increases the number of policy areas in which the directly elected European Parliament approves EU legislation together with the Council (co-decision procedure).



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EUROPEAN COUNCIL

The European Council was created in 1974 in order to form an informal forum for discussion between state heads/government leaders of the member states. It quickly developed into the body, determining European Union goals and defining the approach for their fulfilment, in all spheres of action of the Union.

The forum obtained formal status in the Treaty of Maastricht of 1992 which defined its function to give impetus in defining the political guidelines of European Union development. With entering into force of the Treaty of Lisbon, the Council transforms into an institution. The Lisbon Treaty creates a new permanent position – a President of the European Council. He or she is to be appointed by the European Council for a period of two and a half years. A President can be reappointed once. This provides greater consistence and continuity in the work of the European Council and aims at facilitating cohesion and consensus in the European Council. The president **cannot simultaneously hold any elected position or office nationally**.

The first President of the European Council is Herman Van Rompuy, appointed after extended consultations on the highest political level. As from January 2010, he is responsible for preparing and presiding over the European Council sessions.

COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

The Council, together with the European Parliament, performs legislative and budgetary functions.

It performs functions in defining policies and coordination, in line with the conditions, stipulated in the Treaties. The Council consists of one representative of each member state on ministerial level who can legally bind the government of the member state he/she represents and exercise its right to vote.

The new system of voting in the Council provides for „qualified majority voting“. It is based on the principle of double majority: adopting a certain decision would require support by at least 55% of Council members, including at least fifteen members and representing member states inhabited by not less than 65% of the Union population. In order to make it impossible for a small number of countries with great population to hinder a given decision, the blocking minority must include at least four members of the Council, otherwise it is accepted that there is a qualified majority, even if the population criteria has not been fulfilled.

The European Council decided that the new voting system will enter into force in 2013. During the first three years - until 2017 - member states will be able to demand the adoption of a given act to be with qualified majority as defined by the existing system, according to the Treaty of Nice.

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The Treaty of Lisbon introduces qualified majority voting to new policy areas. It is in the best interest of the European Union to adopt a simplified approach to decision-making, including on issues like combating climate change, energy security and emergency humanitarian aid for the world's hot spots. Some of the changes are connected to citizens' initiatives, diplomatic and consular protection and to issues of procedure. Unanimity is preserved in areas as taxation, foreign policy, defence and social security.

The Council holds sessions in various configurations, the list of which is adopted by the European Council. The treaties define two of the configurations as obligatory and both of them are assignees of the former General Affairs and Foreign Affairs Councils.

Council of the European Union configurations:

- *Economic and financial affairs;*
- *Justice and home affairs;*
- *Employment, social policy, health and consumer affairs;*
- *Competitiveness;*
- *Transport, telecommunications and energy;*
- *Agriculture and fisheries;*
- *Environment;*
- *Education, youth and culture*

According to the Treaties, the General Affairs Council provides coherence in the work of the various configurations of the Council. It prepares the sessions of the European Council and together with the President of the European Council and with the Commission observes for the implementation of the decisions made.

The Foreign Affairs Council elaborates the foreign actions of the Council in line with the strategic guidelines defined by the European Council and provides coherence in the actions of the Council.

In its work the Council is facilitated by the Committee of Permanent Representatives from the governments of the member states (COREPER).

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EUROPEAN COMMISSION

The European Commission is the executive body of the Union and provides for the implementation of the common interest of the Union by undertaking appropriate initiatives in this direction. The Commission manages the everyday activities of the European Union: policy implementation, programme implementation and usage of funds, and bears the whole responsibility for the implementation of the decisions, made by the Parliament and the Council. It observes the implementation of the Treaties, of European Union legislation and of the measures, adopted by the institutions in accordance with these Treaties.

It implements the budget and manages the programmes, performing coordination, implementation and management functions, according to the conditions, provided for in the Treaties. With the exception of the Common Foreign and Security Policy, it provides the external representation of the Union.

The Commission has the exclusive right to propose legislation to the Union. No other institution has this right.

The Commission implements its obligations in full independence. The members of the Commission may neither seek, nor accept instructions from any government, institution, body, office or agency. The term of the Commission lasts for five years. The Members of the Commission are elected based on their general competence and their commitment to the European idea among persons whose independence is beyond doubt.

The European Commission consists of one representative of each member state, including the President of the Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy who is also one of the Vice-Presidents of the Commission.

The members of the Commission are chosen among the citizens of the member states on the basis of strictly equal system of rotation, reflecting the demographic and geographic variety of all member states of the Union.

Bearing in mind the exclusive powers of the European Commission, the role of its President has been described in detail in the Treaties. The internal organization of the Commission, the number and the type of portfolios are determined by a decision of the President. He appoints all Vice-Presidents, except for the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, who is a Vice-President by rights.

The Treaties stipulate that after November 1, 2014 the Commission will be made up of members, including its President and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, whose number will correspond to two-thirds of the number of member states. After the entering into force of this provision, the member states must be treated equally in determining the sequence of participation and the duration of term of their citizens in the Commission. A provision in the treaty stipulates that the difference in the number between the total seats, taken by citizens of two member-states in several consecutive colleges of the Commission cannot be more than one.

In order to overcome the Irish veto against the Lisbon Treaty, the European Council unanimously decided that the next Commission will also have one representative from each member state. The question of the reduced college of the Commission will be decided upon only in 2019.

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The European Council, recognising the results from the European Parliament elections and after respective consultation, with qualified majority proposes to the Parliament a candidate for the position of President of the Commission. The President of the Commission reaches an agreement with the Council about the list of persons, nominated for members of the Commission.

The President, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the other members of the Commission are approved by an en bloc vote by the European Parliament. Based on this approval, the Commission is appointed by the European Council with the qualified majority of its members.

The member states are obliged to respect the independence of the Commission and not to try and influence the members and the President of the Commission.

In September 2009 the European Parliament approved **Jose Manuel Barroso** for his second term as President of the European Commission. The new college of the European Commission was approved by the European Parliament in February 2010.

The new European Commission presented an ambitious ten-year programme for the development of the European Union. **EUROPE 2020 - A Strategy for Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Growth** provides the framework for development of the Union over the next 10 years. The Strategy for the European Union in 2020 sets differentiated national goals which are to be coordinated with the European Commission but the decision on which would depend on the governments of the member states.

In the spring of 2010 the European Council agreed in principle to the new Strategy for Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Growth by stating that it will maintain *“close cooperation with the European Parliament and other EU institution. National parliaments, social partners, regions and other stakeholders will be involved, as to increase the ownership of the strategy.”*

It is expected that the new strategy for the development of the European Union by 2020 will be formally accepted by the European Council in June 2010.



CONSULTATIVE BODIES

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of the European Parliament

The institutional system of the European Union stipulates that the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission shall be assisted by an Economic and Social Committee and a Committee of the Regions acting in an advisory capacity.

The Economic and Social Committee consists of representatives of organisations of employers, of the employed, and of other parties representative of civil society, notably in socio-economic, civic, professional and cultural areas.

The make-up of the Economic and Social Committee shall not exceed 350 members.

The members of the Committee are appointed for a period of five years. The Council approves a list of the members, based on the proposals made by each of the member states.

The Committee of the Regions consists of representatives of regional and local bodies who either hold a regional or local authority electoral mandate or are politically accountable to an elected assembly.

Members of the Economic and Social Committee and of the Committee of the Regions are not legally bound with any mandatory instructions. They must be completely independent in the performance of their duties in the Union's general interest.

The European Parliament, the Council and the Commission can consult the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions in the cases, provided for by the Treaties. They can express their opinion on their own initiative, if they consider this to be appropriate.

The make-up of the Economic and Social Committee shall not exceed 350 members.

The members of the Committee and an equal number of substitutes are appointed for a period of five years. The Council approves a list of members and substitutes, corresponding to the proposals made by each member state.

The members of the Committee may not simultaneously be members of the European Parliament.

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THE NEW ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

A MORE DEMOCRATIC AND VISIBLE EUROPE

The Treaty of Lisbon provides for new legislative powers of the European Parliament in a great part of EU legislation. More than 40 new areas are included under the co-decision procedure for adoption of new laws between the Parliament and the Council of Ministers, including agriculture, energy policy, immigration and European Union funds. The Parliament has the final say in the adoption of European Union budget. The Parliament, as the only directly elected European institution has at its disposal new means to hold European Union institutions accountable to their citizens.

In a moment when Europe and the rest of the world are faced with new challenges as globalization, demographic changes, climate change, energy security and terrorism, there is no country that can cope with these challenges by itself. Europe can respond to the concerns of its citizens only if European Union institutions work together, more efficiently, more responsibly, more transparently and more consistently, by speaking with a single voice. The Reform Treaty makes the European Parliament more prepared for the challenges of today and of tomorrow. The Parliament has the right to propose future changes in the Treaty. In the words of European Parliament President **Jerzy Buzek**, the implementation of the new Treaty is a key priority in the short term.

The European Parliament has established the practice for applying non-traditional methods for inclusion of European civil society in support of its work. The development and the experience of the Citizens' Agora Forum, organised by the European Parliament, is an opportunity for practical implementation of the principles for effective citizen inclusion in the process of discussing issues from the legislative agenda of the Parliament, stipulated in the Lisbon Treaty.



So it is so difficult in our free, democratic society to find a proper way because very often it happens so that our freedom could be against the freedom of another person.

The Citizens' Agora Forum provides a platform for connection between the European Parliament and the European civil society. It is a unique tool with regard to its structure and scope for discussing the issues from the legislative agenda of the Parliament with the citizens.

As a forum, Agora unites the voices of European citizens and their elected representatives. It provides the participants with an opportunity to take part in the European debate and to define proposals for specific policies, based on everyday experience, in order to cope with the problems, faced by the Union.

The Agora forum can be beneficial to the work of the Members of the European Parliament in developing project reports for parliamentary committees, i.e. before a given issue is voted for by the respective committee. Debates will be geared toward priority issues in the European Parliament agenda and questions which have obvious effect on the everyday life of citizens. Thus, the forum will contribute to the clarification of questions which are often limited to discussion with lobbyists.

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New powers mean greater responsibility. As the only directly elected European Union institution, the Parliament has at its disposal new instruments in order to guarantee that the voice of 500 million citizens of the Union is heard and to hold European Union institutions accountable to them. The Parliament guarantees that the Charter of Fundamental Rights, part of the Treaty of Lisbon, is effectively implemented. The same is true for the new legislation about the Citizens' initiative which allows for the people to propose new policies, in case more than 1 million signatures are collected.

*The first issue arose when the EP refused to approve the Swift agreement, which expressed the will of the Commission and the member states to make legal the large-scale transfer of bank data to the USA to the purposes of the fight against terrorism. The Council believed that EP will approve the agreement, as it always does. The discussions in the European Parliament committees demonstrated that the committees clearly realize their new powers and the mechanisms they have at their disposal. Thus Members of the European Parliament rejected the agreement with 378 votes in favour, 196 against and 31 abstentions. After the vote Home Affairs Commissioner **Cecilia Malmström**, said: "I remain convinced that the programme enhances the security of our citizens: it would be the role of the Commission to make sure that all the relevant safeguards for EU citizens' privacy and data protection are duly included in any possible future agreement." European Commissioner for justice, fundamental rights and citizenship **Viviane Reding** pointed out that they "will be preparing the recommendation for authorising the negotiation of a future EU-US data protection and information sharing agreement".*

Moreover, it will guarantee the right of national parliaments to oppose to legislative proposals on the European level, provided that they believe that these proposals address issues which would be better decided on the national level.

Only months after the entering into force of the Lisbon Treaty, the euphoria has already evaporated. The European Commission, the European Parliament and the member states have started competing for their new places in the institutional framework of the Union. Since the Treaty makes changes in the roles in Brussels, the affected stakeholders gradually start to realize that fact. Several months after the entering into force of the new provisions, the discrepancies between EP and the other institutions have already started.

The European Parliament showed that it could effectively use its new powers. The Parliament can put into practice the spirit of the Lisbon Treaty by expanding and diversifying the opportunities for more effective participation of citizens in parliamentary life. This will increase confidence in the European Parliament and will provide for better dynamics in parliamentary debate.

from page 45:

When we are fighting for freedom, we are also fighting for dignity for every person.

Solidarity is necessary if we want to be free. It also means responsibility.

How to be more competitive? The answer is, to be more innovative!

We need to unlock the potential of our regions.

When we are doing something together, it has a European added value.

From a democratic perspective, in the fight for freedom and for the human rights the most important institution in each member state is the Parliament.

EP President Jerzy Buzek's public lecture "Europe and Freedom", Sofia University, 3 March 2010

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THE ROLE OF NATIONAL PARLIAMENTS

For the first time National Parliaments have been fully recognized as part of the democratic wholeness of the European Union. Protocol (№ 1) to the Treaties regarding the role of National Parliaments in the European Union includes specific provisions, which guarantee more active participation of national parliaments in the work of the Union.

In particular, national parliaments can act as „keepers“ of the principle of subsidiarity (*this principle aims to guarantee that decisions are made as close to citizens as possible and that it is continually made sure that actions on the Community level are justified with view of the opportunities available at the national, regional and local levels*). They have the right to express their position about a certain issue at a very early stage, before a given proposal has been considered in detail by the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union.

Commission consultation documents (*green and white papers and communications*) shall be forwarded directly by the Commission to National Parliaments upon publication. The Commission shall also forward the annual legislative programme as well as any other instrument of legislative planning or policy to national Parliaments, at the same time as to the European Parliament and the Council.

Draft legal acts originating from a group of member states, the Court of Justice, the European Central Bank or the European Investment Bank shall be forwarded to National Parliaments by the Council.

National Parliaments may send to the Presidents of the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission a reasoned opinion on whether a draft legal act complies with the principle of subsidiarity.

It is provided that an eight-weeks period shall elapse between a draft legal act being made available to National Parliaments in the official languages of the Union and the date when it is placed on a provisional agenda for the Council for its adoption or for adoption of a position under a legislative procedure. Exceptions shall be possible in cases of urgency.

The European Parliament and National Parliaments shall together determine the organisation and promotion of effective and regular interparliamentary cooperation within the Union.

A conference of Parliamentary Committees for Union Affairs may submit any contribution it deems appropriate for the attention of the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission. That conference shall in addition promote the exchange of information and best practice between national Parliaments and the European Parliament, including their special committees. It may also organise interparliamentary conferences on specific topics, in particular to debate matters of common foreign and security policy, including common security and defence policy. Contributions from the conference shall not bind National Parliaments and shall not prejudice their positions.

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EUROPEAN OMBUDSMAN

The European Ombudsman is a mediator between citizens and European Union institutions. He receives and investigates complaints by European Union citizens, businesses and associations, as well as by anyone who resides permanently in a European Union member states or whose registered office are in one of them. Businesses, associations or other bodies with a registered office in the Union may also complain to the Ombudsman.

The European Ombudsman is appointed by the European Parliament for a period of five years, corresponding to the term of the European Parliament. The European Ombudsman can be reappointed.

Democracy, transparency and good governance involve citizens' participation. In fact, transparency is a major aspect of good democratic governance. It is transparency that makes it possible for the citizens to critically review the actions of public authorities, to assess their performance and to effectively use their political rights, freedom of speech in particular, as well as to participate in public affairs.

The complaints which the citizens have chosen to address to the European Ombudsman prove that European Union citizenship is a reality and not just an aspiration.

Citizens can use their right to turn to the European Ombudsman not only as a way to seek compensation for a specific case of injustice, but also as a way to achieve greater transparency.

By protecting the rights of citizens and civil participation on the European Union level, the European Ombudsman contributes to the gradual development of the democratic process and to strengthening the positions of the political agenda on the supranational level.

By creating European citizenship, the Treaty of Maastricht expresses the commitment of the Union not only to respect a list of rights, but also to consolidate the legitimacy of the operation of Union institutions through political participation of the citizens.

The European Ombudsman represents a mechanism that can be used by the citizens to this purpose and an active agent who aspires to encouraging the citizens to use their political rights and supports them in so doing.

He investigates cases of „maladministration“ by European Union institutions and bodies. Maladministration means poor or failed administration - in other words, when an institution fails to abide the laws and does not respect the principles of good administration or violated human rights. Some examples are:

- ◆ unfairness,
- ◆ discrimination,
- ◆ abuse of power ,
- ◆ failure to reply or refusal of information,
- ◆ unnecessary delay,
- ◆ incorrect procedures.

The Ombudsman performs investigations after a complaint received or on his own initiative. He implements his functions in absolute independence and equity. He does neither seek nor accept instructions from any government or organisation.



Challenges to the
Implementation
of the Treaty

CITIZENS' INITIATIVES

CITIZENS' INITIATIVES

Greater involvement
of the citizens of Europe

More visibility of
the EU decisions
in the member states

“Transnationalization”
- the public spheres
of the member states
more open to each other

“Not less than one million citizens who are nationals of a significant number of Member States may take the initiative of inviting the European Commission, within the framework of its powers, to submit any appropriate proposal on matters where citizens consider that a legal act of the Union is required for the purpose of implementing the Treaties.”

Treaty on European Union, Art. 11

Citizens' initiative is a new element in the Treaty of Lisbon, introducing one entirely new mechanism for democracy of participation in the European Union. The Treaty of Lisbon introduces the opportunity for the European citizens to be able to call on the Commission to submit an appropriate proposal on matters where citizens consider that a legal act of the Union is necessary regarding the implementation of the Lisbon Treaty.

“I am very excited about this idea, which I believe represents a real step forward in the democratic life of the union. It is a concrete example of what we talk about so often in Brussels: “bringing Europe closer to its citizens”. It is my conviction that fostering a lively cross-border debate about what we are doing in Brussels will lead to better rule-making, inspired by the grass roots”, inter-institutional relations and administration commissioner Maroš Šefčovič said for EUROPE Gateway.

Immediately after the Treaty entered into force, the European Commission started the preparation of respective draft legislation for the purpose of regulating citizens' initiative.



Procedures and conditions, necessary for submitting such an initiative must be introduced in a regulation defining a minimum number of countries whose citizens support the initiative.

At the end of March 2010, after consultations with stakeholders, the European Commission submitted a proposal according to which for the first time the public will have the opportunity to directly address its requests for new European legislation.

The proposed procedure stipulates that the public can call upon the European Commission to make legislative proposals in areas where the Commission has the powers to do so, in case at least one million citizens from at least one-third of the member states (i.e. at least nine member states at the moment) sign in support for the initiative. To guarantee the genuine pan-European dimension of the initiatives, it is foreseen that a requirement for a minimal number of signatures should be introduced for each member state. It is of crucial importance that this revolutionary new element of the democratic process is reliable, as well as that protection of personal data is guaranteed. According to a great part of the participants in the consultations for the initiative, there should be no limits to where and how the citizens sign

Citizens' Initiatives

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for the initiative - in the streets or online. To avoid fraud, the proposal of the European Commission foresees that all the participants should state their home address, date of birth, nationality and personal identification number (ID number, passport number or social security). The organisers must also notify who funds the petition.

After collecting 300 000 signatures from citizens of at least three countries, the petition shall be registered with the European Commission, which is then to decide whether the initiative falls into its scope of powers. After that the organizers of the petition will have one year to collect the rest of the signatures.

If the initiative fulfils the criteria, the Commission shall investigate the issue and decide whether to prepare a legislative proposal, to start an inquiry or not to take any further actions. The decision of the Commission must be publicly motivated.

It is expected that the European Parliament and the member states, represented in the Council, will accept the proposal of the European Commission by the end of the year, so that the first initiatives could be carried out in 2011. This opportunity for citizens' initiative is also a challenge to us, the European citizens, and our activeness will determine whether the European Union will go beyond the “borders of Brussels” and will attain a more democratic image.

GREATER INVOLVEMENT OF THE CITIZENS OF EUROPE

The citizens today have greater knowledge and ability to participate in the political, technical, and administrative government decisions that affect them. Information is abundant, widespread and the information technologies have considerably facilitated the access to it. Their involvement in decision-making is encouraged, because it is viewed as fundamental to the democratic theory and practice. Nevertheless, direct citizen participation is often discussed with scepticism and even approached with precaution. A frequently voiced argument is that people do not have the time, preparation or interest to be directly involved in public affairs and therefore the representative democracy, or indirect citizen participation, is the most effective form of government. At the same time, the challenge to involve citizens in policy processes is a central theme in discussions about modernizing governance and reducing the democratic deficit not just in the EU but world-wide.

It could be assumed, of course, that the current interest in citizens' involvement is just a reaction to the criticisms of analysts and normative political theory. The developments in the governance policies and public management demonstrate however that it is more likely a response to significant shifts in the models of governing and in the ways the civil society operates.

How to involve citizens in policy making occupies important space in the discussions over modernizing governance and building a stronger civil society. It implies employment of more horizontal models - collaborative processes of collective problem solving that involves partnership and interdependence - and a more organized, diverse and empowered civil society. In addition, advances in communication technologies have created new potential for practical methods of involvement. But the effectiveness is still

E-information is the first stage of e-engagement. It represents a one-way relationship from governments / parliaments to citizens. The capability of the internet to present well structured information 24/7 is a major advantage at this stage used actively throughout Europe. Further developments are planned from a "passive" to a more "active" delivery mode based on a profile of interest of the citizen (e-enabling), who is automatically kept up to date with relevant information.



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difficult to be judged and ensured, especially at the horizontal level, which demands complementary paths for involvement, corresponding to the idea of collaboration.

As a starting point it is essential to form an understanding of what the participation of citizens is needed for. It is a fact of life that citizens do not necessarily engage in the affairs of government but may act instead as subjects of the public bureaucracy. They do not actively measure or monitor the activities of their government. Many do not vote and have minimal or no interaction with the authorities; some feel ineffective in dealing with public bureaucracies and bureaucrats.

There are various approaches to this issue. One approach is to view citizens as the owners of government who have a duty to get involved in public affairs and instruct politicians and public administrators in “shareholder” demands. Thus, reasons for involvement will be to provide citizens with an opportunity to make policy demands, allowing governments to obtain social knowledge based on the experience of individuals and communities, or contributing to social development.

Another approach is to view citizens as investing resources in the community and government, from which they expect to receive value. The value perspective focuses on the gains and benefits citizens receive from government and tries to identify its worth to them. In any case the social development initiatives benefit from citizen involvement in at least three ways:

- ◆ first, civic involvement creates public value by itself, as it strengthens the community, provides opportunities for the creation of social capital and allows the people to be more proactive in the determination of their future.

- ◆ second, the expected impacts of social services and social programs are co-produced, which facilitates the required changes and increases the probability of effective achievement of expected goals.
- ◆ third, citizen involvement can include some degree of monitoring and social control, thus promoting greater accountability for public decision makers and management.

Therefore how, then, can governance practices effectively promote citizen participation and strengthen democracy? The recent developments in the EU and the signing of the Lisbon Treaty in particular provide immediate answers: by improving the availability, timeliness and interpretability of relevant information to citizens and civic organizations; by providing opportunity for ideas and feedback from citizens and civic organizations; and by introducing a flexible and results-oriented management style that will allow effective reaction and change in response to citizens' needs and feedback.

From today's perspective and in the projection of the next decade all these answers have accompanying challenges.

Convince not neglect

As of today, a significant percentage of the population is disconnected from the European policies. For the large majority of the Europeans, as far as they are concerned, Brussels could be one Mars. There are numerous explanations and answers to this problem from both politicians and academics that have performed extensive studies of the situation of modern European democracies.

“e-Democracy consists of all electronic means of communication that enable/empower citizens in their efforts to hold rulers/politicians accountable for their actions in the public realm. Depending on the aspect of democracy being promoted, e-democracy can employ different techniques: (1) for increasing the transparency of the political process; (2) for enhancing the direct involvement and participation of citizens; (3) improving the quality of opinion formation by opening new spaces of information and deliberation.”

Kies et al. (Evaluation of the Use of New Technologies in order to Facilitate Democracy in Europe. E-democratizing the Parliaments and Parties of Europe. 2003)

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One of the underlying factors of the largely discussed democratic deficit in the EU is the limited transnationalization and integration of civil society in Europe. This multinational civil society does not easily fit into the traditional concepts of civic participation. So, the efforts to develop a European public space attempt to compensate for its fragmentation and for the limitations of political representation at the EU level.

The relationship between collective action, understood as a range of mobilizations and forms of interest representation, and social membership, which has traditionally been used as an indicator of societal bonding, is not as straightforward in the 21st century as it was during the 20th. The advanced access to education and communication technologies make individuals more autonomous from formal group belonging. As a result, social membership becomes more complex, more fluid and less community based.

With all that has been said about alienation from politics, newspaper headlines tell us that people still care deeply about certain issues and are ready to demonstrate it with action when the institutions appear immune to arguments. Where citizens think they can influence the outcome and participation matters, they get involved. With the collapse of the Berlin Wall Europe found itself in a much-enlarged (to the East) democratic space. Never before has there been such a large number of politically active, transnational networks motivated by the *“interests and passions”* of citizens to promote and protect the quality of their democracy. In this unprecedented favourable context, how does one explain the widespread discontent with the practice of “real existing” democracy in Europe.

Citizens' reactions have ranged from indifference, neglect and “enough is enough”, through suspicion and mistrust of politicians, to overt hostility

towards “politics” - whether of the left, right or centre. The tendency to “replace citizens rather than represent them” is one of the intrinsic dangers of democracy when it relies heavily on the technocracy of experts and specialised knowledge. The challenge is to connect and the policy development clearly shows that the politicians are working hard on it. Along with the better quality of representation, the offer now is for direct participation. Involvement, however, will make very little difference, unless it contributes to the results.

The Lisbon Treaty is offering a response to the sense of disconnection between the citizens and their representation. It introduces more participatory elements that complement the political process of participatory democracy. Setting out the principles, it is asking citizens to pronounce on the details of implementation and thus give the Initiative a democratic mandate. Without underestimating the dramatic importance of ground rules and procedures however, the core new challenge is that this deal will be particularly vulnerable to indifference. Judging from the impact so far calls back to an old anecdote:

the audience in a theatre hall is waiting for the start of the performance, when the theatre manager comes out to announce its cancellation. He explains that the lead actor had just had a fatal stroke in his dressing room. A lady cries out from the balcony, “Quick, give him an artificial respiration.” “My dear lady”, the manager says, “he is dead. An artificial respiration can’t possibly help”. “Maybe”, says the lady, “but it won’t do any harm”.

Only in our case there is the risk that it will.

E-consultation facilitates provision of feedback on certain issues put forward by government (e-engaging the citizenry through online surveys and discussion fora). Through e-participation governments could support active input by citizens and allow bottom up ideas to influence the political agenda. Since the responsibility and the final decision on policy formulation still rests with governments, e-participation could only be partial in nature.



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Therefore promising as it is, the contribution of the Citizens' Initiative and the other methods of involvement to the restoration of trust is conditional on civic participation being valued as essential to policy outcome; on going dialogue and maintaining relationships; setting in place understandable communications and processes; respect and encouragement; reach out to all communities; seeking early involvement, consideration of and response to citizens' input in a timely manner, accounting of all perspectives and insights; achieving quality of the collaboration by evaluating its effectiveness; promoting on going education of citizens and provision of financial and technical support where needed.

Indeed, **one of the best ways to enhance the participation of individuals will be through the creation of strong associational networks among them.**

Differentiation

Today we have more questions than answers. For instance,

What forms of involvement will be appropriate for what kinds of issues?

What is likely to generate more legitimacy and effectiveness, given the specificity and the constraints of the issues?

Where does the risk of harm come from and is there recognition of it?

Empirical evidence is only partial.

We have seen that where self-selection of citizens' representatives is involved, the outcome is biased towards organized, high-resource interests.

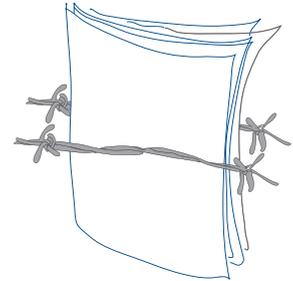
We have learnt that a random selection results in a closer approximation of real public opinion.

We have witnessed how when experts are brought together with ordinary citizens, the technical complexity of pursued decisions can be reduced in the dialogue.

From an empirical perspective, governments are in democratic deficit when their citizens come to believe that they cannot use their participatory opportunities and resources to achieve responsiveness. Deficits have appeared in the many new forms of “citizen engagement”, which have developed in response to deficits in representative democracy. For these forms of participation to function democratically, all potentially affected by the decisions of a government should have the opportunity to influence them, in proportion to their stake in the outcome.

The claim that the EU was in democratic deficit reflects the growing expectations for inclusiveness, transparency, accountability and ultimately making Europe a place of possibilities that came with political integration. It implies institutions, and the European Parliament most of all, that allow measuring according to democratic norms. The trends in governing, and the more so in the complex EU governing, are towards growing technicality and expertise. No citizen can possibly know or understand all the public spheres with their advanced developments. This means that the business of government is reserved for experts who are technocrats and who need to find ways to convince the public that their course of action is in its best interest.

Every citizen is affected by a variety of decisions. It is clear that even informed position on each one of them is a burden which people cannot be expected to bear. Also, they cannot and should not be confronted with a



At present, practices of e-democracy, launched to involve citizen opinion in policy making, are few in number, scattered, and still of a very experimental nature, lacking universally acknowledged methodologies.

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choice between politics and competing forms of engagement such as family and friends, interest and hobby groups or personal causes. Ideally, choosing a representative to represent and protect their interests would suffice, with the additional option to join associations that fight other battles. In other words citizens do not need to participate directly in decision making. They only should be able to trust their representatives for withstanding their values and interests.

In this way the citizens will have the chance to channel their time and efforts to a limited number of issues that are the most sensitive to them and the political conflict matters most. This makes the investment of knowledge and attention in pursuing change manageable and offers people the option to **divide their relationships to government between those of active participation and those of trust.**

While trust is in greater deficit, active participation has been given a variety of innovative opportunities: advisory councils, representation at public hearings, focus groups and advocacy groups, standing on monitoring and consultative committees, stakeholder forums and citizens' panels, participatory budgeting, neighbourhood councils and deliberative polling. More often, however, the administrations seek input as a strategy for gaining advice and avoiding pressures rather than citizen empowerment in decision making.

The public increasingly expects to have a voice in matters that affect it. So it is hard to tell whether the cause of its political disengagement is the poor performance of political institutions, the growing critical capacity of the younger generations; the declining participation in social groups or a general disinterest in public policy debates, or some mix of the above.

The identification of the cause could be essential so far as the new forms of democratization through involvement can equally generate democratic deficits.

The most inclusive format of the referendum sometimes produces outcomes that are hard to interpret because it demands an alternative yes/no response from voters on complex and multi-dimensional questions. The majority of other formats are less inclusive because they are usually based on self-selected representation of non-government activists. Thus paradoxically enhanced opportunities for citizen participation may increase political inequality since they tend to favour groups that are better educated and abler. And participation without power can actually deepen the disconnection when the engagement proves fruitless.

Participatory procedures are believed to (1) increase the motivation of those involved, (2) enhance the knowledge and values basis of policy-making, (3) initiate a process of social learning, (4) open up opportunities for conflict resolution and achieving the common good, and (5) improve the level of acceptance and legitimacy of political decisions. Over the last few decades all democratic systems have experimented with new ways of engaging citizens, gaining information, and generating informed public opinion. These experiments have little to do with organized party politics or formal political institutions. Most are **functional and segmented by policy area**.

European institutions have to connect with citizens because the decisions ahead will be of strategic importance for their lives. The Union needs more trust, more transparency, a more inclusive decision-making process and, above all, political accountability for those in charge.



We should keep in mind that the EU is the only guarantee for preserving the different cultural identities and this means that there is not one European culture, there are many European cultures and each deserves to be kept. It is a pool in which all these cultures can live together and exchange. I'm coming from Saarland, close to the French border, I am a German and I am European.

When you go deeper, you discover that the EU deserves really the respect of everybody because it keeps our future.

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The debate on the future of Europe, launched in 2001, is one example of attempted involvement. It continued across the Union with hundreds of conferences and seminars where Convention-related issues were debated in public. One plenary session of the Convention was entirely dedicated to hearing the positions of representatives of civil society, and a parallel plenary session to a Youth Convention involving 210 young Europeans in an innovative process of debate with final recommendations. Overall, it is difficult to question the transparency of the Convention proceedings with respect to civil society. Citizens, however, were not mobilized in sufficiently large numbers by this exercise. Public opinion then more or less neglected the European debate and the functioning of the Union. Hardly surprising, as the institutional reform, which the Convention revolved around, is a highly technical issue that not many people can make sense of.

There is widespread belief that the internet and other digital technologies can be used to broaden and deepen the democratic process, making it more transparent, inclusive and accessible. But is e-participation achieving this? We have a large number of software applications being used in e-participation projects, which range from weblogs and alert mechanisms to the more sophisticated consultation platforms. Technological innovations concern new forms of access, such as mobile phones and new processing and handling options.

The greatest concentration of tools at present is in the consultation field. In many countries online consultation offerings on a national level have been already institutionalized and readily accessible. However, the quality varies significantly between simple polls and complex consultations. In the case of complaints and petitions, the offers vary strongly depending on national laws.

Offers by non-governmental organizations designed to increase transparency address processes on both legislature and executive level. They round off government offers or highlight the need for transparent processes which government institutions fail to satisfy. ICT also provides tools for empowering non-government players, for example, by compiling public information concerning the work of MPs. Activism, campaigns, lobbying represent the technically most advanced forms of e-participation.

Tools that provide information in a user-orientated manner promise added value for participation, such as portals with search functions and indexes as well as possibilities to track the processing status of inquiries. By comparison, the number of cooperation offerings is small. It is a demanding form of participation and is hence quite seldom used. The use of ICT for this purpose is still limited to a largely experimental level.

A barrier to current e-participation initiatives is the large and diverse range of stakeholders which have different needs and preferences, diverse interests, backgrounds, perspectives, and linguistic and technical capabilities. Social diversity makes placing the stakeholder at the centre of the design process a difficult task. This barrier reflects the concern about how organisations need to integrate e-participation into their routine structures and policy processes. There is no point in inviting citizens to interact - online or offline – if no mechanism exists to process inputs, respond to them and feed them into the policy process. The result would just look marginal and tokenistic.

In the foreseeable future there will be citizens who only use technology minimally, citizens who have a wide range of skills and experience in the latest technologies and citizens with a wide range of literacy and communication skills. In addition, there will be citizens who like talking about civic

from page 65:

The reinforcement of mobility should not be limited to the younger generation only.

We have to empower people to include themselves into societies and this is hard work, especially for adults.

In this field it is the European Parliament that takes the decisions – we have the legislative power over the European programmes, concretely when it comes to culture and education, media, youth and citizenship.

Keep in mind that you have to have a vision and this vision means to bring these European values forward and to base all our politics on these common values. And therefore I think we have to work on this.

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issues and want more opportunities to do so and there will be others who can only be involved when an issue is close to their own interests. So maybe the clue to this challenge is **differentiation of citizens' involvement in the different policy spheres, forming circles of competence with employment of varied methods.**

Addressing the myths

The shift from public consultation to citizen engagement reflects an interest in creating more interactive forms of participation that lead to policy learning and promote the development of citizenship skills and capacity. Although the objective of encouraging more effective citizen involvement is almost universally recognised, once the idea moves from rhetoric to reform it is met with serious resistance. A challenge in making the reform happen is to eliminate the myths surrounding citizen involvement.

In an enthusiasm for involving citizens, it might be assumed that every public policy issue should be subject to citizen involvement. This is neither practical, nor useful. On many issues, government has little policy room in which to manoeuvre or has a strong commitment to a particular course of action, from which it is not ready to deviate. If it asks the citizens what they think and thus give them the illusion that room for influence exists but then ignores the input, the effect could be reverse.

In some democracies civil society organizations and citizens are already facing consultation overload and make their own distinctions between consultation and meaningful consultation in which it seems worth participating. On the other hand, if departments unilaterally decide that a policy issue is not of interest to citizens or that their input is of no value to government and cross involvement out, they will endanger relationship with the public.

Therefore the challenge appears to boil down to establishing when citizen involvement is required and valuable, and when it is not.

Another myth is that public involvement has to be either through individuals or through organizations, and that one happens at a cost to the other. Actually, the two play a complementary role. Voluntary organizations are spaces for the exercise of citizenship per se and means of connecting citizens to government. They serve as arenas for deliberation and vehicles for collective action that link citizens to policy processes. Involvement should not only promote the direct participation of individuals, but also encourages the development of strong associational networks with active, democratic memberships.

One other myth that causes perhaps the greatest anxiety is that if administrations boost their role in involving citizens, it will be at the expense of the role that parliamentarians have to play. It is rooted in the traditional distribution of legitimating sources. The public service has the monopoly over expert knowledge, while the representatives in the national assemblies are the primary source of knowledge about the attitudes and demands of their voters. With the expanding role of citizen involvement in decision making, the MPs are likely to feel displaced.

This is only true on the surface. The citizen-generated knowledge that parliamentarians possess is not necessarily consensual and more often than not in policy making it has to be balanced by expert knowledge. This is primarily the task of legislators. From a public policy perspective, the product of citizen involvement is policy learning, not decision taking. In addition, greater opportunities for involvement provided by the public service are likely to increase citizens' demand for contact with parliamentarians and strengthen their claims to legitimacy.

from page 67:

Americans promote their way of life via the films. The European films are not spread because they are not produced in a language which can be understood everywhere in the EU. The remedy here is the Media programme but its scope is not sufficient.

The culture in Europe should play a bigger role because the soul of Europe is culture.

Doris Pack, EPP -
Germany, Chairwoman of
the Committee on Culture
and Education in the EP
the "Europe 2020 - Civic
Visions" conference

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The question when we feel European and part of a community that goes beyond our own nation does not have an easy answer. Most notably, it seems, it is when the Union confronts us with requirements or opens opportunities for us. That is to say, to build a European identity and to be able to participate, we need to keep up with the EU decisions that affect us.

The European Commission's great concern about the media system is an expression of its need for visibility. In her speech at the ECAS conference “Is the EU really listening to citizens?” in October 2007 in Brussels Commissioner for the communications Margot Wallström said the reason that too many people are ill-informed about European issues and have a negative image of the EU is the failure of their national governments to explain to their citizens why and how decisions were taken.

Where did national governments fail? And was it their explanation that missed the point?

“The key concept [*in the new approach to communication*] is partnership. Partnership primarily between the European institutions and the member states. But with plenty of scope for involving civil society. [...] Through informed dialogue and debate. For the sake of a more democratic Europe”, the Commissioner said in the same speech.

Involving the civil society does not automatically make Europe more democratic or visible. The civil society is not a group of altruistic individuals who generously share their time and money, or an army of like-minded people. It is a space of different visions of the good society that have a range of conflicting points. People mobilize around a variety of agendas: Euroenthusiasts believe that unified Europe is the best prospect for a

better future but Euroskeptics and nationalists insist that the nation state is the best unit of good governance. Scientists are distinctly supportive of GMO (don't start throwing rotten tomatoes now); anti-refugee activists are described by human rights' defenders as "born without the compassion gene"; civil libertarians would not take any restrictions of individual freedoms in the name of public security. The public good is different things to different people, groups, organizations and communities. And civil society organizations - less often social networks and more likely NGOs, think-tanks and service providers - can equally be undemocratic and self-appointed.

In modern politics democracy by definition requires representation. The exercise of the sovereign authority, which is vested with the people, is staged through the representational medium of public debate, happening in the public sphere. The importance of the public sphere is in its intermediary function between the political sphere and the citizens, where information is provided and the public opinion is voiced. In practical terms, any democratic participation exercised through informed choices depends on the interest, knowledge and motivation of citizens to pursue the public good. If the citizens do not have sufficient ground to form meaningful opinions about political affairs, the formal procedures for feeding them into the political system, although a necessary precondition for involvement, cannot fulfil their purpose. That is, they need the adequate knowledge that will allow them to recognize their interest and validate their choice. To be able to do that, citizens need decisions (as well as proposed decisions) that are visible.

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It has been universally recognized that the European integration and development is a top-down processes driven by political elites. The evolution of European citizenship however requires the building of a common identity through participation “from below”. For the last two decades we have witnessed a dynamic process of coalition building in the EU. Some proved extremely efficient at single-issue lobbying and at setting up broad networks. Among the examples are the Green 10 group of environmental NGOs, the Platform of European Social NGOs, Concord, the European NGO confederation for relief and development aid, Human Rights and Democracy Network, Corporate Responsibility (CORE) Coalition, alliances of existing associations that unite to defend a common position such as the EU Civil Society Contact Group, which brings together under a single umbrella networks of organizations in seven sectors – environment, social, development, women, culture, human rights and public health.

Civil society organizations play a variety of roles in the EU: they monitor developments at its institutions and analyze the potential impacts on their members or interests; they inform and raise public awareness and consult various social groups on their views, bring their standpoints back to the EU and challenge policy-makers and stakeholders to address their concerns. Such organizations strive to function as a system for generation of political debate and agenda setting for neglected or avoided issues. In general, dialogue between the EU and NGOs tends to work best in areas where there is some structure of the discussion. This is particularly the case in the field of environment. In fact, the civil society networks score their successes on the issues of citizens' concerns. Their mobilization power is not employed in matters of institutional arrangements. Explaining the reason for the decisions and the manner of their taking is not part of their job. Rather, they act as a form of control against bias of interests in the process.

Typically, the EU political elite present the apathy of the European citizens as the consequence of public misperception and rarely as disapproval of EU institutions. Alternatively, they assume that it could be the effect of problems of presentation (to be compensated with cool ads in EU-tube). As it seems, this view is very much one-sided. Here's what we find in the blogs of transnational think-tanks and policy networks:

“The European Commission will need more than a communication tool box and a web-based exchange to bring European citizens along. The understanding is missing that the processes of change need to be underpinned not only by top-down communication but by a public education strategy. The communication challenge with regard to Europe's modernization is on par with other transformative challenges such as climate change in which thousands of organizations, people and multipliers have been activated for decades to explain the broad public why change is necessary. A communication tool box and a web-based exchange can never replace the activism and engagement from the bottom-up, which has made all the difference in the area of climate change.”

There was a joke about a pharmaceutical company that invented an extremely effective new medicine and only had to find it a proper disease.

The inevitable consequence of the institutionalisation of insulated decision-making is that it diminishes the capacity of European politicians to motivate and inspire their electorate. It is less likely that low voter turnout in the elections for the European Parliament comes from any problem of presentation. More likely, it follows the logic of behind-the-scenes political manoeuvring and seeing EU officials as bureaucrats rather than political leaders.

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“European institutions communicate too little”, is one of the more recent diagnoses on the phenomenon of increasing EU-fatigue and weak enthusiasm for the European elections. At the same time, the European Parliament and the Commission stress that they are trying as much as never before to make EU-politics public. Why the two institutions cannot answer to the public expectations, but also to their own conception of democratic communication? This communication deficit alienates the citizens from their elected representatives, but more importantly from crucial current public affairs.

One aspect seems to be the honesty in this communication. It is widely commented that citizens are actually ignorant about power brokering in Brussels.

“The defining feature of European-level politics is secrecy: its emblem is the closed door, the *Limité* document”, a leading newspaper correspondent in Brussels writes. “The structure of EU decision-making is designed to provide maximum privacy for elites, and maximum insulation from public pressure and scrutiny, a “public-free zone”. Under conditions normally reserved for high level national diplomacy, political leaders now together devise laws on areas such as crime, immigration, and energy policy. Laws are made in chambers where no notes are taken, and there is no public reporting of events.”

We don't know if that is actually the case, but we have reasons to believe it. The elites' distancing from their publics is both popular and expert talk throughout Europe. This is precisely one of the reasons people mention when asked why they do not consider their representative of the European Parliament if they would like to act on a matter of special importance to

them, “They are too far away.” And it is not the geographical distance that is envisaged. The problem with consensus arrived at through bureaucratic procedures is that they happen in a public-free zone. They are stripped of political and economic interest representation and became technical issues. And it is public interest and not technical issues that politicians, political leaders and interest groups mobilize citizens on behind them.

Many activists believe that civil society organizations should become political. That does not imply, of course, to become partisan or to align with political parties. The meaning of being political for them is having position, stand for it and use different tools to make it real. It could also be phrased as push for change and fight for a cause, whether in coalition or confrontation with political parties.

Democracy thus relies on multiple channels of intermediation between the political elites and society for their legitimacy and effectiveness, one of which constitutes the mass media. In today’s world public knowledge, perceptions, attitudes and beliefs crucially depend on the news coverage in the media. They do not simply disseminate information, they actually structure the political reality because they have the power to determine and shape in the minds of their spectators what has more significance than something else. There is also their interpretive function of commenting, analysing and giving orientation to the audiences.

The literature on the media landscape in Europe as regards the content of political news and current affairs points out that it is nationally based and nationally oriented. The poor awareness of the Europeans about their common political affairs is broadly documented and often explained with the absence of pan-European common public space. In line with that, the

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documented lack of interest and knowledge of Europolitics and weak political activity is attributed to the absence of a common European political communication system.

This brings us to the question of whether a common public sphere of the EU, transcending those of the individual national public spheres of the member states exists at all and whether it is possible. This question has been investigated by many authors and there is general consensus that the national public spaces do not directly transcend to the all-Europe level. Instead, they describe the situation as numerous public spheres that are not only segmented and differentiated, but also changing with time. Therefore we arrive at two possibilities.

The first one is to fill the gap of the missing common pan-European public space with the most popular medium – television. We are not suggesting that it is an empty space. Euronews, the pan-European news channel, has solid achievements in giving a European perspective to the reported events across the continent. To start with, it allows large audiences to watch EU reporting, which is almost universally under-represented among the national television stations, in their own languages or such as they understand. It is currently the only news TV company that transmits simultaneously in seven languages 24 hours a day: English, French, German, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese and Russian. To give it credit, it even considered future broadcasting in Arabic and Bulgarian. Even the content of the programmes is culturally adapted to the different language versions. It is not subject to any national policy or point of view, reports extensively on EU policies, offers a diversity of coverage on various member states and issues. Nevertheless, telling from the people metric surveys Euronews is popular among and

used as an information source almost exclusively by the best educated and socially elevated strata and the problem of representing Europe as a common political, cultural and social arena still exists.

The second is the networking option, which refers to the interaction of the media, social actors and institutions with resonance on European issues. Research shows that a multiplicity of communication networks exists, some linked to each other and some subdivided according to different European themes. In contrast to the first possibility, in this case analysts distinguish between a “strong public sphere” and a “weak public sphere”. The differentiating line between them is in their relationship with Brussels. The “strong” group is formed by actors from the European elites who have a privileged communication, while the “weak” are actors who do not interact directly with Brussels but generate debate and form public opinion in other ways.

Apparently, both models create cleavages and divides in the development of a common European identity, European solidarity and the desired European integration process.

Other suggestions include reinforcing the coordination of EU and Member States’ political communication services in view of enhancing national responsibilities in the diffusion of EU information. Shortcomings of the current state of affairs in this field are the multiplication of government and non-government communications that tend to reproduce wasted efforts and diluted messages and incoherence because no long-term framework for EU information and communication campaigns is in place nationally.

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Based on their own experience, some politicians believe that the Euro-indifference of the European citizens could be overcome, if the EU enters the national political sphere. Normally Europe comes to the forefront in the national media when a famous politician puts some EU-related topic on the political agenda and gives it visibility. The European style, in fact, has been promoted throughout Europe and exported outside it as the brand of peace, prosperity, justice and respect of human rights. It has produced charming posters and videos; it has an army of artists campaigning for it. European identity is heatedly discussed at symposia, but it has not been given substance.

This is in the nucleus of the EU communication challenge in the long run. The EU policy issues are rarely on the political agenda of national political parties, hence perceivable by the general publics in the member states. Much more often they remain non-issues and therefore not visible in the media. The question is, “Is it realistic to think that EU policy debates could possibly penetrate the national political agendas?” For example, the transposition of EU legislation by the member states could be made more visible to help people understand what actually “comes from Brussels” and what is the initiative of the national political elites, sometimes using the EU as an excuse.

Furthermore, there is a marked contrast between journalists based in Brussels, able to access information directly from the “Europe’s capital”, and journalists working at the regional or local level in the member states. Europe from within is reported daily through newsletters, on-line commentaries, on-line TV programs produced by EU founded bodies (such as Europe by Satellite), independent bodies (like Alphagalileo, European Voice, Agence Europe), transnational media (such as the Financial Times),

Pan-European media (such as EuroNews). Europe is a relevant daily issue for these groups, but for the outsider media it only comes onto the agenda when something relevant happens, or when correspondents from Brussels make sharp comments.

Between 2005 and 2009 the European Commission embarked on a very ambitious programme for educating the journalists and the civil society. With the aim of enhancing dialogue and interactions and putting Europe in the spotlight of public attention guidelines and codes of conduct were published for journalists and workshops and training courses were organized for civil organizations. An array of modern tools and formats emerged in the world wide web – fora, blogs, the Your-Voice in Europe portal, the CIRCA website and profiles in Facebook – all searching to give people a say on political matters concerning the EU. Its approach to communicating the Union was comprehensive as regards the media environment and was going strategic in its targeting.

The civil society organisations and the media welcomed the new communication strategy, but still subjected it to scrutiny and a critical eye. The civil society organizations, not surprisingly, emphasized the need for a truly bottom-up approach to the debate of common European issues and concerns and underpinned openness and inclusiveness as the basic principles of improving the democratic public sphere and reducing the EU's democratic deficit.

By improving the dialogue and debate between the institutions and the citizens, the Commission is trying to develop a new kind of democratic imagined community in which governing takes place within a new demos. The emphasis on a two-way flow of communication introduces a new di-

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mension in the communication. This effort to further democracy through increased public participation is considered a promising approach to revive the European project and overcome its present difficulties. The institution of European citizenship, the first steps towards a Social Europe and the constitution of policies in areas such as education, culture, information and communication, can prove crucial for the next-generation communication between the EU and its citizens.

The crucial role of the elites in the construction of the European identity is widely discussed, especially in the academic circles. It is part of what we could call the EU's self legitimisation process, pursued through the policies for building a “Citizens' Europe”. The European Commission and the European Parliament appeal to civil society associations to disseminate actively information about European affairs and, as a novelty in the discourse, to “socialise” EU citizens to Europe. At the beginning of the new millennium the EC established networks of communication and interaction at different levels and between different actors, in order to change the image of Europe from that of a top-down structure to a bottom-up system of democratic governance.

So we come to an alternative possibility, illustrated by the experience of the foreign minister of Austria in a recent publication. “During my EU listening tour through the provinces, I discovered the following: What is decisive for Austrians are not glossy brochures or Internet portals, but personal conversation and direct contacts. They have very specific questions on Europe and they wish for direct contact partners in the municipalities and city districts”, he said. Therefore, the Foreign Minister and the representation of the European Commission in Austria launched an initiative providing for the designation of separate “municipal councillors for Europe” in as many

municipalities as possible. Similar to municipal advisors on environmental, financial, construction, or youth issues, these EU envoys could represent the central port of call for European issues in the municipalities and would make a significant contribution to better explaining EU decisions on a local level, so that these are better understood and ultimately backed by the people. “Europe needs a familiar face on a local level. Our initiative aims at meeting the demand for dialogue and information on Europe at a local level as effectively as possible”.

Accordingly, to be legitimate, governance must be based on informed public deliberation about the interests and alternatives available, as well as information about the performance and promises of politicians. These procedures provide the basis for opinion and will formation among the citizens. Moreover, public deliberation is crucial for the development of solidarity and a common identity. And here comes the big challenge: the European peoples do not “talk” to each other.



“TRANSNATIONALIZATION” – THE PUBLIC SPHERES OF THE MEMBER STATES MORE OPEN TO EACH OTHER

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The dialogue between the nations will be strongly dependent on their intercultural competences. This includes not only communicative skills, but also knowledge that helps people with different cultural backgrounds understand each other. “If we don’t have teachers who are true Europeans”, European Parliament member and chair of Committee on Culture and Education Doris Pack told the conference organized for this project, “how could we expect the students to become true Europeans”. Therefore the first important step will be to make intercultural competences an integrate component of the school curricula and the broader cultural literacy training environment.

We know from the social identity theory that the groups we belong to define who we are (conservative, Spanish, tanguero ...). It points at the individual’s ability to identify with two cultural identities at the same time in symbolic and concrete terms. In order to foer the people of Europe to engage in a dialogue it is not enough that they accept each other’s differences; it implies a reciprocal effort to find and “populate” a common space where the meeting will take place. A key element in the process is the construction of a common shared memory, accepted by all stakeholders.

When they engage in a dialogue, the European peoples speak from the position of their own self-identification that is often based on mythologized history and competing memories. Therefore to be able to build a common identity, they should be ready for compromise in the interest of the social harmony and try to find their common historical narrative. In their majority the negative biases to specific ethnic groups or nations form during the

school years in the history and literature classes; for instance the relationships between France and Germany after the World War II. The memory of past collective wrongs performed by another nation or ethnic group burdens today's attitude and makes them a mobilizing force.

Initiatives in this direction exist. In 2006 the agreement on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the Franco-German Treaty of Elysee lead to the writing of a joint history book published simultaneously in both languages and introduced in the curricula of French and German schools. This textbook was developed by a mixed team of history teachers and each chapter combines the two national points of view. The source book was the result of continuous discussions and analyses of the used terminology and its implementation proved a success. It is an example of the fact that, in order to happen, interculturalism should account of the experience of the other culture and accept its truths. In a sense, this was a meeting of two different convictions. As asserted, a foreigner is someone who asks questions we find obvious.

The Europeanization may have a variety of forms and characteristics. The lack of a common language and a common media system implies that the European public sphere should not be perceived as a uniform public space, but as an Europeanization of various national public spheres. Speaking of transnationalisation, we may refer to a broadening of the scope of public speaking beyond the state territory or towards other European states or the EU as a whole.

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Let's start with the first projection. It requires some level of attention to and observation of the political developments in other European states. Honestly, how many presidents of European states can we name? And do you feel the elections in Finland (Malta, Bulgaria, the Netherlands ...) matter to you at all? This is the first step, interest to what is happening in other parts of our enlarged political community. It is also preliminary, because it does not mean yet that people are talking with each other, but only that they are talking about each other. It is important, however, because it contributes to the crossing of the communicative space boundaries.

As regards the second projection, it is determined by the attention given to the European institutions and publics in the public talk. From the normative perspective it means that the citizens should be able to get informed about the policy making in the EU and its justification in the same way they get informed about the national policy making, and be able to exert pressure for public justification of the arguments.

The formation of a collective identity in the transnationalisation however goes even further since it implies transnational politically uniform society where it will matter who wins the elections in another member state or what kind of policy it will implement in the field of healthcare for example. A necessary condition of this is for the conversation to happen in one and the same public space, which means by definition that the citizens should have the feeling of belonging to a singly community.

Thus the integrated European public space needs a uniform European public, the emblematic European demos that is taken as the key legitimizing component in the EU polity. It should unite opinions, ideas and contribution from the individual public spheres and to this end the crossborder communication should become routine, together with the active transfer

of cultural products, in order to engage people from different nations in a common public talk. As already pointed out, the communicative infrastructure between the EU and its citizens exists, but the orientation of the political debate and the formation of opinions is still national.

In the presence of a very few pan-European media channels the national news media are crucial for the development of the European public sphere. But are they generally aligned in their argumentation and the issues they focus on? It is still not easy to find public information or participate in a debate on issues that form a common cause in the information jungle of the EU, although certain parts of the transnational public sphere in Europe reflect the social reality. However difficult its contours may be to outline, it has its arenas and a discourse going on between them.

The question is whether with its present shape this public sphere satisfies the criteria that saturate the communication with generation of public opinion and political validity. From theoretical point of view it should be a tool of public opinion mobilization as a political force and of pressure on the governance. Therefore it matters what the terms of this dialogue are and who participates in it. The public sphere should correspond to the exercised political power and the problem is that the political communities and the spaces of public discourse belong to a much greater extent to the national democratic units than to their aggregation.

For example, does the European public space generate public opinion that includes all the affected parties and is based on critical arguments and understanding of the common interest? Who belongs to this public and what channels of communication do the participants use? Perhaps it happens in the area of environment.

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In the eve of the European Parliament hearing that debated the future of the European agricultural policy a broad alliance of European, national and local civil society organizations, anxious about the future of foods and agriculture in Europe, announced in March (2010) a “European Food Declaration” to mobilize the European citizens and authorities for the reformulation of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). Nearly 200 organisations from 24 member states signed the declaration and are convinced in the need of a strong message not only to the EU politicians but also to the national politicians. The declaration calls for a comprehensive review of the existing system and points out the political goals of the new Common Policy for Agriculture and Food for the future. It demands that the new approach guarantees and protects the right of the citizens to determine their own models of production, distribution and consumption, to manage the scarce resources more effectively and to ensure the biodiversity. *“This declaration is the first step in the efforts to build a massive movement for change in the direction of sovereignty in terms of foods in Europe, including in the policies and practices of the EU”.*

The coalition says: *“We encourage the organizations, groups and individual citizens, considerate about the future of agriculture and foods, to sign this declaration online at www.europeanfooddeclaration.org and use it as an instrument for launching discussions on the food and agriculture policy that we need.”*

Speaking of the public opinion on this arena, we hear the voices of the national players, admitting the significance of the European level and the actions undertaken on it.

David Baldock,

Executive Director, Institute for European Environmental Policy, UK

There are not many governments, in United Kingdom and elsewhere prone to admit to what extent the advance of the topic of ecology in their own countries depends on agreements on the European level. Almost all standards were raised - in water and air pollution, recycling, regulation of chemicals and environmental protection. Without the power of law behind these standards, they would not have been met. The world today looks to Europe for leadership in environmental protection, including climate change the way it used to look to the United States.

Stephen Hale,

Director, Green Alliance

European agreements were the engine behind the improvements in many aspects of ecology in the United Kingdom, including air quality and recycling. The individual governments could not cope with ecological challenges on their own. To some extent this is due to the fact that climate change and various forms of air pollution do not acknowledge national boundaries. Yet, it is not of lesser importance that ecological standards and ecological improvements cost money and that individual governments can not take their price by themselves. Joint European actions turned pan-European environmental protection into reality. The completion of the debate about the Reform Treaty will provide European countries with common interest with the opportunity to work more effectively towards addressing these urgent challenges.

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The enhanced joint action and the mutual interconnectedness enable the diversification of the voices and the exchange between the participants from different cultural contexts. The year 2008 was defined as the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue. The European institutions took this decision in order to confirm their strong and increasing political commitment for mainstreaming the intercultural issues as an integrate part of the agenda of the EU internal and external policy. Naturally, the intercultural dialogue involves all cultures and none of this either homogenous or monolithic.

A variety of points of view and interests co-exist in a national society. Europe is a union of many national cultures and each individual nation forms a cultural community. Transnationalisation in this context means that they have to reach understanding on numerous topics, which in turn implies communication of values at the level of the common political institutions. In the process of creation of a collective conscience the pride in the cultural heritage of the past millennia is extremely important but the praise of one's own nation at the expense of diminishing another is an enemy of the cultural exchange.

The communication between the peoples in Europe requires reasonable responses and approaches to diversity. The dialogue is a shared search for better understanding, connections and opportunities and therefore the usual precondition for it is the common belief in the possibility of a common benefit. If in the mind of the Polish he or she has nothing in common with the Greek and the conviction resides that his or her only interest is in the own utility, the Polish will have to reason to talk to the Greek. Therefore the creation of a platform for dialogue is of crucial importance and the interference of a third party in the process could be very valuable.

The question about the types of dialogue that we would like to achieve also exists. In order for such huge and varied groups as the national cultural communities to start talking to each other the entire array of dialogue types will be necessary, starting with the interpersonal dialogue in all interrelations. From there we move on to the inter-group dialogue of organizations and interest groups where new ideas, new opportunities, alternative options, projects and approaches to conversing on specific topics between the stakeholders are born, and that traditionally leads to collective action.

It has been broadly recognised that in the EU format the Council of the EU is the institution that is the least open to public discussion. As a part of the more discussions on the way democracy should be strengthened in the European Union the Contact Group of the Civil Society (CSCG), an association uniting eight large non-government sectors on the basis of rights and values, acting in the public interest and gathering the voices of hundreds of thousands of associations throughout Europe conducted research of the interrelations between the civil society organizations and the Council (i.e. the member states) with the hypothesis that the current practices do not utilize their full potential. The research outlined the following main trends:

1. The interrelations between the civil society organizations and the Council are the result of their own efforts predominantly. The Council does not have a strategy how to work with them and as a consequence any existing communication depends exclusively on the will and desire of the civil organizations themselves, and to a greater extent on the capacity and resources that they invest.

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2. The contacts are more useful for collecting information and development of the organisations' profiles than for any influence on the decisions. Apparently both sides search to get first-hand information but the factual participation in the decisions is difficult and even close to impossible.
3. The national-level partnerships are of key importance.

In this case both sides of the interaction have not yet sat at the table where the dialogue is taken as normal and desirable. The described identified trends raise the question about how to start the dialogue. For the conversation to begin, links to other experiences that they perceive as real communication should be found by both parties. This is a necessary condition because only after a period of dialogue it could be determined whether the on-going communication is valid. If it is not valid, in a sense that the participants speak different languages, the opportunities for solution of the problems or making effective decisions will be drastically reduced. So in this case the dialogue is in the core of the effective group action.

Nevertheless with the abundant communicative exchange that already exists in the EU we should be cautious not to mystify the dialogue. Some of its proponents make it sound like an almost esoteric experience. If we want it to bring benefits, it should be accessible to all. Unfortunately the abstract description does not help accessibility. As we know well, “the devil is often in the details”.

The debate in the framework of the conference of speakers of national parliaments in the European Union held this past February underscored the importance of increased inter-parliamentary cooperation, envisaged in the

Lisbon Treaty. Special attention was given to the identification of priority issues, the adoption of an annual calendar of the inter-parliamentary events and enhanced participation of the specialized committees. All that requires intense communication and exchange, constant dialogue and most probably, specific programmes for regular dialogue.

Eventually the greatest challenge from the perspective of the EU seems to be the communication between the communities for studying and reproduction of their shared future and for referring to their collective wisdom. It is partly rooted in the diversity of their cultures. When we act as carriers of culture and have the conscience of our cultural belonging, we are emotionally bound with our learnt mental categories, the psychologists assert, because they form a significant part of our group identity. This often makes us think that our prejudices are the right ones.

Why in fact do we have so many problems understanding each other? The answer is generally that we are culturally burdened in our education not just to think through certain consensually established categories but also to demand a certain degree of recognition and status for ourselves against the other participants in the communication. We are equally inclined to distribute things into categories representing reality that fit into our own framework of reference. Did you know that when the platypus was first discovered, the scientists were perplexed and could not come to an agreement as to whether it was a bird, a mammal or a reptile. The reason for this was their automatic assumption that birds, mammals and reptiles were the reality that should accommodate all vertebrae. In fact beyond the scientific convenience there is no need to assign the platypus to any category. But we are inclined to do that when we encounter something unfamiliar and thus reduce our chances of learning about reality as it actually is. In dialogue,

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if it functions properly, the group as a whole may think productively, creatively and most of all, together. And the more inclusive and representative it is, the better.

The ultimate goal is for dialogue to become systemic. This may only be the result of all the listed types plus the context in which they develop. We will know when this is achieved when there is an universal expectation among the people to incorporate dialogue each time an important decision has to be taken. In a culture, systemic dialogue, means that it is institutionalized: it characterizes every institution from marriage to bureaucracy, education and healthcare, politics and business.

Where could the public talk happen? What are its realms?

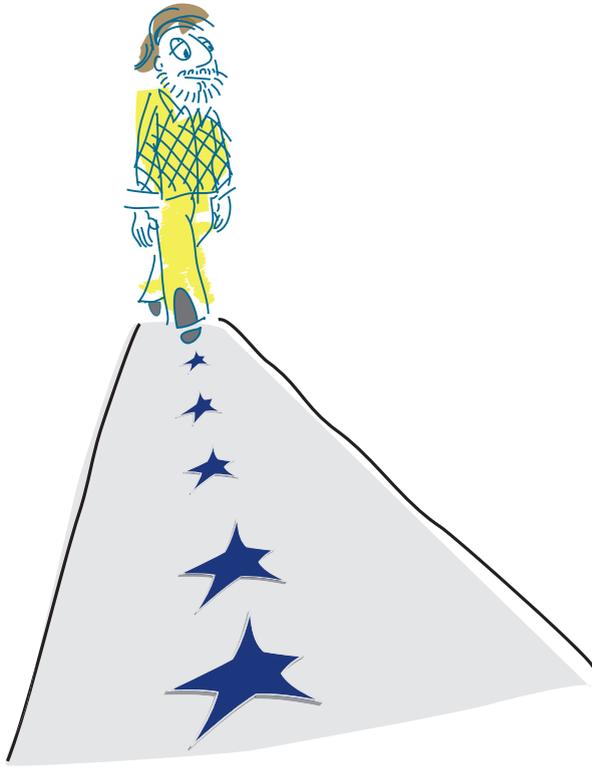
Public talk happens on public issues. It goes on in the media through journalism, art, entertainment and advertising. It also goes on in the academic circles where specialists generate knowledge and debate ideas.

There is also quasi talk on public issues. It runs in the works of literature and visual arts, including through novels, television programmes and films. In addition, it has its expressive forums such as the media talk shows with the participation of spectators/listeners, letters to the editors and blogs in the internet where ordinary people express their opinions on topical issues. It also happens through the “facilitated” dialogue between representatives of the stakeholders, for instance in the public councils.

In its most difficult version it should go on between cultural communities. But how? This is a Nobel Prize question and we do not have a ready answer to it. We could only say that there is along way to go, before it is achieved.

In any case its connection with real life and everyday practice is determining. For example food is one of the simplest and most direct ways of promoting intercultural understanding. The tastes and smells of the traditional national cuisine are an intrinsic path to a significant part of the collective memory, accessible to everyone. Not surprisingly this is one of the most developed forms of communication between the European cultures - exchange of national dishes.

The dialogue between the nations will be strongly dependent on their intercultural competences. This includes not only communicative skills, but also knowledge that helps people with different cultural backgrounds understand each other. “If we don’t have teachers who are true Europeans”, European Parliament member and chair of Committee on Culture and Education Doris Pack told the conference organized for this project, “how could we expect the students to become true Europeans.” Therefore the first important step will be to make intercultural competences an integrate component of the school curricula and the broader cultural literacy training environment.



EUROPE
IN 2020

THE EUROPEAN DEMOCRACY

The European identity

The European solidarity

THE EUROPEAN DEMOCRACY

Visions for democracy in Europe, formulated by the thematic forum “European Democracy – Mission Possible?”

Most of all European democracy is a long avenue, an ongoing debate. It will not be achieved any soon, and it is not clear whether by 2020.

At this stage the European identity does not yet exist and a European demos cannot be formed. It could be created with assistance from above and this should be a goal for the coming decade.

The Citizens’ Initiative is a very positive development, introduced by the Lisbon Treaty and expectations to it are high, perhaps even too high. Therefore it will need to prove itself with the necessary precaution to focus on the proper issues, so that the civic enthusiasm is not wasted away. Another key aspect will be the Commission’s response to this Initiative.

European Citizens' initiative is one of the new elements of the Lisbon Treaty aimed at promoting citizens' participation and direct democracy in the EU. While the expectations that this instrument can precipitate the emergence of genuine European demos, it can contain certain risks as well. For this reason the quality of the proposed Regulation to be tabled by the Commission by the end of April 2010 will be of crucial importance and will to a large extent determine how this new instrument will be applied in practice.

Among the interesting questions is the way the Commission is obliged to respond to the initiative. The Commission's Green paper deals mainly with the time limit within which it should be obliged to respond to the initiative. EC is obliged to examine the substance and admissibility of the initiative. The text does not say, however, whether the Commission should react in a substantive way, even if the initiative is found as inadmissible (e.g. deals with issues that do not fall within Community competences). Those who would like the instrument to become a tool for developing European citizenship argue that the Commission should in any case give reasoning and, if possible, identify the authorities responsible for dealing with the application, should it find it is not within the community's competence. But this might put additional burden on the Commission, which might make it difficult to cope with.

EUROPEUM Institute for European Policy, Czech Republic

David Král

THE EUROPEAN DEMOCRACY

The European identity

The European solidarity

Although the EU is not a polity, it is materially present in the lives of the European citizens. By 2020 the vision is for consolidation of what has already been achieved. The citizens of Europe have numerous rights but are unaware of a large part of them. The desired output is that these rights become effective and come to the table, fully fulfilled.

The 2009 European elections were the biggest transnational elections in history. The turnout, however, varied considerably between different Member States, with a general decline since 1979. The main question is then how to increase the turnout - how to motivate people to participate in the elections.

First of all, more knowledge about the MEPs, European Parliament and other institutions is needed. Secondly, political communication has to be organised from the perspective of the citizens - addressing their needs, wishes and interests. This can help to raise understanding of the system by citizens, which is a precondition for their participation. It goes beyond informing, though. A continuous dialogue with citizens, in which MEPs are included, is needed - this is the only way to link citizens and politicians and solve the problem that not many people can even name their MEP. So, there is a need of a permanent election campaign with continuous information. The content of the campaign should identify issues that citizens are interested in - positively and negatively (ex: climate change, demographic challenges, immigration, jobs and public financing - different in different countries), taking into account mass psychology that says that negative effects seem more tangible than positive ones. Except giving information about the current situation and the work and role of the European Union, the campaign should help citizens to understand that there are options and different acting possibilities in different policy areas and show them these options. The final message should be that taking part in the European elections is a possibility for a citizen to influence which one of these options will be represented and chosen at the European level.

Institute of Public Affairs in Warsaw, Poland

Agnieszka Łada, PhD

The EU has accomplished a level of transparency and it is desirable that the member states follow this trend. It is desirable that the citizens' organizations get more involved in the ex-post evaluation of the impact of legislation, not just in its shaping.

With regard to communications, two parallel challenges are to be considered: on the one hand, the well known problem of communicating to 27 different public spheres. The parallel challenge comes from the media environment: national media (editors) devote very little space to European affairs, which also means that the information which is made available is very simplified, bordering on the inaccurate. Online media are playing an important role in delivering additional dedicated coverage of EU affairs, but they are also contributing to a worrying phenomenon. Indeed, publishers often find it more convenient to replace senior correspondents with young and sometimes inexperienced freelance journalists, who rely extensively on press releases and information fed into the process by the institutions themselves. This raises questions of deontology, as it undermines the critical function that the press is supposed to perform.

Among the tasks that the Laeken Declaration had given to the Convention on the future of the EU was that of increasing the transparency of the EU decision-making process, but there have only been some small steps in this direction. The Treaty itself is rather obscure and convoluted, and the new posts that it created have been assigned in a very non-transparent way. The positive development is the fact that the legislative sessions of the Council will now be public, so interested parties will have access to the reasons behind the Council's decisions.

But this brings us back to the original question: who is aware of the activities of the Council and therefore interested in checking them? How many people are watching Europarl TV every day? I would maintain that there are not so many, and this is a basic problem that would have to be addressed through education, putting EU affairs and EU 'civic education' higher on the national curricula. Funds for exchange programmes should also be increased.

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The mainstreaming of the civil rights and fundamental freedoms in all policies is not a finished process. More attention needs to be paid to placing policies at the different levels. Although not a polity, the EU is a powerful political system. The democratic crisis does not derive from lack of interest of the citizens to the EU and it is not a rejection, but uncertainty whether it could be sufficiently protective of their interests and rights.

The paradox of European democracy:

After the French and Dutch ‘No’s to the proposed EU Constitution in 2005, many politicians, fuelled by Eurosceptic claims that this result signified the failure of an emerging European identity, were quick to conclude that Europeans did not want a ‘state like’ Europe but would, instead, prefer a ‘technical’ system of non-political co-operation. To a certain extent, even the first Barroso Commission echoed this perception, and the Lisbon treaty avoided references to symbols of the EU, etc.

Nevertheless, a careful study of European public opinion proves that this reaction is the polar opposite to what Europeans want. At the time the French voted ‘no’ to the constitution, levels of support for EU integration reached its highest level in about a decade. Similarly, the EU symbols appeared as one of the most appreciated aspects of the Constitutional treaty. Moreover, according to a mass survey I carried out over 30,000 citizens in all 27 member states, over 75% of respondents across the EU would support new elements of political integration such as a direct election of an EU President, pan European referenda, or the right of EU citizens to vote in general elections in the EU country where they reside. Finally, on a scale from 1-10, the average level of general European identity of citizens is over 7, as is their level of ‘civic’ European identity, while their cultural identity is over 6.

Michael Bruter, PhD

London School of Economics, United Kingdom

The uniqueness of the Union is in that it is composed of democratic states, voluntarily associated. The EU itself is not a democratic state and it will probably not become one, because that would need a political culture shared by all people. The tools of democracy are made available, now it is up to the citizens to decide to what extent they want to use them.

The current obstacles to the emergence of transnational politics and the failure to meet expectations in a transnational way, expressed by European citizens, hinder the potential of Europe to live up to these objectives. The case of the lack of strong common answers to the economic crisis and deceiving response to the expectations of European citizens for the EU to become a strong actor on the global scene, are good example of this.

However, new tools are available to European citizens to make their voice heard at a transnational level, such as the European Citizens' Initiative. The emergence of transnational lists for European elections and transnational political parties is another way to act strongly on the so-called 'democratic deficit' of the European Union and to unlock the potential existing in the idea of Europe, so far hindered by national governments, such as the recent nomination of European Commissioners.

European Alternatives, France

Ségolène Pruvot

THE EUROPEAN DEMOCRACY

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Democratization of the EU requires strengthening of the European polity. Institutions should realize that the citizens cannot be administrated, they must be involved. The right to be consulted is a new area which has a good chance to bring citizens closer to the EU. On the side of the citizens it means education from an early age to prepare for participation, active exchange and communication, both personal and organizational.

The challenge to national politicians is to assume their responsibility for better connecting with their constituencies and translate the European affairs to them in a way that builds the common identity.

An important change relates to the principle of subsidiarity that states the EU cannot undertake actions in fields of joint competence with the member states, where such actions could be better implemented at the national, regional or local level. This principle is supported by the Lisbon Treaty and the national parliaments acquire new power and more time to object to any law that does not observe this principle.

As we know currently one-third of the national parliaments object draft EU legislation on the grounds of interrupted subsidiarity – the so-called “yellow card” in the Lisbon Treaty. In such a case the European Commission shall have to reconsider the proposed legislation and either propose changes or withdraw it. If the Commission finds no problem, a majority of national parliaments may sustain the objection, after which the Commission shall have to refer the matter to the Council and the Parliament that are supposed to take a decision – the “orange card”. The national parliaments therefore bear the responsibility of carefully examining the EU legislation in order to make sure that it complies with the principle of subsidiarity and it is very important that they use this power. What I mean is that in the course of these steps the European citizens will be able to participate directly in the monitoring and consultations of their national governments with the European Commission because the procedure will be the direct effect of their initiative. As a result the democratic accountability and transparency could only be improved.

Andrey Kovachev , PhD

MEP (CEDB/EPP)

Some of the existing mechanisms are still discouraging the citizens from participation because they do not trust the authenticity of the results and need further regulation and improvement, such as the lobbying.

Democratization of the institutions

The core problem of the democratic deficit at the European level is that the national executives are at the same time the most powerful legislative organ in the EU: the European Council and the Council of Ministers. It happens regularly that national Governments do not find majorities in their national parliaments; as a “solution”, they pass the initiative to the EU level where it is passed by the peer group of ministers – with or without the European Parliament. This is not democracy, this is bypassing democracy, and the EU is misused as an instrument to bypass democracy.

On the other hand, the European Parliament, which in a “normal” democracy is the only legislator, is the weakest legislative organ at the EU level. It has no right to initiate laws and it does not get this right with the Lisbon Treaty. The right to initiate laws is in the exclusive hands of the Commission, which actually is the Executive. The legal initiative is in the exclusive hands of the Executive power – this is not democracy.

Furthermore, the Parliament in no single policy field can make its own decision. It has to find a common solution with the Council that continues to be the national executives. In many key policy fields, the EU parliament does not have any legislative power at all, and it does not get it with the Lisbon Treaty, e. g. foreign and security policy, tax policy, monetary policy, Euratom. Let me illustrate this: few months ago, the EP adopted a motion in favour of a financial transaction tax (FTT), which is the name-giving and founding demand of the global Attac network. But the EP not only cannot initiate a law, it is not even allowed to co-decide in tax policy matters; and the Governments don't want the FTT.

According to the conservative Viennese economic research institute IHS, a European-wide FTT would generate tax revenue of about 270 billion euros: exactly the double of the total budget of the EU.

Attac, Vienna University of Economics and Business, Austria

Christian Felber

The European democracy

THE EUROPEAN IDENTITY

The European solidarity

2. THE EUROPEAN IDENTITY

Need to encourage **the mobility of European citizens**, more particularly to increase the financing for the European exchange programmes; we need follow-up of the programmes and more visibility of the programmes for the whole society; need to include young people who don't have the possibility to participate in exchange programmes; more mobility creates feeling of common identity.

What can we learn from deliberative polling for the prospects of EU democracy? Deliberative polling shows that European citizenship under ideal conditions can be turned into something more than a legal entitlement. Citizens from different member states can debate and seek understanding across languages and cultures. They can become active European citizens who develop shared problem perceptions and agree on possible solutions. Even more, they can also build solidarity and trust among each other and develop a self-understanding as members of the same political community. As such, citizens will also more readily agree to delegate political authority and to support the deepening and widening of European integration. Deliberative democracy can in this sense be seen as the pathway for building the EU polity which also includes the commitment of the citizens with different national backgrounds to a shared political project.

Network of European Active Citizens - NEAC, Italy

Gianni Altavilla

The European Citizens have only rights, they must also have duties.

The difficulty in conceptualizing citizenship as a shared political status and as a normative political ideal is primarily due to its complexity as any of its existing conceptions entail several distinct and interrelated meanings. Each of these meanings is associated with a number of tensions, problems and challenges that are both complex and controversial. As the existing literature amply demonstrates, some of the most important issues remain largely neglected and unexplored thus making any conception of citizenship open to different interpretations. Furthermore, a set of theoretical objections, practical disagreements and political conflicts that arise out of the tensions between the obligations of citizenship and the demands for tolerance, respect and recognition of diversity challenge the integrative function of citizenship.

*Hans Jörg Trenz, PhD and Silvina Cabrera
Center for European Studies, University of Oslo, Norway*

The European democracy

**THE EUROPEAN
IDENTITY**

The European solidarity

The EU programmes should provide social inclusion; they should consider the local needs; some projects are more successful if organized at a local level (*the question is how to restructure the projects to make them reach the people at local level*).

The introduction of the OMC at the Lisbon European Council in 2000 has been highlighted as the latest attempt to reinvigorate European Social Policy. Scholars studying the OMC have placed particular attention to its participative dimension (along with the learning one) and more precisely on the role of non-state actors such as NGOs. Results have nonetheless fallen short of initial expectations; NGO participation still lags behind initial aspirations and is determined to a significant extent by the domestic patterns of social dialogue, in turn raising questions to the legitimacy of the process.

Prof. Theodoros Sakellariopoulos, PhD

Panteion University of Social and Political Science, Athens

To have a common identity, we need to have common values or to unify them which means a common political project (i.e. European Constitution); EU relies on homogeneity so that we could speak about common values, collective conscience.

Empirical data are instructive of how the EU lags behind member states when the direction of citizens' loyalties is examined. Nevertheless, they are instructive of citizens' expectations vis-à-vis the EU. Paying attention to table 1, data show that the EU is not unimportant for citizens. In 1995 the average degree of commitment was halfway between the "not very attached to" and the "fairly attached to" codes. Significantly, 2005 data reveal that 66% of persons acknowledge they are attached to the supranational level. The data reveal that two out of three respondents understand the EU is important. It is reasonable to expect their expectations should be met by EU institutions. In this context, perhaps there is room for EU citizenship. Otherwise the gap between the polity and citizens is a huge bridge that tears them apart from the EU.

Furthermore, the fact that a share of citizens' taxes accrues to the EU budget plays a role in capturing the relevance of EU citizenship. Not only for the linkage between taxpayers and EU finances, but also because the EU budget performs a rather timid redistributive function (both in sectoral and in geographical terms). Contrary to conventional expectations (based on a conventional approach of citizenship), the "no representation, no taxation" principle is already met at the EU. Therefore, EU citizenship is not only rhetoric.

*Prof. Paulo Vila Maior, PhD
University Fernando Pessoa, Portugal*

The European democracy

THE EUROPEAN IDENTITY

The European solidarity

Education is essential; there is a need for more active policies directed to young people; the first step to construct the European identity is the cultural and intellectual attitude of every member state; the importance of European history should be highlighted in the education process.

The EU should be solution of the problems of the globalization and not be accepted as a loss of identity; EU is not a symbol of the globalization, it doesn't deprive citizens of their national identity.

The generation after 1989, despite its relative indifference, will contribute to the creation of a common identity through its common values.

Despite all the benefits brought by the European construction, it is undeniable that a gap is increasing between such improvement and the perceptions of the citizens. Too far from realities, fear of incoming member states, too much power for free trade and no consideration for a social unity: the European construction seems to build itself against the people and gathering all its fears.

The youth generation, the one which grew up after the fall of the Berlin wall, the one which never felt what a border between two European countries is, this generation has a unique relation with the European union. It lives in the European Union, travels inside it, moves from a country to another, without considering it as an outstanding situation. It is so, it has always been so, and always be so.

This singularity is the reason why the political construction of a European Union will be hold by this generation, this one who naturally considers Europe as its political space and as the real level for ambitious political debates and projects. This is the reason why this generation will let no space for a pro or anti European debate. This is the reason why this generation will not love Europe more than it did before, it will build it because it has to be so.

This is why European construction is a matter of generation, at a time when the most wonderful political project ever is about to meet the first generation that has always naturally felt European, without even thinking about it.

“Les Jeunes Européens” Association, France

Aymeric Chassaing

2011 – the European year of voluntary service – the voluntary service encourages the active citizenship and promotes the European identity and it should be supported; it shouldn't replace the state duties.

On January 22nd the Council of the European Union adopted the decision that 2011 shall be designated as European Year of Volunteering. In a time when there are more than 100.000.000 active volunteers in the European Union (CEV data) this initiative is expected to enhance an existing dynamic (the EU already runs a number of programs that relate to volunteering in different degrees, such as Lifelong Learning Programme, Europe for Citizens and EVS – Youth In Action). Of course volunteering does provide a huge potential for non-formal and informal learning and at the same time non-paid 'work experience' positions (such as internships) provide a respectable personal choice for improving one's employability. The European Year of Volunteering, 2011, will be very fruitful for volunteers acting as a bridge between the various European peoples as long as this important distinction is upheld!

Mediterranean SOS Network, Greece

Haris Nikokavouras

The European democracy

**THE EUROPEAN
IDENTITY**

The European solidarity

The active policy for children is essential.

Under the conditions of today the citizens of the European Union face different and complex challenges in terms of economic crises, political, environmental and social change. If we add these challenges to the recent uncertainty about the institutional development of the Union, the debate about the future of Europe becomes very topical.

This future has rarely been discussed from the point of view of its around 94 million citizens under the age of 18. This means from the perspective of every fifth European citizen.

In the last few years, the visibility of children's issues at EU level has grown significantly. Some actions related directly to children have been taken, for example in the field of child poverty, social inclusion, child protection, etc. There is also a common understanding that children may be negatively affected by the impact of EU policies of which they are not the primary target, for instance in the field of employment or environmental policies. All this led in 2006 to the publication of the Commission's Communication entitled "Towards an EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child".

Nevertheless a number of obstacles currently remain in developing a coherent EU approach: the legal basis for child policy in primary EU law is relatively limited; children's interests are fairly invisible at EU level; opportunities for child participation are very limited; current action is fragmented and lacks co-ordination. A way forward to address some of these challenges is the elaboration of an EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child.

*European Studies Department, Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski"
Rumyana Kamberska*

More funds are needed for programmes for inclusion of the Roma minority, but within them there should rather be included various cultures, not only Roma people.

Roma are one of the largest minority groups in the European Union with estimates on their number ranging from 8 to 12 million people. The high percentage of young people means a growing number of Roma in the coming generations. Large groups of the Roma live in need and their life expectancy is significantly shorter than of the respective national population. Racism and discrimination are a constant background within all issues Roma are facing.

Twenty years after the changes – and defiant of huge programmes and initiatives (e.g. Decade of Roma Inclusion), and the fact that the Roma issue is on the agenda of all national governments and international institutions – we have to observe not only an increasing social deterioration of huge Roma groups, including of course, a growing number of young illiterate Roma.

Taking into account that improvement in any field: education, housing, health is based on a reasonable income of the respective families (and groups), it is our opinion that income generation measures are central to any development.

Whatever instrument there will be, it needs to be as transparent as possible (e.g. all participants should be obliged to publish their funding for projects online), and as controllable as possible at all levels.

The Central Council of German Sinti and Roma

Herbert Heuss

The European democracy

The European identity

THE EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY

THE EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY

There is a need for reform of the European employment policy, including the institutions which implement it, for achieving the social Europe, which should follow its economic and political dimension.

Now it is important that the European Institutions focus on delivering sustainable growth by putting people and responsibility first; take advantage of the world of globalization and interdependence and most importantly start seizing new opportunities. Among the fields that we should focus on are:

Empowering people

The right environment should be created in order for individuals with acquired skills, innovative and creative approach to be able to develop entrepreneurship and/or be able to establish a smooth transition between jobs. Skills and lifelong learning are the crucial elements to ensure transition between jobs and occupations, also in avoiding long-term unemployment which would lead to loss of human capital. To achieve this it is of great importance to create a new entrepreneurial cultural wave, one with an attitude towards risk-taking and a capacity to innovate.

Competitive, connected and greener economy

In order to improve competitiveness we should deliver tangible benefits for consumers. The EU 2020 vision should aim at upgrading and inter-connecting infrastructures and ensuring effective competition of network industries in the single market. Also, the development of smart, upgraded transport and energy infrastructures will contribute to multiple objectives including decarbonisation, transport safety, energy security, and the competitiveness of our network economy.

Iliana Ivanova

MEP (CEDB/EPP), Bulgaria

One of the useful steps in this path is the grant of more competences and duties for the Economic and Social Committee, beyond its present consultative functions.

Civil society plays a major role in the process of shaping EU's social policy, therefore perspectives over the type of expression of the "civic visions" should be wide enough to encompass such interventions.

In what concerns the larger domain of social policy, IPP is one of the few NGOs in Romania that, together with strategic partners, has undertaken the responsibility of protecting, promoting and struggling for social inclusion of people with mental disabilities in Romania, a vulnerable group which suffers from major exclusion and abuse.

Main methods used by IPP to meet its objectives:

- *partnering with specialized organizations;*
- *performing targeted research in the field;*
- *advocacy campaigns targeting very specific topics related to the field;*
- *conducting comparative research projects at national and European level.*

The approaches mentioned are concrete examples of how a non-governmental organization may tackle important issues concerning various aspects of social policy at both national and European level. Thus, the civic voice can be more powerful and allow for a double pressure onto national authorities in order to generate the desirable changes.

*Institute for Public Policy (IPP), Bucharest, Romania
Alexandra Soci*

The European democracy

The European identity

**THE EUROPEAN
SOLIDARITY**

There is a need to present social cohesion as a priority within the new strategy, Europe 2020, to reaffirm the construction of a **social Europe**.

It is difficult to make predictions in a political world of constant change. Looking at how Europe reduces itself to a zone of free commerce runs the same risk as does looking at Europe become a zone of welfare and solidarity. If there is a dissociation between an economic Europe and a social Europe, there will not be space for the welfare of its nations.

The global financial crisis could lead to bilateral policies, to the deterioration of the social and convergence policies which have been implemented in the course of the last thirty years. We can also accept the idea that the states of Europe will pursue their integration in a perspective of solidarity, convergence and a reinforcement of social Europe.

In that perspective it would be urgent to set as a priority the creation of a common base of social rights.

Political Europe is weak. It does not have a proper framework. Therefore, it would have been convenient to create a stronger legal framework as the “European Constitution” proposed it.

A “constitution” could provide for and guarantee the European rights and equal obligations to all parties: the state, its citizens, the workers, the industry and the banks.

This legal framework could institute monitoring organs for harmonization of the most essential activities of the EU in the economic, commercial and financial fields, and to prevent and eliminate aberrant behavior.

In this context, could we have prevented the economic and financial crisis as well as the destructive relocations of welfare? Controls proved to be complex because of the very liberal role of the World Trade Organization which the EU cannot avoid.

Furthermore, there is not any control executed further by the World Bank regarding the financial flows.

The access of the European citizens and public and private social organizations to the European Parliament and directly to the Commission should be facilitated.

We propose the creation of a Social Forum to represent the associative world next to the European Parliament and the European Commission. This forum will function by providing opinion, raising questions, establishing a room for suggestions, proposals and dialogue.

We propose the broadening the competences of the Economic and Social Council with the power of initiative addressed to the European Parliament and the Commission.

We propose for the creation of a European authority where economic democracy could be exercised in such a way that it could integrate the industry and banks as actors, responsible for the European development.

We demand a Charter of good behavior involving the industry and the banks, including the respect of the civil rights and the work rights.

The worsening of the living conditions of the citizens in the regions which have been victims of the relocation should be regarded as a major infringement of human rights.

We propose the creation of a common base for European legislation that the European Parliament adopts, with the term of “the minimal standards for a good quality of life”.

The European democracy

The European identity

THE EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY

It is useful to discuss the refocus of the solidarity policies towards concentrated investments in fields with growth potential, considering the new EU financial perspective.

The frameworks of understanding of European solidarity are an object of constant expansion and are already close to their „external borders“, beyond which the notion itself will lose its sense. Various tools and approaches are grouped on one place, as a clearly monetary mechanism for transfer of resources, solidarity as an expression of emerging European social policy or the very process of enlargement which sets out the element of commitment for development of the accession countries.

My main thesis is that during the coming years, EU is headed towards a less solidarity development pattern, involving less active internal policies for of these conditions. Political dynamics in this direction are not explicit and do not present a clear and complete, well-formed process, but have numerous indications for such development. These come from two main directions: the first and more important is the Member States, while the second is the development of the EU as an organization.

The causes, stemming from the Member States are on two levels. Firstly, there is a conceptual level, at which at least two significant processes are to be observed. The first one is related to the way of reacting to the global crisis by the major, bigger Member States which are also the biggest donors of the EU. What is meant are some mainly national reactions in which the countries are seeking their own, local solutions to a greater extent and depend on European support on a smaller scale. The main question through which solutions are sought is “What can we do with the rest national management tools?”. This alone would not lead to radical changes in their European policies but there is no doubt that there is a process of rediscovery of sovereignty by the bigger countries on the continent. In the long term, this process would lead to partial reconsideration of the degree to which the EU has to seek strongly solidarity decisions.

*Sophia Analytica, Bulgaria
Vladimir Shopov*

Until 2020, the role of the local and regional authorities should be increased in the European context, and local and regional partnerships should be encouraged.

Expected changes require a new vision about the policies of the EU after 2020 which must contribute tangibly to social cohesion, coping with unemployment, promotion of social inclusion, and also to guarantee proper functioning of labour markets. The functioning of the educational systems and labour markets needs to be reconsidered, Europe's mobility for the deployment of innovations and creative potential has to increase.

The challenges facing the EU regions demonstrated so far clearly point out the significance of the regional policy of the European Union. Regional cohesion must continue, as well as the process of Europe's enlargement will not cease. This, on the other hand, means increased use of an integrated approach for providing efficient solutions for pressing issues. Only if it works together with the other EU policies, the regional policy will have the chance to provide territorial and social cohesion beyond the challenges of the future.

*Filiz Hyusmenova
MEP (MRF/ALDE), Bulgaria*

The European democracy

The European identity

**THE EUROPEAN
SOLIDARITY**

Flexible security should be created in the employment market and should be practically applied the principle of gender equality, including:

Unification of the employment market conditions;

Guaranteed freedom of migration within the work mobility;

Carrying out of measure for fight against poverty through financial inclusion should be continued and so should be the extension of the scope and extent of these measures, including the formulation of:

Minimal standards as a base for the social security;

Minimal standards for the quality of life;

The European Union in 2020 will be a reaffirmed factor on the global scene as a global player with reinforced political dimension, parallel to the economic one, and it will be led by strict principles in that direction, including:

The enlargement as the most convincing expression of EU's solidarity;

Attitude towards Russia consisting in a partnership for development, rather than competition for influence;

Completing the stages of development of the EU Eastern partnership and reaffirming the European perspective for the Eastern neighbours of the EU.

In the context of our topic today, I strongly believe that EU enlargement should not be perceived as a threat to the EU borders. On the contrary - it may actually create new opportunities to reduce human illegal migration.

Having in mind the mentality of Balkan people to do the opposite of what they are told to do - What is a better strategy for management of the migration? Prohibition for entrance, as used till recently, or the visa liberalization?! What the statistics from 19th of December 2009 tell us?!

Taking into consideration the closest examples - the new EU member states, which are currently feeling migration pressures based on the fact that they are more used as transit countries rather than sending countries, let's look at the migration issue from the Balkan's perspective.

Whenever we talk about the EU enlargement versus the Balkan countries topic, the strongest accent is given on the benefits for the Balkan countries with the entrance in the EU. Isn't it that it seems unreasonable how Macedonia with 2 million citizens could be immigration treat for the EU?

*Center for Research and Policy Making, Skopje
Nedžad Mehmedovic*

AN OPEN END ...



“You cannot make the people love the institution. You cannot make the people love the Commission or the Council. But you can make them involved and attracted by a vision”, MEP **Doris Pack** told the “Civic Visions” conference in her speech.

“Sometimes I believe in as many as six impossible things before breakfast”, says Alice in Wonderland. *“That is an excellent practice”*, the Mad Hatter responds. Believing the impossible can be inspiring. But our task is easier. We only have to believe in three possible things: in the European democracy; in the European identity; in the European solidarity.

The vision is a difficult concept to master. Is it just words or a true means by which we communicate our intent? Speaking of European democracy, European identity, European solidarity, are these just slogans or powerful set of words? Is it something to put as the header of PowerPoint slides, or is it truly our core values? We think it is what we are because we can weave those words into the mission and actions that we desire for when looking a decade ahead. Those three concepts tell us what we want to be, what we can be and, hopefully, what we will be.

But in order to be that way, leaders have to make it part of their everyday actions. Visions are equally difficult concepts to implement. They are the inspiration for future action, while the activity of daily work can either detract from achieving the vision or help it along. They empower, inspire and challenge. They break into components that reflect the values of a community.

Many people measure success by a combination of mission and people. We believe that the success of these visions can be measured through interac-

tion. Unfortunately, human interactions can't be boiled down to cookbook solutions or checklists of things to do or say. The nature of interaction is dynamic, and what applies in one situation may not apply in another. An academic approach does not easily apply either because it is not easily divisible into subject areas.

An important aspect is that interaction has an effect on the civil climate, since when it occurs, people walk away with an opinion. And there is always reciprocal influence and strategic complementarities. As a consequence the actions of each side in the interaction have the potential to change.

In our case we believe that interactions, both national and transnational, are the key in the pursuit of the formulated visions in the following ways:

European democracy is a possible mission, when strongly rooted in the practices of the national societies in Europe. The goals that will contribute to the accomplishment of this mission are:

- ◆ To create and sustain an environment that encourages active citizenry, shared decision making and goal setting on all levels;
- ◆ To create a climate where people feel both empowered and protected, and help them learn how to exercise freedom responsibly.
- ◆ To make democracy part of education.

Do citizens endorse the basic principles of a democratic system? Do they organize their political thinking? And how much knowledge do they actually need? Improving education and improving democracy go hand in

hand. As already discussed, we must think of education as more than a collection of standardized tests, if we are to foster democracy and create a stronger fabric among the next generation of citizens.

At the core of the new democratic mandate are the ideological touchstones of transparency and inclusion. Their meaning should be disseminated, appropriated and ultimately practiced in numerous cross-cultural contexts.

The European identity involves the cultural diversity and authenticity of the European nations.

“Cultural identity and unity amid the diversity of national cultures does not amount to the simple indefinite expansion of an original cultural core. I see Europe’s cultural identity as a tightly woven fabric. This fabric consists on the one hand of a warp thread carefully stretched, which corresponds to the many strong national cultures, which themselves have their own identity and find their origins in a distant past; on the other hand, there is the weft thread, which represents the interwoven transnational bedazzlement and admiration, the reciprocal influences crossing the frontiers between cultures and between languages. I imagine this literary, artistic, linguistic, European cultural fabric as drawing its beauty, its unity and its solidity from the sheer number and diversity of its threads.”

Speech by Jean-Claude Trichet, President of the ECB, Frankfurt, 16 March 2009

An array of speeches and declarations assert the view that Europe's cultural diversity is an asset with enormous creative potential, rather than a liability that needs to be borne for a while and that could be disposed of some day. In genetics scientists value the advantages of hybrids. In societies it requires going beyond awareness of our own cultural heritage through cooperation and collaboration. The interests in exotic food or in world music are good examples of the assimilation of alien cultural values.

Building one cohesive but culturally diverse society is no easy task, but not impossible, if places of encounter and dialogue exist. Europe shall have to keep creating public spaces for dialogue and cultural citizenship, in which it is possible to express opinion and disagreement - the guarantor of the democratic process.'

Solidarity between the citizens of Europe is the cohesive element ensuring sustainable development, when it is the shared responsibility of the citizens, the national governments and the European institutions, and the mechanisms of interaction among them function effectively, transparently and adequately to the facts of life.

It is clear that we cannot stay where we are. If we don't go forward to some practical construction, we will go backwards. We have reasons to believe, based on the on-going developments, that a united European front could be formed when needed. But we also know that jobs are not created in Brussels; pensions are not provided by Brussels.

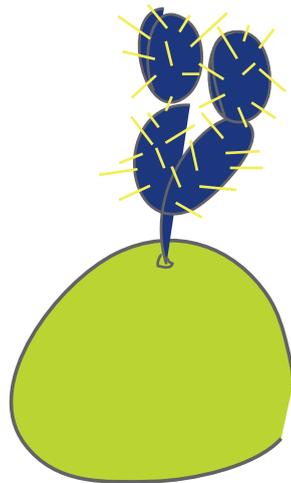
We agree with the broadly promoted ideas that the European Social Model, so far as it exists, should be transparent, democratic, accountable and reliable to people. Indeed, values and principles alone are important but not sufficient for effective action. There is also the need for rules.

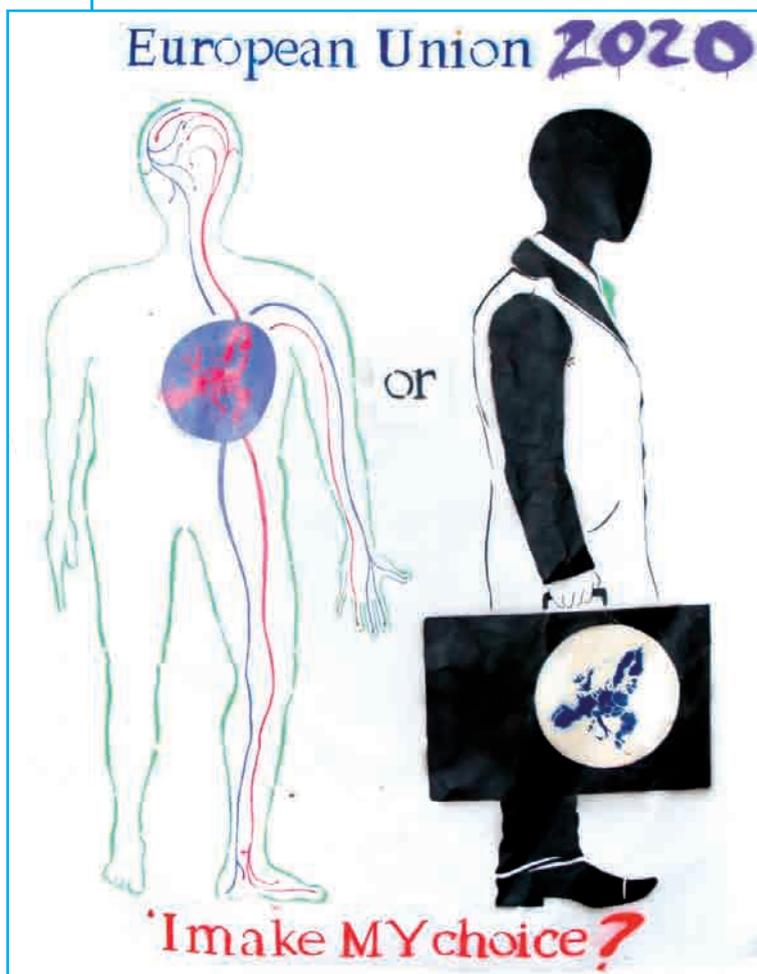
Social science latest research tells us that, while the “deepening” of European integration in other policy areas has been accompanied by convergence towards a European Social Model in the EU-15, the “widening” of the EU has meant, at the same time, that there is now a group of states within the EU that diverge significantly from the dominant model. On the other hand, there is progressive convergence of views on the set of policy objectives and how to achieve them. In particular, there are four key elements for this model: employment, education, autonomy and active citizenship.



All this is possible. In 2020 Europe could be more cohesive, stronger and a more significant factor in the world, if it incarnates in its daily life the idea that, in order to be meaningful, the national and European institutions should utilize the citizens' energy in their activities. The civil society in turn should depart from the role of a beneficiary and become an active participant in the achieving of the common goals.

Therefore the driver of Europe in the next decade will be the interaction among the citizens; between the citizens and the national governments; among the national governments and between the citizens and the European institutions, each using their own mechanisms, as the generator of ideas, unification of resources and accomplishment of the common missions.





Graffiti by Georgi Mladenov - Jorik



ABOUT
THE INITIATIVE

THE “INTERACTING WITH THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT” INITIATIVE

Engaging the citizens in defining the EU common goals and policies through encouraging them to participate in a Europe-wide debate – this is the main objective of the “Interacting with the European Parliament” communication campaign, implemented in various languages through the internet-platform <http://parliament.europe.bg> by the European Institute Foundation, the Centre for Policy Modernization, Europe Gateway and Radio Bulgaria – BNR.

With this initiative, the team’s priority is to facilitate the communication between the civil society and the EU institutions, the Members of the European Parliament in particular.

Together with the campaign’s products such as online-discussions, analytical articles, thematic radiobroadcasts, public debates and educative publications, the website <http://parliament.europe.bg> is set to be an interactive mediator between the voters and the elected on all the topical issues on the European agenda. Our team is determined to clarify the European Union’s institutional organization and, within it, the specific place and role, played by the European Parliament to the project’s target audiences, focusing on how its decisions are echoing both on the citizens’ everyday life and on the global geopolitical processes.

Our target audience is wide, multilingual and coming from various European countries. We pay particular attention to the academia representatives, the young people, the blogosphere, the media and the CSOs. The project addresses not only the EU Member States but also the citizens of the Western Balkans countries - Croatia, Turkey, Macedonia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia.

“Interacting with the European Parliament” is implemented in the framework of a project, approved under the EP’s 2009 Annual Grant Program through the Parliament’s Directorate General “Communication” and its duration is of sixteen months. “Interacting with the European Parliament” naturally succeeds to its predecessor – the “Now – interacting with the European Parliament!” initiative, implemented in 2008 again with the fi-



*From left to right:
Borislav Mavrov, European Institute; Maria Nikolova, Centre for Policy Modernisation;
Konstantin Dimitrov, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs; Ekaterina Mihailova, Deputy
Speaker of the Bulgarian National Assembly; Lubov Panayotova, European Institute;
Andreas Von Below, Konrad Adenauer Foundation; Joao Sant’Anna, Head of the
Legal Department, the European Ombudsman; Violeta Stancic, European Parliament
Information Office - Bulgaria*

nancial support of the DG “Communication”. The already established partnerships continue in a sustainable way – with networks such as PASOS, CHALLENGE, the Balkan Communication Network, the Local Development Booster, as well as with the Europe Direct Information Centers.



*Opening session of the International conference “Europe 2020 - Civic Visions”
Sofia, 29 January 2010*

EUROPE 2020 - CIVIC VISIONS” INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE - PARTICIPANTS DETAILS

PARTICIPANTS’ DETAILS

Over 120 participants from various countries brainstormed together to draft common visions for Europe’s future within the next decade, aiming at best reflecting the expectations of the citizens and their organizations for the Europe of tomorrow.

This was the concept of the two-day international conference “Europe 2020 - Civic Visions”, held in Sofia on January 29 and 30, 2010. This event was implemented by the European Institute Foundation and its partners in the framework of the “Interacting with the European Parliament” project, financially supported through DG “Communication” of the EP.



*From left to right:
Juliana Nikolova, Lubov Panayotova, Doris Pack, Joao Sant'Anna*

PANEL ONE

THE EUROPEAN DEMOCRACY – MISSION POSSIBLE?



TIHOMIRA TRIFONOVA, PHD

Political analyst of the Centre for Policy Modernization

AGNIESZKA ŁADA, PhD

Researcher of the Institute of Public Affairs in Warsaw, Poland

European Parliament elections' turnout – a test for the European democracy

The Institute of Public Affairs (IPA) is an independent, non-partisan public policy think-tank. The IPA was established in 1995 to support modernization reforms and to provide a forum for informed debate on social and political issues. It conducts research, as well as societal analysis and presents policy recommendations. The IPA aims to: implement projects significant for the public domain; initiate public debates; identify potential threats to the social fabric and anticipate future problems; offer new ideas for policies aimed at solving existing and future problems.

Ms. Agnieszka Lada is PhD in political science, Head of the European Programme / Researcher of the Institute of Public Affairs in Warsaw. She is the author and co-author of reports and articles on Polish-German issues, Presidency in the EU Council and European Parliament. She specializes in European and in German issues, the problem of civil education and in press studies.



ANDREY KOVACHEV, PhD

MEP (CEDB/EPP), Bulgaria

The democratic deficit in the EU – What follows after the Lisbon Treaty?

In the EP Mr. Kovatchev (<http://www.andrey-kovatchev.eu>) is member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, the Subcommittee on Security and Defence, as well as of the Delegation for relations with the United States. He is substitute member of the Committee on Regional Development and of the Delegation for relations with countries of Southeast Asia and ASEAN. He is leader of the Bulgarian delegation of MEPs from GERB into the EPP Group. Since 2007, he is Vice-chairman of the Committee on foreign policy and European affairs within the Citizens for European Development of Bulgaria (GERB-CEDB) party. Mr. Kovatchev is Doctor of Natural Sciences, Saarland University (Germany).



CHRISTIAN FELBER

Attac, Vienna University of Economics and Business, Austria

Proposals for the democratization of the European Union

Mag. phil. Christian Felber (www.christian-felber.at) is freelance journalist, book author and international lecturer. Co-founder of Attac Austria, press speaker for 3 years, member of the executive board for 2 years, at present: speaker. Coordinator of the European “Attac’s 10 Principles for a Democratic EU Treaty” (<http://www.attac.at/eu-convention>). His university studies in Vienna und Madrid include Romance Philology, political science, psychology and sociology.



DAVID KRÁL

EUROPEUM Institute for European Policy, Czech Republic

The citizens' initiative as a new instrument of direct democracy at EU level

EUROPEUM Institute for European Policy is a non-profit, non-partisan and independent institute. It focuses on the issues of European integration and its impact on the transformation of political, economic and legal milieu in the Czech Republic. EUROPEUM strives to contribute to a long-lasting development of democracy, security, stability, freedom and solidarity across Europe. EUROPEUM formulates opinions and offers alternatives to internal reforms in the Czech Republic with a view of ensuring her full-fledged membership and respected position in the European Union.



Mr. David Král graduated from the Law Faculty at Charles University. He has been the chairman of EUROPEUM Institute for European Policy in Brussels since 2000 where he also serves as the director of EU policies program. His main areas of expertise in EUROPEUM include the EU reform and Constitutional Treaty, EU enlargement, EU external relations, Common Foreign and Security Policy and EU policy of Freedom, Security and Justice.

HRVOJE BUTKOVIC

Institute for International Relations (IMO), Croatia

Models of democracy in the EU: traditional and innovative democratic practice

The Institute for International Relations (IMO) from Zagreb, Croatia is a public, non-profit, scientific research organization, established in 1963. The Institute is engaged in interdisciplinary research of: European integration, international economic and political relations, transitional policy, international markets, sustainable development, resource economics and environmental policy, foreign policy, strategic decision analysis and culture and communication. IMO carries out research, educational and information activities.

Mr. Hrvoje Butković is research assistant at IMO, Department for European Integration. He is a PhD candidate at the Faculty of Political Science of the University of Zagreb. He actively participated on the several scientific conferences and published scientific and professional articles within the broader thematic field of European integration and civil society research. He also participated in implementation of several research projects focusing on Croatian integration in the EU. Among his spheres of interest and recently released research publications are Croatia within the European context, euro-scepticism and European integration and regionalism as reaction to European integration.



IVAILO KALFIN

MEP, (BSP/S&D), Bulgaria

A Democratic EU Budget - mission possible?

Former Foreign Minister of Bulgaria, Mr. Ivaylo Kalfin (<http://kalfin.eu>) is Vice-Chairman of the Committee on Budgets. As MEP he represents the Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the EP. He heads the Bulgarian delegation of MEPs into the S&D Group. Mr. Kalfin is Member of the Special Committee on the Financial, Economic and Social Crisis and substitute member of two EP committees – on Budgetary control and on Industry, Research and Energy. In addition, he is member of the Delegation for relations with Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro and Kosovo and substitute member of the Delegation for relations with the countries of South Asia.

JOÃO SANT'ANNA

Head of the Legal Department, the European Ombudsman

The European Ombudsman as guardian of transparency

Mr. João Sant'Anna is a former civil servant of the European Parliament, working in the Directorates-General for Information and Public Relations, for Research, for Personnel and Finance, and finally, in the Legal Service of the European Parliament. He joined the European Ombudsman's Office as Head of the Administration and Finance Department in 2000. He was appointed Head of the Legal Department on 1 July 2007. In this function, he manages and leads the Department in its complaint-handling activities. The Head of the Legal Department also advises the Ombudsman on the legal strategy and direction of the institution and fulfils representative functions.



LOUKIA KOTRONAKI, PhD

Athens University, Greece

Solidarity in Protest: Insurrectionary Collective Action in Greece

Loukia Kotronaki is a PhD candidate at the Dept of Politics and History, Panteion University of Social and Political Science, Athens (thesis title: ‘Beyond Consensus: Contentious Politics and the Dynamics of Internationalist Collective Action –the Greek Case, 2000-2007’). She holds a D.E.A. in Sociologie Politique et Anthropologie Politique from Paris I –La Sorbonne, where she has also been a researcher at the CPRS. Works of hers have appeared in edited volumes and journals such as *Actuel Marx*, *Contretemps*, and *Situations*. She is also a regular contributor to the Greek national Press.



Seraphim Seferiades, PhD (left) and Loukia Kotronaki, PhD (right)

MARIYA NEDELICHEVA

MEP (CEDB/EPP), Bulgaria

Civic Initiatives and Relations with National Parliaments

Mrs. Mariya Nedelcheva (<http://mariya-nedelcheva.eu>) is Member of the European Parliament (EPP, Bulgaria), she is the only Bulgarian member of the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development. She is also member of the Committee on Petitions and of the Delegation to the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly. As MEP, Mrs. Nedelcheva is also substitute member of the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs and of the Delegation to the EU-Turkey Joint Parliamentary Committee.



Mariya Nedelcheva (left) and Segolene Pruvot (right)

MARCO INCERTI

Centre for European Policy Studies – CEPS, Brussels

European citizens and the Crisis in the European Institutions

Founded in Brussels in 1983, the Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS) is among the most experienced and authoritative think tanks operating in the European Union today. CEPS serves as a leading forum for debate on EU affairs, but its most distinguishing feature lies in its strong in-house research capacity, complemented by an extensive network of partner institutes throughout the world. Some of the goals of CEPS are: to carry out state-of-the-art policy research leading to solutions to the challenges facing Europe today; to achieve high standards of academic excellence and maintain unqualified independence; to provide a forum for discussion among all stakeholders in the European policy process. Mr. Incerti is Research Fellow & Head of Communications at CEPS - Brussels, one of the most experienced and authoritative think tanks operating in the European Union today. He has Laurea (M.A.) in Law (specialising in EU Constitutional Law), University of Rome ‘La Sapienza’; M.A. in Law and Economy, University of Rome ‘Tor Vergata’.



MICHAEL BRUTER, PhD

London School of Economics, United Kingdom

The paradox of European democracy

Michael Bruter (<http://www.michaelbruter.org>), senior lecturer in Political Science and European politics at the London School of Economics and Political Science. He is author of numerous publications, guest professor at many universities. He has also been Editor of the Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence for European Union Studies, as well as Member of its Executive Board and Researcher.



SÉGOLÈNE PRUVOT

European Alternatives, France

European institutions and democracy in Europe, relations between social movements and European or transnational institutions

European Alternatives is a trans-national organization, based in London, Paris, and Bologna. European Alternatives is devoted to exploring the potential for a post-national or transnational politics and culture, and promoting intellectual and artistic engagement with the idea and future of Europe. The organization runs several projects and events on cultural and political themes internationally, publish a regular magazine, as well as organize the yearly Transeuropa Festival.



Ségolène Pruvot (<http://www.euroalter.com/author/s-pruvot>) is project officer at the European Alternatives: a trans-national organisation based in London, Paris, and Bologna, devoted to exploring the potential for a post-national or transnational politics and culture, and promoting intellectual and artistic engagement with the idea and future of Europe.

SERAPHIM SEFERIADES, PhD

Panteion University of Social and Political Science, Greece

Topic: Solidarity in Protest: Insurrectionary Collective Action in Greece

Seraphim Seferiades, PhD (PhD Columbia) is an Assistant Professor of Politics at the Panteion University of Social and Political Science, Athens and Life Member in Politics and History at the University of Cambridge (CLH). His work spans European and Greek labour and social history, contentious politics and social science methodology. He has edited or co-edited volumes on methodology, social movements and the Greek dictatorship and published extensively in journals such as *Comparative Politics*, the *European Journal of Industrial Relations*, the *Journal of Contemporary History*, the *Rivista Italiana di Scienza Politica*, the *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* and the *Greek Political Science Review*.

Prof. SVETOSLAV MALINOV

MEP (BC/EPP), Bulgaria

Is there a European Demos?

In 2009 Prof. Malinov was elected the 18-th Bulgarian Member of the European Parliament and is to take the office after the entering into force of the Treaty of Lisbon. He represents the center-right Blue Coalition (BC)

in the EPP Group. Former MP. PhD, Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Philosophy - St. Kliment Ohridski University of Sofia, Political Sciences profile. Specialized in political theory in Oslo and New York, master of Political Philosophy, York University (UK). Between 2001 and 2002 Prof. Malinov is Director of the Political Analyses and Strategies Department at the center-right Union of Democratic Forces (UDF) party. Since 2002 he is editor in chief of the “Reason” magazine. He is a founder-member of the Democrats for Strong Bulgaria (DSB) center-right party.



PANEL TWO

**THE EUROPEAN CULTURAL SPACE AND IDENTITY
CULTURAL DIVERSITY; YOUTH ISSUES; EDUCATION...**



Moderator: **Assoc. Prof. Ingrid Shikova, PhD**

*Head of the European Studies Department,
Sofia University "St. Kliment Ochridsky"*

Assoc. Prof. Ainars Dimants, PhD

School of Business Administration Turība in Riga, Latvia

Topic: European Ideas in Latvia - a Model Character of One Book Project

Prof. Ainārs Dimants is Head of the Communication Sciences Department and director of the doctoral study program on Communication Management. He completed his doctoral degree from the Berlin Free University and is well known in Latvia as a media researcher, journalist and one of the founders of the European Movement in Latvia. He is a member of the Baltic studies promotion union and the Baltic media research association, chairperson of the board of Media Institute and author of more than 60 academic publications.

Aymeric Chassaing

“Les Jeunes Européens” Association, France

Topic: European Construction: a Matter of Generation

The non-governmental association “Les Jeunes Européens” (Young European Federalists) (<http://www.jeunes-europeens.org>) aims at gathering young people, who are willing to act in favor of the European construction. The youths in it are militants, in particular, for the construction of a federal Europe. The organization works through networks on local level and its activities are in support of the political pluralism, tolerance and openness.

Aymeric Chassaing is member of the national board of French section of Young European Federalists association (Les Jeunes Européens-France), as Communication and Media Officer. He has been working as communication and public affairs consultant in Paris. He graduated as a Master of Public and Political Communication at Bordeaux Political Science Institute (Sciences Po Bordeaux).



*Assoc. Prof. Ainars Dimants, PhD (left), Gianni Altavilla
Aymeric Chassaing and Hans Jörg Trenz, PhD (right)*

Gianni Altavilla

Secretary of the Network of European Active Citizens (NEAC), Italy

Topic: Citizenship, Diversity and Education

NEAC (<http://www.neac2.eu>) is an international, non-profit Organization whose aim is to stimulate a broader conscience in participation of people for the choices and strategies of developing a democratic culture. The Association engages itself to act to value, spread and use any creative expressive way, and therefore will activate, at national and international level, programs for information and training. By means of promotional adhesions, partnerships and synergies, an infrastructure with the network has been formed, this will be able to contribute to the growing of individuals, associations and groups and give important contributions to the European citizen development.



Mr. Gianni Altavilla was ANSA Information Agency collaborator from 1983 to 1994, from 1976 to 1992 he used to be Head of Press and P.R. Office at San Carlo Opera House in Naples. “Illica” prize in 1982 for the activity carried out just in this last one Institution. His professional activity has been also carried out to many foreign countries. He also carried his reporter activity during crisis periods in Lebanon, Iran and during the first Gulf War in Iraq and Jordan. He has been between founders of NEAC Association and actually is General Secretary and charged of Press Office.

Hans Jörg Trenz, PhD

Center for European Studies, University of Oslo

Topic: Contesting Collective Identities in Relation to EU - Constitution - Making

Hans Jörg Trenz's previous positions were: senior researcher at Humboldt-University of Berlin (Germany, post-doctoral fellow in the graduate school "The New Europe" at Humboldt University) Freie University of Berlin, researcher at Münchner Projektgruppe Sozialforschung, Munich (Germany). Hans-Jörg Trenz studied sociology, political science, criminology and Romance languages at the University of Saarbrücken (Germany), University of Bari (Italy), University of Barcelona (Cataluña) and Middlesex University (London). He holds a PhD in Social and Political Sciences from the European University Institute in Florence. In January 2005 Hans-Jörg Trenz concluded his "Habitationsverfahren" at Humboldt University in Berlin. Among his fields of interest are: the emergence of a European public sphere and of a European Civil Society, European civilization and identity, migration and ethnic minorities, cultural and political sociology, social and political theory.

Haris Nikokavouras*Mediterranean SOS Network****Topic: Volunteering in the European Union***

The Mediterranean SOS Network (www.medsos.gr) is a non-profit, non-governmental organization active since 1990. It engages itself to raise public awareness and to encourage changes in citizens' everyday behavior that impact the environment. The Mediterranean SOS Network also advocates and promotes cooperation among social partners, stakeholders and policy-makers at local, national and regional level. It also promotes active public participation in sustainable development strategies and intercultural exchanges. Mr. Haris Nikokavouras is a graduate in Chemistry from the University of Essex. He also holds MSc from the University College of London in "Environment, Science and Society". He has been involved in work with a great number of NGOs in the past, working mainly in the field of environment and human rights. He has also worked in various areas as a volunteer for many years and is currently the Volunteer Action Co-ordinator for the Mediterranean SOS Network.



Herbert Heuss

The Central Council of German Sinti and Roma, Germany

Topic: The Roma People in Europe

The Central Council of German Sinti and Roma is a civil society organization, acting as the umbrella organization of nine state organizations as well as a number of local Sinti and Roma NGOs. Main tasks of the Central Council are the representation of the minorities' interests towards the Federal Government and its institutions, and also at an international level. Its basic task still is the establishment of compensation for Sinti and Roma, one of the dark chapters of Germany's postwar history. Of equal importance was and is discrimination combating by state institutions, e.g. police, as well as in the broader society, e.g. media.



Prof. Paulo Vila Maior, PhD

the University Fernando Pessoa, Portugal

Topic: European Union Citizenship: The Hard Road Between a Promising Potential and Bitterness

Prof. Paulo Vila Maior, PhD works for the Faculty of Human and Social Sciences of the University Fernando Pessoa (Porto, Portugal). He is member of the Centre for Cultural, Language and Behavioural Sciences (CE-CLICO) and also holds an associate membership of University Association for Contemporary European Studies (UACES) and the Portuguese Association of Political Science (APCP). Among his research interests are political science, political economy and the European financial institutions, EU integration.

Rumyana Kamberska

Sofia University, Bulgaria

Topic: Europe 2020: Making Policies for Children

Ms. Kamberska is a Ph.D candidate at the European Studies Department of Sofia University. Her research interests are focused on Bulgaria's EU membership and its effect on child welfare policy-making. Ms. Kamberska holds a Master's degree in European integration and a Bachelor's degree in Political Science from Sofia University. She also works at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria – at the EU Directorate, where she deals with the EU enlargement policy, institutional issues and justice and home affairs.

PANEL THREE

**THE SOLIDARITY IN THE EU – SHARED
RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE DEVELOPMENT**



Moderator: **Lubov Panayotova**

European Institute Foundation, director

Alexandra Soci

Institute for Public Policy (IPP), Romania

Topic: *The Renewed European Social Agenda - Facing Social Reality of Europe*

The IPP (<http://www.ipp.ro>) is a Romanian non-governmental organization. Its main goal is to support the increased quality of the processes, related to the development of public policies in Romania. The strategic areas of interest of the IPP are transparency of the legislative process, reform of the local government system, fight against corruption and promotion of integrity at all local government levels, organization and operation of election systems and processes, funding of political parties, promoting the rights of the disabled, etc. Mrs. Alexandra Soci is Administrative Manager at IPP Romania.

Alexandra Soci is a researcher who works for the Institute for Public Policy, Romania (IPP) since 2001. She studied at the Faculty of Political Science in Bucharest, and has a Master in Governance and Institutional development. The main area of expertise of Mrs. Soci is Political Parties Finances and Electoral Process in Romania. Mrs. Soci is author and co-author of various studies and reports related to the fields of political parties, elections, electoral campaigns, and political parties' finances, transparency of local and central institutions in Romania.



Andreas Woidich and Stefan Pommer

MKW Labour Market and Economic research GmbH Munich, Germany

Topic: Initiatives and New Trends on Cross-Border Labour Markets in Europe

The MKW GmbH was founded in 1994 as a company focused on purely economic research and consulting. Today, its product range includes also knowledge management and development of information management. The main focus of MKW GmbH is on studies, research and project management in the areas of European labour markets and mobility, migration, industrial relations, employment policy, the European educational area, cultural industries, health economy and various business services including

IT services, relocation consulting and granting Stefan Pommer and Andreas Woidich are social and economic scientists from MKW, Economic Research & Consulting Institute. They have a large number of publications on cross-border cooperation in the field of labour markets and mobility, employment, etc.



From the left: Alexandra Soci, Vladimir Shopov, Stefan Pommer and Andreas Woidich.

Filiz Hyusmenova

MEP (MRF/ALDE), Bulgaria

Topic: The Future of the European Regions: 2020 – an Expected Challenge

Mrs. Hyusmenova (www.filizhyusmenova.com) is Vice-Chairwoman of the Committee on Regional Development. As MEP she is also substitute member of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs. She is Member of the High-level Group for Gender Equality. Mrs. Hyusmenova is also President of the Bulgarian delegation in ALDE for MRF's members (Movement for Rights and Freedoms) and member of the ALDE Bureau. She is member of the Delegation to the Parliamentary Cooperation Committees EU-Armenia, EU-Azerbaijan and EU-Georgia. She is member of the Delegation to the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly.

Hans W. Grohs, PhD

European consumer debt network, Austria

Topic: Financial Inclusion – a Way to Fight Poverty

The European Consumer Debt Network - ECDN (www.asb-gmbh.at/ecdn/index.php) is a European level civil society network built on the experience and activities of key actors in the fight against over-indebtedness and financial exclusion from across Europe, such as debt advice services, educational organizations, consumer agencies, research institutes, etc. From early 2007 the development of ECDN has been coordinated by ASB

Schuldnerberatungen GmbH (www.schuldenberatung.at), the umbrella organization of the Austrian Debt Advice Centers. Mr. Hans W. Grohs, Director of ASB, has been elected to act as the president of the preliminary ECDN management committee that includes representatives of all founding members. He studied law and management in Salzburg and Linz. Mr. Grohs is an expert in the debt advice. He is also the founding member of the Viennese “Die Zweite Sparcasse” non-profit bank.



Kristian Vigenin

MEP (BSP/S&D) Bulgaria

Topic: The Eastern Partnership and the Enlargement of the EU –challenges until 2020

Mr. Vigenin (www.vigenin.eu) is Chairman of the Delegation to the European Parliament in the European Parliament. As MEP he is also member of the Conference of Delegation Chairs, the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Delegation to the EU-Ukraine Parliamentary Cooperation Committee. He is substitute member of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety and of the Delegation to the EU-Russia Parliamentary Cooperation Committee. He is also member of the Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats.



Marc Garcet

Association interregionale de guidance et de santé, Belgium

Topic: European Union's Contributions to its Peoples

The “Association interregionale de guidance et de santé” was founded 45 years ago. Since then, its activities have considerably broadened. Nowadays, AIGS works in the areas of mental and social health, psycho social re-adaptation, professional training, health and social prevention, cultural development, social ecology. Among the main goals of the organization is the development of a social European network and the constructions of social Europe.



Marc Garcet is a founding member and Secretary General of the “Association interregionale de guidance et de santé” - AIGS (<http://www.aigs.be>). Formerly, he was professor at the Institut d’Etudes Sociales de l’Etat de Bruxelles and Director of the NGO “Service Civil International”. At present, Mr. Garcet is a psychiatric social worker and a psychodramatist. He is a well known expert in the areas of medical-psycho social organization and mental health. Mr. Garcet is the author of a large number of publications.

Maria Prohaska, PhD

Director of the Center for Economic Development, Bulgaria

Topic: The Future of Flexicurity under a Gender Perspective

The Center for Economic Development (CED) is a non-governmental think-tank in the economic policy area, established in 1997. It actively contributes to Bulgaria's economic development and achievement of sustainable growth, plays a key role in formulating economic policy options and in promoting public debate on major economic issues; it fosters cooperation between the public, private, NGO sector, and educational institutions in addressing and resolving economic problems. CED carries out economic research, analysis and elaboration of current economic legislation; develops economic policy options.

Maria Prohaska, PhD is Executive Director and Senior Researcher at CED. She has previously worked as Economic Program Coordinator at the Center for the Study of Democracy in Sofia. She holds a in International Economics from the Institute for International Economic and Political Studies at the Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow and has followed a Post-doctoral study in Poverty at Ruskin College, Oxford.



Assoc. Prof. Milena Stefanova, PhD

Sofia University, Bulgaria

Topic: Cohesion Policies – Economic, Social, Territorial Dimensions

Assoc. Prof. Milena Stefanova, PhD at Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”, Faculty of Philosophy, Department of Public Administration. Lecturer in Local Self-Government and Public Administration. Author of many publications in the area of local democracy, local and regional policy.



Nedžad Mehmedovic

Center for Research and Policy Making, FYROM

Topic: Migration Changes/Challenges after the Visa Liberalization for the Western Balkan Countries

Center for Research and Policy Making - CRPM is a think-tank which engages in policy analysis, seeking to open the policy making process to citizens, to improve law, to assess institutional capacities for their implementation as well as to monitor and evaluate how much these policies are creating public value or are directed towards the “Europeanization” of Macedonia. CRPM regularly organizes forums, round tables, and debates offering to policy makers “just-in-time” policy recommendations that are a product of comprehensive policy research, well argued and focused on government actions on policy issues subject to the CRPM’s research interest.

Nedžad Mehmedovic is a research assistant at CRPM - Centre for Research and Policy Making. He has previously worked on a EU funded project - Technical Assistance to the Civil Servants Agency and strengthening the implementation of the National System for Training Coordination, and was a research assistant in the project: “Attitudes Toward the Death Penalty in Ethnically Divided Societies: Albania, Macedonia, Montenegro”. He has a Bachelor’s degree in Political Science at University “S.s. Cyril and Methodius”-Skopje and a Master’s degree in Public Policy from the same university.



Prof. Theodoros Sakellariopoulos

EPEKSA, Greece

Topic: European Social Policy and the Role of Civil Society

The Scientific Society for Social Cohesion and Development (www.epekسا.gr) is a non-profit civil society organization founded in 2006. EPEKSA is dedicated to the promotion of Social Cohesion and Social Development. It is committed to the advancement of social solidarity as a basic component of the modern economic and social system.

Theodoros Sakellariopoulos is Professor at the Department of Sociology, Panteion University, where he is also Director of the Centre of Social and Economic Research (KEKOE). He studied Law and Economics in Athens and Berlin. His main research interests revolve around the following areas: political economy, social policy, employment policies, social inclusion policies, European policies in the fields of employment and social protection, supranational social policies, etc. Professor Sakellariopoulos is President of the Society for Social Cohesion and Development.

Vladimir Shopov

Politologist, Sophia Analytica, Bulgaria

Topic: Frontiers and Political Obstacles to the European Solidarity

Vladimir Shopov is founder and managing partner of Sophia Analytica Ltd, a research and consultancy company. Some of his previous positions include lecturer and tutor in European Politics, Sofia University; Senior Fellow at the Institute for Regional and International Studies, Sofia; Counselor, Bulgarian Mission to the EU, Brussels and EU Policy and Diplomatic Adviser to the Minister of Interior, Sofia. He has worked with various committees of the European Parliament, with the Bulgarian Foreign Ministry, the European Commission, the British Council and has been occasional speech-writer and adviser at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.