



European Economic and Social Committee

# YOUR EUROPE 2013

## Open Space event

in the context of the European Year of Citizens 2013

**23-24 January 2013**

Atrium 5 and 6

## R E S U L T S

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# youreurope2013



### At the EESC

Rue Belliard/Belliardstraat 99,  
1040 Bruxelles/Brussel

IT'S ABOUT EUROPE  
IT'S ABOUT YOU

*Join the debate*



European Year of Citizens 2013  
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17. Establishing a truly representative democracy (women, minorities, disability...)
18. Additional ideas for the European Year of Citizens in the EESC (adding to the results and suggestions of the Coordination Group)
19. Is 'my' Europe 'your' Europe?

The files marked were discussed more in depth during day two of the open space event. You will find two reports on these discussions.

## **Titles of the non-documented proposals**

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*Proposals made at the start of the event – but no documentation was handed in later.*

1. Win people to be active citizens
2. European year 2011 legacy in 2013 (PAVE)
3. Citizens' pact for democracy
4. Languages → communication
5. Compulsory voting for the European Parliament to reach for true inclusiveness
6. Solidarity – especially towards youth employment
7. The high unemployment rate among the young people in the EU

# VOTING SHEET / FEUILLE DE VOTE

Each participant could cast 6 votes (only one vote per topic)

Chaque participant avait droit à 6 votes (maximum 1 par sujet)

19	1	Instilling mutual confidence in democratic processes (not just EU)
7	2	Learning for a long life
13	3	Voting rights for all, on all levels
8	4	Quality of life!?!
17	5	Transnational European elections
27	6	EU citizenship – education in school
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22	8	Inscrire le traité de Lisbonne dans une architecture constitutionnelle efficiente
11	9	25 hours working week for everyone / A change in the way we organise our time and life
17	10	Cultural integration between EU citizens through art
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19	12	How to make EU citizens' rights more tangible for young Europeans?
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11	14	The vulnerable and the voiceless
13	15	Les droits de Roms dans une "Europe unie"
12	16	Energy transition – opportunities of more localised approaches
21	17	Establishing a truly representative democracy (women, minorities, disability ...)
13	18	Additional ideas for the European Year of Citizens in the EESC (adding to the results and suggestions of the Coordination Group)
26	19	Is 'my' Europe 'your' Europe?

# 1

## INSTILLING MUTUAL CONFIDENCE IN DEMOCRATIC PROCESSES (NOT JUST EU)

### Summary of discussions / Results / Suggestions / Next steps

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A very lively debate, which considered processes at all levels in society.  
The key issues that emerged were:

1. Introduce the importance of **participating in decisions from a very early age**, parents, nurseries, schools, universities and community organisations.
2. Emphasise the importance of **empowering citizens** to enable them to see how they can influence decision making processes.
3. **Communication** is vital in overcoming ignorance and in putting across the facts and the issues in a clear and transparent way to avoid the development of misinformation and myths.
4. Communication should include, **listening, discussion, dialogue at local, national and EU level**. Very interesting example of **deliberative democracy**; use of referendums.
5. Information should be clear about the democratic processes available to citizens and about the fact that they should be encouraged to use them. **Clarity of information** enables more transparent processes, which result in a more equal access to systems and processes. Much more consideration needs to be given to the format, structure, use of language in communications.
6. **Formal democratic processes** are in place, but there is **low participation** in all elections, which perpetuates a lack of confidence. There should be increased clarity about where accountability and responsibility lie and about the context in which decisions are made. It needs to be clarified where competencies lie.
7. **MEPs** are often invisible in their Member States and have little **contact** with the citizens they represent (different processes to nominate/elect MEPs in different Member States).
8. The EU has an obvious role when it comes to sharing ideas, good practice, values and solutions, but a clearer framework in relation to decision-making is needed, so that local traditions and values are not undermined by lack of transparent reasoning and information. There need to be more connections between the impact of policy making at EU and national levels. The emphasis should be on trans-national issues.  
**Concept of less Europe for a more integrated Europe.**

### Comments posted on the wall

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Perhaps some concrete suggestions might be possible! (*General comment*)

Language which is easy to understand. Yes – vocabulary. (*Comment made to point 5*)

## 2 LEARNING FOR A LONG LIFE

### **Summary of discussions / Results / Suggestions / Next steps**

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The current approach to lifelong learning is still not responding adequately to the ageing society. A lifelong view means creating a four-stage model (ages up to 25, 25-50, 50-75, 75+) for lifelong learning. Notwithstanding the needs of the younger stages, training opportunities should be also enhanced for those in the third stage, and the emergence of the fourth age requires an appropriate approach to learning in later life. This would clearly require increased support to learning activities in the third and fourth stages... including strategies for improving older people's knowledge and skills of information and communication technologies (ICT).

The learning paradigm means to change from lifelong learning to learning for a long life.

### 3

## VOTING RIGHTS FOR ALL, ON ALL LEVELS

### Summary of discussions / Results / Suggestions / Next steps

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Boston Tea Party: No taxation without representation

**The Treaty of Maastricht** represented a first step from voting right linked to nationality to **voting right linked to residence**.

Maastricht only concerns citizens from an EU Member State living in another Member State.

Maastricht only concerns local and European elections.

Several Member States have extended the local voting right to **third country nationals** (TCN).

Maastricht does not deal with national voting rights.

Since Maastricht things have changed:

- We have a broader view on citizenship (access to local election for TCNs)
- EP has more power and is an almost equal player in the EU legislation process
- EU legislation is the source of 70% of national laws
- Nationals from other Member States influence the choice of EU legislators coming from their country of residence and thereby indirectly the national legislation that is based on EU legislation.

The Council, the second EU legislator, has legitimacy as the representative of the Member States as expressed in the national parliaments. Non-nationals are excluded from participating in electing national MPs.

The traditional role of national parliaments, as an expression of the concept of “one people – one nation” ('Etat Nation'), and national sovereignty has diminished very considerably!

Giving the **voting right on national level** to non-nationals would bring a **supplementary democratic legitimacy** to the other EU legislator, the Council. The Council would get a broader basis similar to that of the EP today.

If the EU wants to be a real democracy, which has taken a step beyond national sovereignty, it must extend the legitimacy of its elected bodies at all levels, from local to national to European.

To avoid a new kind of discrimination, voting rights should be extended to all residents, whether they are from another EU Member States or a third country.

We might find it regrettable that EP elections are very often about national and not European issues. Let us give all those who live in a Member State and can vote in EP elections the right to vote in (real) national elections as well (and have an impact in the Council).

Some other questions raised in this context:

- What about fears?
- What about influence from abroad?
- What about compulsory voting?
- Should there be a minimum period of residence before getting the right to vote in national elections, even if residents pay taxes from their first day in the 'new' country ?

#### SUGGESTIONS, STEP BY STEP

- Extend local voting rights to TCNs; this is already possible if there is political will in a Member State.
- Give voting rights to EP elections to TCNs residing in a Member State.
- Give voting rights to national legislative bodies to residents from another Member State and TCNs after a certain period of residence.

### **Comments posted on the wall**

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All residents of a Member State, whether sick or healthy, whether poor or rich, whether young or old, no matter which nationality they have: they should have the right and access to vote. In some Member States, legal capacity is taken away from people with disabilities. Even if legal capacity is guaranteed, appropriated access must be provided. Even though prisoners have broken the law, their only punishment consists in freedom penalty. They should be allowed to vote.

History of voting right shows that the age went down from 25 to 18 years, a next step may be appropriate. *(General comment)*

EU citizenship is additional to national. It does not and cannot replace it. *(General comment)*

More political participation for TCN will create a more just democratic Europe. *(General comment)*

The right to vote is taken away from many EU citizens with mental disabilities. Do you include them in your topic "Voting rights for all, on all levels?". Legal capacity. *(General comment)*

Better is European citizenship residence *(comment made to the suggestions)*



## 4 QUALITY OF LIFE !?!

### Summary of discussions / Results / Suggestions / Next steps:

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#### FINDINGS

Increase the focus on the Quality of Life.

At Macro perspective (country/EU) – at Micro perspective (Citizens/Community)

A minimum of absolute Quality of Life should have highest priority!  
(food, bed, roof, healthcare, education etc.)

We need a common awareness of the levels, variety, indicators and perception of Quality of Life.

#### SUGGESTIONS

To reach better common awareness we need to “measure” and visualize the Quality of Life in various countries and communities.(country, city, town, village, family/group)

To visualize and to inspire a better Quality of Life we suggest:

- Book of recipes for Quality of Life ingredients (“Cooking Book”) based on citizen level dialogue /”recipes” across Europe. (initiated within the European Year of Reconciling Work and Family Life 2014)
- **Quality of Life Barometer based on citizens values** (initiated by European Economic and Social Committee. Good topic for 2013 Year of Citizens )
- European contest/championship in Quality of Life stories. ( with European Broadcasting Union, EBU)

### Comments posted on the wall

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Widen the focus on the Quality of Life. Make it clearer. Quality is more than money only.  
(*General comment*)

Interesting and innovative, Council of Europe is already working on it. (*Comment made to point 2 of the suggestions*)

# 5

## TRANSNATIONAL EUROPEAN ELECTIONS

### **FR : Rapport / Résultats / Suggestions**

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#### OBSERVATIONS

1. Les citoyens votent sur base d'intérêts nationaux
2. La politique européenne est trop liée à la politique nationale
3. Il n'y a pas de «visages» européens, pas de politiciens européens charismatiques
4. Peu de citoyens et de politiciens comprennent les différents pays et cultures
5. Les structures n'encouragent pas les citoyens à comprendre les différentes cultures
6. Les députés européens sont concentrés sur l'intérêt national
7. Les citoyens ne voient pas le Parlement Européen en tant que corps indépendant
8. Il faudrait renforcer l'image du Parlement Européen vis-à-vis du Conseil de l'UE

#### QUESTIONS ET SUGGESTIONS

1. Des listes électorales européennes pourraient être créées
2. Les Eurodéputés devraient pouvoir être tenus responsables de ce qu'ils font à Bruxelles (importance des circonscriptions et des liens avec leurs électeurs)
3. Faut-il rendre le vote obligatoire?
4. Des circonscriptions qui traversent les frontières nationales pourraient être créées
5. Une ou deux dates pourraient être déterminées pour les élections européennes dans tous les États de l'UE
6. Une petite partie des Eurodéputés pourraient être élus sur base d'une circonscription électorale et les autres sur base du système actuel
7. Le président de la Commission pourrait être élu directement par les citoyens de l'UE

### **EN: Summary of discussions / Results / Suggestions / Next steps**

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#### OBSERVATIONS

1. Citizens vote on basis of national interests
2. European Politics is too linked to National Politics
3. There are no "EU faces", no European charismatic politicians
4. Few people and politicians understand different cultures and different countries
5. Existing structures do not encourage people to understand different cultures
6. MEPs are too focused on national interest
7. Citizens do not see the EP as an independent body
8. A strengthening of the image of the EP vs the Council of the EU is needed

#### QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

1. European electoral lists could be created
2. MEPs should be accountable of what they do in Brussels (importance of constituencies and a link with their electors)
3. Do we need to make voting mandatory?
4. Cross-borders constituencies could be created
5. One or two dates could be determined for elections in all EU Stat
6. Possibility of election of a minor part of MEPs on basis of a broad European constituency and the others with the current system
7. The president of the Commission could be directly elected by EU citizens

## **Comments posted on the wall**

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I disagree, e.g. Cohn-Bendit and Schulz etc. (*comment made to Observations, point 3*)

Important issue across EU institutions, let's strengthen de European Commission's role. (*comment made to Observations, point 6*)

# 6

## **EU CITIZENSHIP – EDUCATION IN SCHOOL INITIAL PROPOSAL**

### **Summary of discussions / Results / Suggestions / Next steps**

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#### 1. Responsibility of teachers

- motivate pupils to be curious about the EU
- educative courses concerning the EU for teachers
  - funding and political will as an obstacle?
  - voluntary?

#### 2. EU education treaty

- generalize the EU educative system
  - same educative system for every member state?

#### 3. Exchange programs

- promote the idea of exchange programs
- increase the financial support (scholarships)
  - are there enough funds?
  - are people aware of the existing scholarships?
- is there financial support for the costs of living?
  - problem: financial support has to be given before the departure
- programs like Comenius should be spread out
- problem: exchange programs to the UK are almost not affordable
  - 'internet exchange': video meetings between young people from different European countries should be part of education in school

#### 4. Language barriers

- language teaching should include the history and culture of its country
- maintain English as the European communication language

#### 5. Age?

- since children are more curious at a young age European education via different medias e.g. skype should start at an age of 7/8
  - the earlier it starts the better it gets

### **Comments posted on the wall**

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Great theme, though additional concrete suggestions would be great.

Absolutely essential to understand democracy and government + possibilities for participation at all levels – and should agree at least to the definite image of last 50 years – a visit to the European exhibition of the Parliament is worthwhile.

Promotion of EU rights in colleges and high schools, not only the economic aspects of the EU.

Make the 9 May the real Day of Europe at schools, high schools and universities.

## 6

# **EU CITIZENSHIP – EDUCATION IN SCHOOL IN DEPTH PROPOSAL**

### **Summary of discussions / Results / Suggestions / Next steps**

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In a horizontal approach

Awareness of EU citizenship:

- EU citizenship awareness at primary schools by the video meetings between EU children [the only resource will be internet – no costs]
- EU citizenship awareness in kindergarten
- Focus and awareness on the EU rights in the education programs at college and high schools [move freely; work freely; set up a business; getting European social security...] that EU citizens use in their daily lives instead of focusing on economic aspects of the EU
- Creation of a social media platform with an account for each school [open source network] for students to be informed or for homework [DG CONECT could be the main resource for data protection and safe Internet program for this European platform]
- Increasing the exchange program as in the European schools the earlier at colleges and high schools

Focusing on teachers:

- Program for the teachers to go abroad and learn languages at primary schools, college and high schools [as it already exists at university] with a financial aid from the EU and national governments – Bonus for the teachers who take part in exchange program?
- Mutual recognition of qualification and diplomas between teachers of the EU
- Encouraging teachers to organise trip to the EU institutions and provide them more documents about EU citizenship [financial support by the EU and Member States]

About EU education:

- Increasing harmonisation of European curriculum?
- E-learning must be a part of the language education at school and at home
- Performing the payment process of scholarships before the ERASMUS trip in order to help students to organise their stay
- Generalisation of the ERASMUS for the schools [it currently exists in some several EU countries : COMENIUS]
- Awareness to intra-generational dimension

# 7

## THE COST OF NON-EUROPE INITIAL PROPOSAL

### Summary of discussions / Results / Suggestions / Next steps

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#### PROBLEMS

1. A large number of EU citizens take the EU for granted.
2. If young children can be educated – is it too late for the elder generation? E.g. elder people even don't stop to think about Europe.
3. For young people the EU is just a history, they don't understand why or how it was created.
4. Ignorance at large and comments such as "Brussels costs us a lot" etc.
5. The popular media are giving the EU bad press and concentrate on negative issues on EU/Euro/budget/unemployment etc. For them, good news is not news!
6. EU institutions do not seem to communicate among themselves and to the citizens.
7. The good achievements and good opportunities almost never talked about.

#### SOLUTIONS AND IDEAS

1. Raise the awareness about the EU in general, achievements, opportunities for citizens (e.g. consumer rights, peace, 4 freedoms, mobility of students etc).
2. Start to integrate EU from primary schools – European curriculum, languages, history, geography...
3. Feed the press with sound economic and statistical data on EU functioning/cost/budget/advantages
4. Using social media adequately in order to inform citizens about EU – e.g. promote the awareness about Your Europe web-site; using new applications for smart grids with info about EU/news/what's new in decision-making etc
5. Launch a campaign "Day without EU" – e.g. simulation games, lectures in Universities, launch a call for competition on the topic among European and non-European film directors (for a movie or series of short movies)

## **Comments posted on the wall**

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Good aspect knowing Cameron's speech of 23 January 2013.

The problem is another one, they don't understand why and where the EU is going (*comment made to problems, point 3*)

Super aspect, thanks !!! Sharing of information + common information + participation on platform should be established (*comment made to Problems, point 6*)

Good point (comment made to Solutions and Ideas, point 2)

Funny idea, thought most probably difficult to implement + problematic from PR side (*comment made to Solutions and Ideas, point 5*)



# 7

## **THE COST OF NON-EUROPE IN DEPTH PROPOSAL**

### **Summary of discussions / Results / Suggestions / Next steps**

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The original initiator was absent, so we had to start by going through the conversation first.

All in all, we realised that this is an interesting and important topic, but it is much easier to find problems and obstacles, than to find any new solutions.

We all agreed that the Europe Day is a very important day on which we could organise a "Day without Europe" campaign as well to present how EU citizens' lives looked like without the EU.

We highlighted that there are already many initiatives (websites, documents, information points, campaigns...) from EU institutions to inform citizens about the importance and achievements of EU. However, these initiatives do not reach the people. New initiatives are not necessary but we need to better link citizens to existing tools and instruments.

# 8

## INSCRIRE LE TRAITE DE LISBONNE DANS UNE ARCHITECTURE CONSTITUTIONNELLE EFFICIENTE *INITIAL PROPOSAL*

### Rapport / Résultats / Suggestions

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Suite au défaut de ratification du projet de traité constitutionnel européen, l'idée consiste à proposer un préambule synthétique des droits qui sont disséminés dans l'ensemble des textes qui relèvent du droit primaire de l'Union. Ce document pourrait consacrer des principes de valeur quasi-constitutionnelle dégagés tant par la Charte des droits fondamentaux de l'Union européenne, que par la Convention européenne des droits de l'homme. Ce texte pourrait être conçu comme un « bloc de constitutionnalité » dont la valeur le placerait au sommet de la hiérarchie des normes, dans le Traité de Lisbonne. A cette fin, le groupe de réflexion a souhaité que les principes suivants soient explicitement adjoints au Traité de Lisbonne (version consolidée). Ils doivent permettre aux Etats membres de transformer l'élan de l'approfondissement et réaliser un modèle politique et sociétal clairement identifiable.

#### PRINCIPES POLITIQUES, ÉCONOMIQUES ET SOCIAUX PARTICULIÈREMENT NÉCESSAIRES À NOTRE TEMPS

1. Le droit des minorités sociétales et linguistiques ségréguées en raison de leur appartenance socio-éthologique à pouvoir jouir des mêmes droits et devoir sur l'ensemble du territoire de l'UE.
2. Consacrer une identité européenne de sécurité et de défense intégrée (IESD), et assurer un engagement européen unanime dans les situations de maintien de la paix en hors-zone.
3. Instituer un « haut-commissaire » dont la mission constituerait à assurer le lien entre les institutions et la société civile, et qui aurait compétence pour pallier aux carences internes de la mise en œuvre des politiques publiques.

#### PRINCIPES FONDAMENTAUX RECONNUS PAR LE DROIT PRIMAIRE DE L'UNION ET CONSACRES TECHNIQUEMENT PAR LE DROIT DÉRIVE (CJUE)

1. Droit d'association et attribution d'un régime de reconnaissance unique aux associations en Europe.
2. Protection de la dignité de la personne humaine,
3. Liberté contractuelle et liberté d'entreprendre,

#### OBJECTIFS À VALEUR CONSTITUTIONNELLE

1. La sauvegarde des fins d'intérêt général (sauvegarde de l'ordre public et la liberté de circulation des biens, des personnes, des capitaux et des marchandises)
2. Le droit à se prévaloir de la question prioritaire de constitutionnalité

3. La procédure de contrôle de constitutionnalité sur les actes a valeur contraignante de l'UE et déjà en vigueur (dit « contrôle de constitutionnalité a posteriori »). Leur articulation devra être indissociable des droits reconnus par le droit primaire existant, et viendra compléter, selon la méthode des « petits pas », le corpus des libertés qui sont éparpillées dans les autres sources du droit positif européen.

## **Comments posted on the wall**

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Great topic! How about the process of civil society involvement in drafting process of the possible new Treaty? (*general comment*)

Involvement of civil society is crucial → set out responsibilities on both sides. Citizens = institutions (*general comment*)

Especially relevant in the light of yesterday's speech by the UK Prime Minister (*general comment*)

## 8

# INSCRIRE LE TRAITE DE LISBONNE DANS UNE ARCHITECTURE CONSTITUTIONNELLE « EFFICIENTE » *IN DEPTH PROPOSAL*

## **Rapport / Résultats / Suggestions**

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### COMMÉMORATIF DES FAITS ET DE LA PROCÉDURE

Suite au défaut de ratification du projet de traité constitutionnel européen, la démarche constructive du groupe de réflexion consiste à formuler le cadre logique à l'intérieur duquel le préambule synthétique des droits éparés dans la Charte des droits fondamentaux de l'Union et la Convention européenne des droits de l'homme (CEDH-LF) sera doté d'une valeur constitutionnelle inédite. Ce texte est inscrit comme un « bloc de constitutionnalité » dont la valeur le place au sommet de la hiérarchie des normes juridiques, en l'occurrence le Traite de Lisbonne (version consolidée). Ce texte s'inscrit dans le prolongement de la dynamique évolutive permanente de l'approfondissement du modèle européen. Au moyen de ce nouvel instrument juridique, les Etats membres seront en mesure de transformer l'élan et donner forme à un modèle politique et sociétal plus conforme à l'aspiration concrète des citoyens de l'Union.

### EN DROIT : APPORTER DES GARANTIES JURIDIQUES QUI NE PEUVENT PLUS DÉJOUER LA PRÉVISIBILITÉ DES CITOYENS EUROPÉENS.

Il s'agit d'abord de conforter des principes politiques, économiques et sociaux particulièrement nécessaires au temps de l'action commune. Cela renvoie entre autre chose au respect du droit des minorités sociétales et linguistiques ségréguées, en raison de leur appartenance socio-ethnologique, a pouvoir jouir des mêmes conditions d'application du droit sur l'ensemble du territoire de l'UE. Cela renvoie aussi a mieux coordonner le lien interactif qui existe de fait entre la société civile et les autres institutions de l'UE. Enfin, cela renvoie encore à l'affirmation d'une société européenne toujours plus démocratique et convergente qui inscrit l'élection d'un Président européen suivant les modalités pratiques du suffrage universel direct.

Dans cette perspective de transformation fonctionnelle, et pour reprendre la seconde proposition, il est proposé de dynamiser les droits garantis par l'article 11 TUE, qui consacre déjà la notion d'insertion inclusive des citoyens, dans le processus décisionnel. A cet effet, il serait bon que l'initiative du dialogue décrit opère à toutes les phases du processus de concertation active mais aussi à tous les niveaux de décision.

Sur le plan du montage technique et juridique, compte tenu des dispositions du Traité, il est suggéré que le CESE puisse renforcer sa position dominante dans une structure du dialogue tripartite déséquilibrée existante. A cette fin, et pour garantir une parfaite prise en compte des aspirations émanant de la société démocratique, il apparait utile qu'un représentant direct du CESE (i.e. un Vice-président du CESE) puisse être admis dans une plateforme dans laquelle les trois autres institutions de l'UE coopèrent a la mise en œuvre des politiques publiques suivant les aspirations de la société civile.

Au final, et en conclusion partielle, il convient de souligner que ce « chapeau » juridique doit impérativement consacrer aussi bien des principes fondamentaux reconnus par le droit

primaire et le droit dérivé ; mais, il doit aussi veiller à inscrire précisément des objectifs à valeur constitutionnelle, notamment la reconnaissance d'un statut européen des associations comme liberté fondamentale inaliénable.

**EN FAIT : REDONNER CONFIANCE DANS L'EUROPE EN REPOSITIONNANT LE CITOYEN DANS UNE LOGIQUE DE DIALOGUE DYNAMIQUE ET INTERACTIF.**

En vertu de l'article 11 paragraphe 4 du TUE (version consolidée), l'initiative citoyenne européenne représente, à côté de la voie suivie par le Parlement européen, une autre expression démocratique dans l'Union.

En effet le droit d'initiative citoyenne européenne (ICE) a été introduit par le Traité de Lisbonne. L'article 11, paragraphe 4, du TUE énonce : « Des citoyens de l'Union, au nombre d'un million au moins, ressortissants d'un nombre significatif d'États membres, peuvent prendre l'initiative d'inviter la Commission européenne, dans le cadre de ses attributions, à soumettre une proposition appropriée sur des questions pour lesquelles ces citoyens considèrent qu'un acte juridique de l'Union est nécessaire aux fins de l'application des traités. Les procédures et conditions requises pour la présentation d'une telle initiative sont fixées conformément à l'article 24, premier alinéa, du traité sur le fonctionnement de l'Union européenne ». Conformément à ces dispositions, et suivant l'idée d'une adhésion librement consentie et ouverte, il est souhaitable que cet instrument juridique, qui constitutionnalise les dispositions du Traité de Lisbonne, fasse l'objet d'une acceptation officielle. À titre de suggestion, ce dispositif constitutionnel pourra voir le jour à l'occasion d'une manifestation politique à moyen terme (célébration d'une entente bi ou tripartite, comme dans l'hypothèse de la célébration de l'amitié franco-allemande).

Dans le cadre de la nouvelle interactivité renforcée, qui est établie entre le CESE et la société civile, d'une part, puis le CESE et les Institutions de l'UE, d'autre part, le suivi de la progression des « attentes » formulées par la société civile pourra faire l'objet d'une randomisation régulière des outputs, sur un site web dédié.

De la facilitation de la mise en œuvre de ces mesures dépend aussi la meilleure lisibilité externe de l'Europe par ses néo-citoyens.

# 9

## 25 HOURS WORKING WEEK FOR EVERYONE A CHANGE IN THE WAY WE ORGANIZE OUR TIME AND LIFE

### Summary of discussions / Results / Suggestions / Next steps

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#### ADVANTAGES OF WORKING LESS:

##### At personal level

1. People that are not working are being paid through the welfare system. It could be more convenient for them to have a week of 25 hours for all.
2. Tim JACKSON: Commission for The UK: "if we want sustainable development, we have to work half-time: less resources, use "the bigger the salary, the bigger the carbon print".
3. More personal and domestic satisfaction/ better understanding among couples
4. More efficiency during working time
5. A part of our food should be done by ourselves: 1 day a week urban gardening
6. Health, education and domestic improvement: more rest and time: "keep it small"
7. Family rebalance: divorce is highly correlated with a lack of understanding of the domestic time most women spend doing homework
8. More time to get involved in the political life
9. Less gender discrimination

##### At "corporate" level

1. More productivity during work time.
2. Rediscover the pleasure at work/better quality of work.
3. Less absenteeism at work/less administrative burden to ask for holidays.
4. More quality during the working life time: eagerly keen to work longer.

##### At State level

1. Less unemployment and less correlated health problems: depression.
2. Better payment for pensions correlated: (longer work).
3. Minimum wage for every citizen/ facilitation in the way public.

#### CO-RELATED ISSUES

1. Convincing persons that are the wealthier to reduce their time at work.

2. Convincing companies that are making profit not to delocalize.
3. Obligation of a minimum of work for everyone.
4. Time-banking: possibility to reward different
5. Developing working hubs and impose minimum distance-working for workers: more flexibility in schedules.
6. New class of entrepreneurs: educate and stimulate private initiatives/ little entrepreneurs give more employment and are more locally based.
7. Generalize workshops with entrepreneurs in high-schools.
8. Educate young kids in creativity.
9. New models: Develop and educate on collaborative models at the school level and within companies.
10. The Nordic countries that work less in more flexible organizations have better life and larger citizens' satisfaction.

## CONCLUSIONS

- Many advantages in this new life organization: domestic, health, satisfaction at the personal, corporate level
- Need for more economic and political visibility
- Initiative in accordance to Europe main goals: Long life education/ health prevention/ active ageing.

## CESE ACTIONS NOW:

1. Pilot test of 25h up to 32h in different kinds of companies in different countries in Europe: 1 year trial/ watch the benefits
2. Job-sharing tests: twin job organizations
3. Pilot tests in administration
4. More access to the different European initiatives.

## **Comments posted on the wall**

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This is a topic appropriate for the European Year 2014.

# 10

## CULTURAL INTEGRATION BETWEEN EU CITIZENS THROUGH ART

### **Summary of discussions / Results / Suggestions / Next steps**

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#### SUMMARY

1. Art expresses new ideas, breaks down barriers and existing structures which prevent integration and increases individual adaptability and emotional resilience
2. Art is a medium that transcends language and goes directly to the emotions, by-passing frontiers.
3. Catharsis through art allows us to approach problems which otherwise would be overwhelming.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

Several recommendations were mentioned, including:

1. EU promotes network of artists,
2. Art should be integrated with other aspects of education,
3. EU encourages art that arises from European themes.

### **Comments posted on the wall**

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This theme can be integrated into the "Is 'my' Europe 'your' Europe?" theme as they complement each other.



# 11

## FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS

### *INITIAL PROPOSAL*

#### **Summary of discussions / Results / Suggestions / Next steps**

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1. The group decided to focus on two main topics, which resulted in the composition of two sub-groups: lobbying group for operating grants and national impacts due to financial cuts.
2. Financial cuts do not only have impacts on civil society organisations (CSOs), but also on their members and all European citizens.  
As a result of the financial cuts, participatory democracy will be jeopardized and the goal of creating a European citizenship would become a difficult one to be achieved. The link between national and European civil society organisations is already weak, and would completely disappear in case operational grants would be cut.
3. As national organisations often have a lack of experience and knowledge, they need good links with European CSOs in order to better involve citizens in their activities and also to raise funding to become sustainable. In addition, a flow of information is also needed from the European level to the national one, to enhance their capacity building.
4. This situation is very likely to create a situation in which less activities for citizens related to Europe will take place, though undermining the efforts made on creating a European identity.
5. The financial sustainability of CSOs is in high danger due to planned cuts on operating grants. The group agreed that lobby activities are needed to raise awareness for the importance of operating grants.  
Very often there is a lack of knowledge in various DGs of the European Commission on how CSOs are financed and on how grants could be handled in a more civil society friendly way within the existing financial regulations.
6. The group wants to address the European Year of Citizens Alliance to take the topic on the agenda of their first workgroup. The goal is to include the issue on operating grants into the council conclusions of the Irish presidency. The group also wants to advocate for it at DG BUDG and the Budget Committee of the EP. This could also lead to a letter to Commissioner Lewandowski, in charge of the EU budget.
7. The group agreed that it would be helpful if CSOs would put together a manual for all DGs of the European Commission, which will explain through best-practices how grants could be better implemented and lead to more financial sustainability – or in other words, to a better use of taxpayers' money.

8. The group wants to point out, that it is a bad and wrong sign from the European Union to knock a lot of CSO of their financial feet in the European Year of Citizens and one year before the European elections.

### **Comments posted on the wall**

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Use of the volunteer time as co-funding would help! (*Comment made to point 5*)

# 11

## FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS

### *IN DEPTH PROPOSAL*

#### **Summary of discussions / Results / Suggestions / Next steps**

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In the current context of the financial crisis, sustainability of organisations is more important than ever – many organisations face unprecedented reductions in funds and the need to plan ahead for the long-term is crucial.

The group agreed that we should work together to emphasise the priorities for funds (e.g. Europe for Citizens Programme) and set out core principles, highlighting the value of CSO (linking to communities).

We propose to develop a manual or Guide for good practice to include issues:

- principles for funding
- longer term funding rounds
- sufficient notice of funding changes
- different levels of financial Regulation for different sizes of funds, (eg. flexibility for smaller projects)
- volunteer time + in kind (how to measure these aspects)
- simplified audit
- core funding - basis of org. to ensure sustainability
- co-funding as way to ensure commitment of organisations
- pre-financing of projects

#### KEY ACTIONS:

- EESC is to work with EYC Alliance to develop good practice manual on funding for key EU programmes.
- To provide advice to national alliances on how to Access structural funds. Work to influence practical approach of national administrations.
- EYC alliance + EESC + liaison group to gather evidence on use of structural funds + feedback to EC for next programme.
- One of the conditions for growth would be to turn to Small and Medium Enterprises. As a matter of fact SMEs represented over 90% of the enterprises in Europe. If we obliged each one of them to hire at least one employee, that would be a source of growth.
- At least four key factors of the hiring decision should be optimized: Education, Languages, Soft skills and Experience.

# 12

## HOW TO MAKE EU CITIZENS' RIGHTS MORE TANGIBLE FOR YOUNG EUROPEANS?

### Summary of discussions / Results / Suggestions / Next steps

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After a brainstorming session on methods, content and possible channels to make citizens' rights more tangible, we came up with the following ideas and recommendations:

It's about communication!

1. **Highlight the EU citizens' rights.** Not all young people know what those rights are. We might take them just for granted, not being aware what is a European Union right.
2. **Identify the needs of young people** and start from the local context and their immediate environment.
3. **Get concrete, get personal.** Inform about concrete opportunities, e.g. to work in another country, and showcase personal examples, your own and testimonials from other young people.
4. **Be relevant** by addressing concrete needs of young people. Different young people have different needs. Try to provide tailor-made information and examples.
5. **Have a dialogue with young people.** The space for that dialogue can be an event, cross-country exchanges. Groups, such as scouts can create such environment an environment.

In addition, we suggest to further look into the following framework conditions:

- Freedom of movement needs to be accompanied by **language learning**. If you don't speak a foreign language, you cannot fully exercise and benefit from your European rights.
- Improve overall **access to information**, e.g. job opportunities abroad. Here access is meant in technical terms (Internet access for all is still not achieved) and in terms of "easy to reach, find and comprehend".
- Improve **access to training** for young people.
- **Encourage more exchanges** for young people and opportunities for them to **experience Europe**, e.g. with virtual links, school exchanges, sports meetings.

### Comments posted on the wall

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Let's continue the brainstorm to collect more concrete ideas for EY identity support mechanisms.

E.g.: "European Civic Engagement", "EU Civic Service" to experience the European citizenship.

→ Youth exchanges in the field of "citizen service".

More mobility, training on citizenship, better EU understanding, win-win-win situation (youth, society and host organisations), FOR ALL YOUTH!

# 13

## HOW TO REDUCE YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT IN THE EU? *INITIAL PROPOSAL*

### Summary of discussions / Results / Suggestions / Next steps

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#### PROBLEMS

1. Once job seekers are caught in a vicious circle, it becomes difficult for them to get hired
2. There is widespread exploitation on the mostly unpaid internship market
3. Freelancers are faced with red tape and other difficulties in becoming entrepreneurs
4. Brain drain and forced emigration, which causes a double problem as most people do not come back and contribute to the economy
5. In some MS civil engagement is linked with unemployment
6. Recognition of diplomas and qualifications not yet achieved
7. Rigidity of labour markets in some MS / linked to the recognition problem
8. Young people with disabilities even more affected by unemployment
9. We do not have a real single labour market!
10. Skills needed and those provided do not match / EU needs more skill creation in maths, sciences, engineering etc. / this goes back to the education problem

#### PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

1. The problem of the first job seekers or students just finishing their studies should be tackled by creating programmes at EU level, which should stimulate the "in-between" period and help these people to get their first paid job. The costs of this are lower than the cost of (long-term) unemployment. The Youth Employment Package from the European Commission and the Quality Framework for Traineeships should be urgently adopted. Also, validation and recognition of prior learning and work experience should be better regulated.
2. The problem of the abuse of (un)paid internships should be regulated to tackle the exploitation of young people who compete for (un)paid work on the labour market. A swift implementation of the "Youth Guarantee" could be a proper solution in this context. Also, the use of funding for the traineeship schemes should be extended so that people feel more encouraged to become entrepreneurs.
3. The red tape in some (southern) MS should be tackled in order to create sustainable jobs in Europe.
4. The brain drain and forced emigration problem could be tackled by more funding for professional exchange programmes. This could tackle also the rigidity of labour markets and improve the information on which skills are needed on the market.
5. The topic of civil engagement should not be abused and could be tackled by measures in countries where the problem exists.

6. Also on this topic, a swift implementation of the "Youth Guarantee" could be a solution. Here too, the use of more funding for the traineeship schemes could help so that the people become more encouraged to become entrepreneurs.
7. Funding and better traineeship programmes that are linked with companies that work with young people could help to tackle the rigidity of labour markets
8. Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) could help to create platforms of European schemes and incentives which could help to manage the problem of losing European "knowhow" to booming economies.
9. Member States should shift their competences in relation to the high unemployment rate among young people more to the EU level.
10. The skills mismatch and the rigidity in the teaching systems could be tackled by better stimulating the skills needed by the labour market and reform the education system so that it is easier to adopt to the needs in the years to come. Also, flexible learning is a must.

## **Comments posted on the wall**

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I totally agree. I'm a student already did 5 unpaid internships. That's exploitation of young people; they do the same tasks as the employees. Give them a real chance! (*Comment made to point 2 of proposed solutions*).

National funding or EU funding? (Comment to point 1 of the proposed solutions)

European entrepreneurs should give a priority to their EU partners before outsourcing abroad. So jobs stay in Europe. (*General comment*)

# 13

## HOW TO REDUCE YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT IN THE EU *IN DEPTH PROPOSAL*

### Summary of discussions / Results / Suggestions / Next steps

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#### PROBLEMS IDENTIFIED:

1. Mobility
2. The need to invest into growth (153 billion Euro is estimated cost of unemployment across Europe; 21 Billion Euro is cost to address unemployment)
3. Skills mismatch on the labour market
4. Starts up for youth is not encouraged
5. Internships are not valued as real jobs

#### SOLUTIONS PROPOSED:

1. As it is done in Sweden, employers should be obliged to get trainees for 1 or 2 years, in that period they will offer their trainees guidance. As a counterpart trainees accept to be paid 25% below the minimum salary.
2. There should be an investment of 21 billion in the youth guarantee scheme in order for Europe to reap financial benefits of an active and mobilized youth labour market.  
→ A Social fund exists, we should make clever investment with it and efficient redistribution and in the public sector job services they should be more accessible and user-friendly to young people.
3. In order to keep our working forces (youth), a “youth immigration scheme” can be created were youth can travel abroad to gain knowledge and experience and return. Incentives and communication have to be made on both sides of the labour market deciders:
  - a. On the employee's side: guarantee that their experience and knowhow will be recognized and valued
  - b. On the employer's side: guarantee of a qualified labour force
4. We should enable solution in terms of incentives
  - a. Better education output
  - b. Create incentives for them to go on the labour market
5. Lower and reallocate these resources to other fields, for instance into internship remuneration. Then we would have a minimum wage for internship. The EU Youth Forum Charter for Interns should be honoured.



6. Without growth is there any possibility of creating new jobs. From a collaboration and solidarity perspective, we can use the tools like time money and resources to redistribute it more efficiently.

One way would be to share all the total number of working time between the work forces available. For instance having 35 hours of paid worked and some 5 hours of extra "work" time would be used for civil engagement. A bank of time could be devised where people could exchange one 1 hour of their knowhow against another service they need and that is equivalent, in terms of value, on the one offered. For that to be possible the EU should use the ILO standards that provide for the value of non-paid work to be measured as an added value of well-being, creating an "evidence based policy", instead of only monetary valuation.

7. For youth start up, tax rates shall be lowered for young people that would like to be entrepreneurs. Schemes that enable the young people to open their own enterprise shall be created; for instance having an entrepreneurship course in the education system.

We shall take into account the future changes we will face to be able to create sustainable jobs; as well as addressing intergenerational solidarity issues such as providing care for the ageing population.

Before outsourcing outside of Europe, entrepreneurs shall give priority to European partners.

At some level could we consider that the market is not always the solution? Shall regulation be authorized? If yes, at what level? Given the mobility of labour we wish for Europe, youth employment shall be an EU competence or a national competence? If it had to be an EU competence, could the taxes still be a national competence?

# 14

## THE VULNERABLE AND THE VOICELESS

### Summary of discussions / Results / Suggestions / Next steps

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Who are the vulnerable and the voiceless?

1. People who are illiterate
2. Homeless
3. People in detention centres and prisoners
4. Undocumented migrants
5. Unskilled workers
6. People in rural areas
7. Unemployed
8. Disabled people
9. Drug abusers
10. Trafficked human beings
11. ITC illiterate people
12. People experiencing poverty, even if it is a temporary situation
13. Animals
14. Others

Why do we need to reach out to these people?

1. The main objective is the eradication of all forms of poverty
2. To ensure that vulnerable people know their rights
3. To ensure that effective programs regarding language and communication problems are in place together with intercultural policies through EU funded projects
4. To help them improve their situation in life
5. To empower them to equal access to participate in society
6. To acknowledge their contribution to society
7. To create awareness to bring about a change in perception by society: they should not be treated with pity (compassion) but as people in a dignified manner
8. Society should not 'categorise' them but should treat them with human dignity
9. It is only by listening to their experience that we can really treat them as human beings, because they are the only ones with the knowledge about their situation; therefore we should listen to their experiences. Eg. the needs of undocumented migrants and their families need to be treated differently from those of asylum seekers or economic migrants

How can we reach the different vulnerable groups?

1. By creating: local national and regional spaces for dialogue through proper structures

2. NGOs are in a position to educate and train people in vulnerable situations and to help in integrate in society as full citizens
3. to empower them to be active citizens, to have the knowledge and the skills to participate in dialogue with various authorities so that policies can really address their needs
4. to offer training and vocational training which is certified to help them get into employment
5. The role of the business sector in its Corporate Social Responsibility(CSR) programs together with other social partners to offer vocational training for prospective employees

What role can be played by Government, NGOs and the EU Institutions?

1. Measures to encourage a process of active citizenship and integration in society are wide-ranging depending on the needs of the different groups
2. The need for a holistic approach is often indispensable
3. The role of NGOs as mediators and facilitators between vulnerable groups and government and related authorities should be underlined by the concept 'Give a man a rod and teach him how to fish'
4. At national level, there is the need for more accurate data collection on vulnerable groups to better understand their needs. NGOs should be involved in the collection of data so that more effective policies are put in place
5. The EU Commission should have more powers on how EU funds should be used at national level to ensure that the needs of vulnerable groups are better addressed
6. EU projects should move from short-term to long-term projects and should reach larger groups
7. The EU and national governments need to take stronger measures and make use of more resources to address organised crime in particular in drug trafficking and trafficking of human beings: including stronger legislation and sanctions that act as a deterrent; better protection of victims and witnesses and the elimination of forced return to country of origin
8. More effective training for all professionals involved, in particular to the police force (UN Palermo Protocol) is crucial
9. The EU and national governments need to address issues concerning people in detention (depriving them of their freedom is a sanction (punishment in itself).
10. These include prisoners, undocumented migrants, people in psychiatric institutions amongst others. In line with the Council of Europe Convention on Human Rights, the right to vote and other fundamental human rights should be respected in circumstances where the exercise of this right will not infringe on the security of society
11. Members of families (especially of undocumented migrants) whose parent is in detention should be allowed to enjoy family life in society and not be forced to be detained with the prisoner, especially in the case of children.

## **Comments posted on the wall**

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Added to list of vulnerable and voiceless: plants.

Vocational training should be free, maybe even under working hours.

# 15

## LES DROITS DES ROMS DANS UNE "EUROPE UNIE"

### Rapport / Résultats / Suggestions

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#### CONTEXTE

1. Non-respect des droits des Roms
2. Image négative suite à l'initiative du gouvernement Sarkozy envers les Roms (expulsion forcée, détention inhumaine des femmes et des enfants)
3. La Commission européenne a commencé à réagir sur la situation des Roms dans l'UE (droits des Roms) lorsque les événements sont devenus catastrophiques en France et en Italie
4. Le Conseil de l'Europe a réagi face à cette situation dramatique par la déclaration de Strasbourg équivalente à une charte des droits des Roms (20 octobre 2011)

#### OBJECTIF GENERAL

1. Les personnes qui sont sensibles au problème des Roms en Europe estiment que ce problème doit être mentionné clairement dans les documents officiels stratégiques (directives, décisions politiques, mesures,...). La mention portant sur les droits des Roms doit figurer dans les traités européens, conventions, directives ou protocoles-cadres.
2. Dans le contexte européen de citoyenneté, il serait préférable d'accorder une attention particulière à la population Rom qui est dans une situation plus critique que d'autres communautés marginalisées en Europe, pour lui permettre de disposer de plus de ressources pour s'intégrer (*empowerment*).

#### RECOMMANDATIONS

1. La participation active des Roms en matière de décision dans les différents niveaux de l'administration (locale, nationale, européenne).
2. Lutter contre la stigmatisation des Roms par tous les moyens ; sensibiliser la population majoritaire aux causes structurelles de la pauvreté et de l'exclusion des Roms.
3. S'inspirer des meilleurs exemples d'intégration en Europe (Espagne, Belgique) : mise à disposition de logements sociaux, accompagnement socio-pédagogique
4. Faire pression sur les Etats membres pour que soient respectées les directives et les recommandations européennes.
5. Faire respecter le droit à la justice et à la liberté d'expression qui sont propres à toute société démocratique.
6. Reconnaître et promouvoir la culture des Roms et permettre à cette communauté de la vivre normalement.

## REFLEXION FINALE

1. Les membres du workshop souhaitent que le travail réalisé soit suivi d'effet au niveau du CESE avec des outputs plus larges dans les institutions européennes et dans les Etats membres par la suite.
2. L'année de la citoyenneté européenne n'est possible que si la justice sociale de toutes les populations est respectée.
3. L'open space «citoyen européen» doit être élargi à toutes les catégories de la population et pas seulement à un cercle d'experts ou de privilégiés pour que les problèmes de société soient pris en compte globalement.

# 16

## ENERGY TRANSITION – OPPORTUNITIES OF MORE LOCALISED APPROACHES

### Summary of discussions / Results / Suggestions / Next steps

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1. Energy issues are complex, as they can be regarded from very different perspectives. Many of citizens' every day habits have an impact on the energy footprint. Consumer behaviour is one important example (i.e.: if we repair products or buy second-hand ones instead of buying new ones, if we buy fruits and vegetables from local producers instead of buying supermarket products.)
2. Nevertheless, this workshop was focusing more on direct energy saving and energy production issues in households.
3. There are many (very simple) energy saving measures that may have a highly positive impact on someone's energy footprint at a relatively low input (i.e. basic insulation in houses and flats). Local councils and federal governments may facilitate such measures by providing an appropriate legal frame (i.e. to allow energy saving measures through simplifying permissions to owners of historic buildings)
4. The participants of the workshop felt that (European) energy policy is rather favouring large scale solutions instead of smaller scale ones. Whereas often the actual local needs in different parts of Europe could be easier handled on a smaller scale and closer to the actual consumers.
5. Moreover a more localised energy production allows to easier equilibrate energy saving measures and installation of new production facilities (in order to provide the most environmental friendly and cheapest solution for the client). Localised energy solutions are therefore cost-saving and can potentially increase the community resilience (meaning: to allow absorbing shocks caused by fluctuating or increasing energy prices).
6. Examples for decentralised energy production are various municipalities in Germany, who often possess their own public utility companies distributing and/or producing energy on a local level (i.e. Stadtwerke München, Germany) and community run schemes (such as local energy cooperatives (i.e. Ovesco, Lewes, UK). Both approaches of local energy production and distribution allow as well generating an income on local or regional level.
7. Today's cheap energy prices are mainly due to low prices for fossil energy resources. The participants of the workshop mutually agreed that it is very probable that energy prices will increase severely in the coming years. This will cause a new energy precarity in many European countries – as a consequence governments will need to subsidize energy prices. Due to short state budgets across Europe they will have to choose solutions in a cost effective way. It is likely that localised and regionalised solutions are the most cost effective, for the reasons mentioned above.

8. A very good example for small scale and citizen driven initiatives (as well in the energy sector) is the Transition Network. Transition initiatives are local community initiatives where citizen driven action groups developing and implementing small scale solutions to cope practically with various aspects of climate change and energy scarcity. The Transition Network is UK-based. The initiatives can be found in currently more than 1000 municipalities and neighbourhoods across the world.
9. To promote the idea of decentralised and localised energy solutions it would be helpful to promote well working examples. Examples are created and provided as a toolbox by Transition Movement already. However, there are other organizations that can provide useful examples, too.
10. Nevertheless, it is very likely that decentralised energy solutions need to be adapted to each political and geographical context.
11. In conclusion it can be said that decentralised energy solutions may offer a large variety of opportunities.



## **ESTABLISHING A TRULY REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY (WOMEN, MINORITIES, DISABILITY)**

### **Summary of discussions / Results / Suggestions / Next steps**

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#### DEFINITIONS/GENERAL DISCUSSION POINTS:

1. Although strides have been made, problems with universality still exist, e.g. women increasingly have made it to decision making positions, but not to all levels.
2. One cannot claim a true democracy when decision makers do not constitute and reflect the diversity of its citizens. It is important how European citizens relate to their representatives and invest in the political process.
3. Current trend: having to defend the principle of representation/representative democracy, rather than advance it, under pressure from member states amongst others.
4. It is important to address the lack of representation for these reasons:
  - a. TRUST: citizens who feel they are properly represented trust those in power to have their diverse interests in mind.
  - b. DIVERSITY: needed for diverse points of view and perspective, to sit around the decision making table to ensure different perspectives and experiences can be voiced.
  - c. CONSENSUS.
5. The need to recognise other barriers to political participation: migrants, single parents, labourers.
6. Entrenched barriers in political process. E.g. potential political candidates picked through party nomination. Too exclusive?
  - Need to recognise barriers to access positions of influence/engaging in political system. Under-represented groups are also more likely to be in part-time or insecure work, have less free time, have less economic independence.
  - QUOTAS: some in favour, some against. There are examples of quotas that work in Germany. Some are in favour of quotas (for those with disabilities, but not women). Resistance to quotas comes from member states. Examples can be found in South America, where women have risen to the top and don't need quotas, even in more overtly patriarchal cultures. Quotas are a good way to recognise structural and systematic ways in which sections of society are disadvantaged in terms of political participation (quotas used to redress this imbalance, entrenched inequality).
7. POLICY VERSUS PRACTICE: recognise that the principle of equality is entrenched in laws and treaties, even if those principles and laws are not enforced in practice.
  - Lack of implementation. Need for realistic, concrete recommendations to use the existing structures and processes to address this, e.g. taking cases to the Court of

- Justice? The EU needs to take proactive steps to ensure policy is put into practice universally.
8. PREJUDICE/EDUCATION: e.g. Erasmus is good for cultural integration, understanding across the EU and challenging prejudices, but it's still restricted to those with access to higher education. Is there a need to focus on lifelong learning and internet as a resource to self-educate?
    - Sweden has good examples of how to integrate greater equality through education from very young age.
    - Do we need more proactive EU led campaigns?
    - European Voluntary Service
  9. REFORM TO ENABLE ENTRY TO THE EU: change policy around citizenship. The disenfranchised, particularly migrants, have to be able to become EU citizen after a number of years residence. Need to harmonise the process across EU.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS/GOOD PRACTICE

**Women's mentoring network:** European Women's Lobby is matching experienced female MEPs with minority women interested in running for the 2014 elections. More here - <http://www.womenlobby.org/spip.php?article4391&lang=en>

**50/50 campaign:** cross-party coalition and petition to call for gender parity at all levels within all European Institutions. "No Modern Democracy Without Gender Equality" <http://www.womenlobby.org/spip.php?rubrique257&lang=en>

**European citizenship initiative:** a way to propose ideas, which used to be utilised more by lobbies and CSOs.

#### Comments posted on the wall

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Education is key.

## 18

# ADDITIONAL IDEAS FOR THE EUROPEAN YEAR OF CITIZENS IN THE EESC (ADDING TO THE RESULTS AND SUGGESTIONS OF THE COORDINATION GROUP)

### **Summary of discussions / Results / Suggestions / Next steps**

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1. Include in the outcomes of the Year that some clarity and positive results can be achieved on funding civil society and participation in EU issues on EU and national level
2. Strengthen links between EESC members and civil society representatives on national level throughout the year and create joint events
3. Create a common understanding on the role of civil society and their links to the EESC and EU decision making
4. Use the EY2013 to create a model for future European Years in the Committee. The model should include information on how to involve all or most sections in the work (find links of the EY theme to the section works), define links and best practice with cooperation with the Communication Group, other in-house structures and external players
5. Suggest to create at least one event per Section related to the EY (e.g. discussion, hearing)
6. Suggest to the INT section in cooperation with the Single Market Observatory to organise an EYC related event/discussion on the Role of citizens in the single market (or something alike)
7. Suggest to the ECO section to organise an event/discussion on Cohesion and citizens
8. Discuss the possible benefits of a special/separate budget line for the European Years, perhaps starting with 2013 (important: no new EESC bodies/permanent structures shall be created)
9. Discuss on possible benefits of a mixed Section Coordination group of the EY

### **Comments posted on the wall**

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Regular connection in each year (*comment made to point 9*)

# 19

## IS “MY” EUROPE “YOUR” EUROPE? INITIAL PROPOSAL

### **Summary of discussions / Results / Suggestions / Next steps**

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#### STATEMENTS

1. European identity exists – it is a cultural one and not a political one. Europe is more than a legal framework, nonetheless European single laws are also creating a common identity.
2. Identity is always in transition; there is a European multilevel and multiple identities as an added value.
3. There are European values as tolerance, solidarity, mutual respect and humanism; balance between rights and responsibilities.
4. Democracy, rule of law principle, the welfare state principle and the European social model are part of the European DNA.
5. Consensus that our Europe (European pattern) exists, we are Europe.
6. Lack of communication between European citizens and a lack of communication between the institutions and citizens and a lack of awareness on the respective competences.

#### INCENTIVES AND SUGGESTIONS FROM YOUNG PARTICIPANTS:

1. The European integration needs more emotional emphasis, means to touch the hearts of the Europeans as Europeans. More transparency is needed, more channels for citizens engagement are to be found.
2. The EESC should reflect on new ways of civic engagement and its role within that.

### **Comments posted on the wall**

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Great idea, but more concrete ideas please! (comment made to Incentives and suggestions from young participants, point 1)

# 19

## IS “MY” EUROPE “YOUR” EUROPE? IN DEPTH PROPOSAL

### **Contributions to the discussion:**

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People's concepts of Europe were not fundamentally different, and there was agreement that "our" Europe does exist ("European Pattern") because "we are Europe". Europe is much more than a supranational legal construct; it is based on a cultural identity, not a political one. Shared European identity is founded on shared (historical and cultural) experiences; it in no way replaces personal, local, regional and national identities, but rather complements and enriches them. Given that law is also an expression of culture, common law also shapes people's identity. The idea of European identity is closely tied up with values such as democracy, peace, freedom, solidarity and tolerance; these become "European" values through the "balance of values" and their varied roots ("unity in diversity"). One practical example of this balance is the European Social Model, which, together with the principle of the welfare state, constitutes a kind of "European DNA". All of this means that European identity is multidimensional. One problem is the inadequacy, or in many cases complete absence, of communication concerning this Europe; focusing solely on economic issues will always be counterproductive. The citizens of Europe will only become Europeans if we address them on an emotional level, which makes it essential to have a general debate on values.

The ongoing crisis has led to a rise in extremism, nationalism, racism and conflicting political interests in the EU. Before the establishment of the Union, these trends could have led to war, or at least to armed conflict of some kind.

### **CONCRETE PROPOSALS:**

- initiatives should be launched to show citizens, on a rational and emotional level, that they can be proud of "their" Europe (reference to values) and to give them a sense of belonging.
- authorities and citizens' services at national and, in particular, local level must provide much clearer and more honest information about proceedings in the EU (without pinning the blame on "Brussels").
- an online platform should be created where citizens can discuss current EU-related topics, as many citizens do not feel that they really have any representation in Brussels. The EESC was urged to get involved in creating such an online platform and to ensure that contributions are screened and, where appropriate, passed on.