

“DO EU KNOW?” PROJECT



FINAL PUBLICATION

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INTRODUCTION

«Since everything then is cause and effect, dependent and supporting, mediate and immediate, and all is held together by a natural imperceptible chain, which binds together things most distant and most different, I hold it equally impossible to know the parts without knowing the whole, and to know the whole without knowing the parts.»

Blaise Pascal (1623-1662)

This booklet presents the European project "Do EU Know?" and its results. The birth of the project and its conclusion took place in a period of time which was quite important for the history of Europe, a period that started with a crucial event and finished with a positive one for the European integration process.

The idea of carrying out an action which may **contribute to develop active European citizenship, working together with Italian, Greek, Polish, Spanish, Bulgarian and Swedish partners**, followed an event that brought the European integration process to a standstill. In June 2008 the Irish people refused to ratify the Treaty of Lisbon. According to a post-referendum survey carried out by Eurobarometer (June 2008), the main reasons for not voting were a lack of knowledge and the difficulty of understanding the issues raised by the referendum, while the main argumentation of the "no" voters to explain their choice was the lack of information. The result of the Irish referendum was very meaningful. After 52 years from its birth, **Europe is still perceived as distant from many of its citizens**. The institutions are perceived as unapproachable and the legislation processes are felt little democratic.

The Irish "no" came after a difficult period that had begun in June 2005 when France and Holland stopped the project of a European Constitution. These blows were followed by the scanty participation in the European elections, especially in central and eastern European countries in June 2009, which highlighted the problem of estrangement and distance of European citizens from the EU. The fact urged European institutions to promote the development of active Europe-



an citizenship and the actual involvement of citizens and civil society in decision-making processes.

In a good Democracy, citizens' rights are not limited to the political freedoms granted by the Constitution, nor are they transferred to representatives only against a vote in an electoral procedure. The degree of democratic quality, beyond the guarantees provided by the parliamentary model, depends on the degree of direct participation of citizens, with corresponding undertaking of responsibilities in the management of power and decision making.

Taking into account the limits of the Parliamentary model of democracy in the development of a democratic conscience in citizens, participatory democracy offers the opportunity to the members of a community or group to contribute to decision making, it increases the number of people that have access to similar opportunities and can significantly enhance the democratization of the E.U. Although the cases of **direct participation of citizens** are limited as to their results, **they can contribute to the creation of a European public sphere in which citizens will be informed, they will participate and contribute to political debates.**

"Do EU know?", which was carried out within the Programme "Europe for Citizens", aimed at contributing to the reduction of the distance, to the continuation of the inclusion and participation process, and to the building of the European Union whose main actors and beneficiaries are the citizens themselves.

The project came to an end when two important events for EU integration process took place: the positive results of the new referendum in Ireland (October 2009) and the ratification of Lisbon Treaty in the Czech Republic, the last Member State which had to ratify the EU Reform Treaty. The new treaty will strengthen the role of citizens, national parliaments and the European Parliament, it will guarantee a better protection of rights thanks to the inclusion of the European Charter of Fundamental Rights, it will smooth the working mechanisms of EU institutions which became more complex after the last Enlargement.

Now that new rules have been set, that the borders of the European

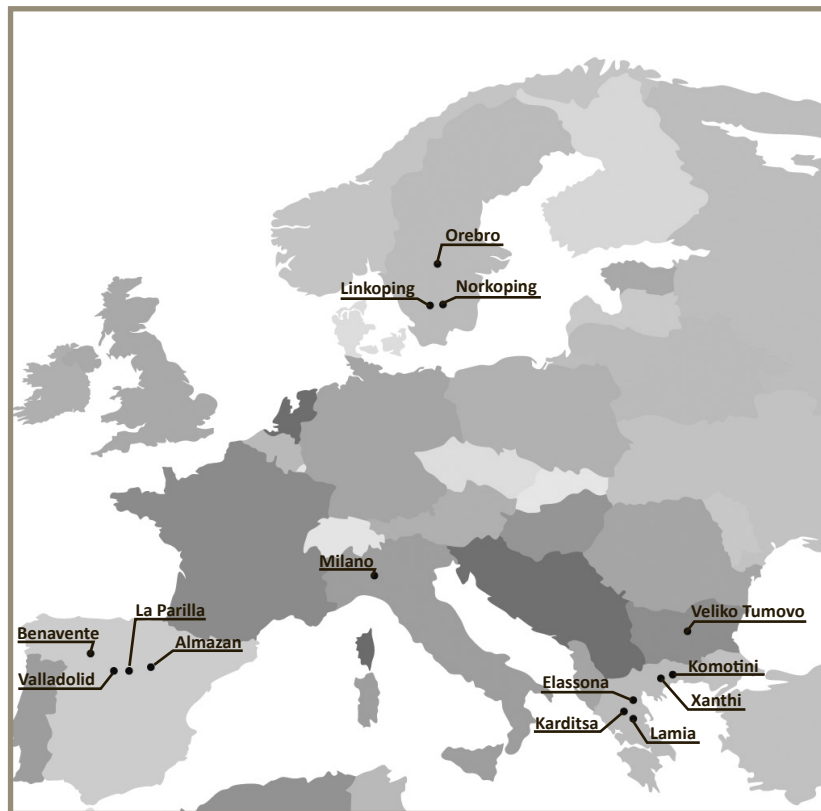


Union have been enlarged, it seems to be necessary to go beyond, to move forward some cultural barriers by extending the borders of citizens' belonging and identity. This is the transversal purpose crossing the whole project. It is a difficult but necessary passage that we have to take as citizens and civil society members in order to contribute to the building of "our common European house", a house which "tries to protect the stability and solidarity of its members in this period of uncertainty too" ¹.

¹ Quotation from "Building a Better European Home" - Declaration of the COMECE Bishops in view of the Election to the European Parliament on 4-7 June 2009: www.comece.org.



THE "DO EU KNOW?" PROJECT



The Do EU know? project, as many other projects in the frame of Europe for citizens programme, was meant as a bridge to bring the EU institutions and policies closer to the community. The main aim of the project was to encourage the dialogue between European citizens and the institutions of the EU, informing citizens as regards EU policies and their impact, and ensuring that citizens' opinions reach the EU institution.

Participate directly to the construction of a democratic Europe through stimulating the dialogue between European citizens and institution

The project involved 529 citizens in 5 European countries, living in very different geographical and social contexts (from urban and rural areas), working in different fields (legal field, training, social cooperatives, local public bodies, foundations), having different abilities to use ITs (young and elderly people), involved at different degrees in the political local life (Committee of citizens) or in organisations of the civil society (as volunteers, civic service, social workers). They participated actively to meetings and training sessions on issues connected with the EU: the Lisbon Treaty, the decision making process, participative tools to let their voice be heard at European level, how their daily life is affected by the EU, the programmes for people's mobility and so on, allowing an open discussion between citizens, experts and policy-makers at different levels.

Basic knowledge on Europe was the starting point for a second active step. The citizens, grouped in panels, were called to reflect upon issues they were concerned about, and on which they wanted Europe to intervene. The themes chosen varied from active citizenship to the labour market and entrepreneurship, lack of or inadequate information on Europe, the education system and the mobility of young people, the environment etc.

The output was a list of recommendations that are addressed mainly, but not only, to EU institutions and that also concern strongly nation-

al governments, the means of communication, the education systems and civil society.

The main phases of the project have therefore been:

- Transnational launching conference in Milan on 31st March 2009 'The role of institutions and citizens for a more democratic Europe. Towards the new Treaty'

- National panels

Selection of participants to the panels, meetings and training sessions, drafting of the recommendations

- Dissemination activities

- Transnational closing conference in Milan on 6th November 2009 'More or less Europe? What European citizens ask for' with the presentation of the recommendations and discussions of an accurate selection of recommendations with representative of the EU institutions and of local government.
- Final publication in English and in partners' languages
- Cd containing the electronic version of the final publication and the training and animation tools produced and used by partners.

Inclusion
Participation
Empowerment

ACTIVITIES

March 31st 2009	Launch conference 'The role of institutions and citizens for a more democratic Europe. Towards the new Treaty', Milan (I)
April 1st 2009	First transnational meeting among partners, Milan (I)
April 5th 2009	First panel meeting of University students in Valladolid (ES)
April 7th 2009	First panel meeting of Political Science students in Veliko Turnovo (BG)
April 14th 2009	First panel meeting of university students in Veliko Turnovo (BG)
April 14th - 24th 2009	First and second panel meeting of county council members in Örebro and Linköping (SE)
April 17th 2009	First panel meeting of third sector workers in Linköping (SE)
April 20th 2009	Second panel meeting of University students in Valladolid (ES)
April 27th 2009	Third panel meeting of University students in Valladolid (ES)
May 7th 2009	Panel meeting in Komotini (EL)
May 8th 2009	Panel meeting in Xanthi (EL)
May 9th 2009	Panel meeting in Ellassona (EL)
May 11th 2009	Panel meeting in Karditsa (EL)
May 12th 2009	Panel meeting in Lamia (EL)
May 13th 2009	First panel meeting of young people in Milan (I)
May 12th - 13th 2009	Second and third panel meeting of third sector workers in Linköping and Norrköping (SE)
May 13th 2009	First panel meeting of young people at risk of social exclusion in Benavente (ES)
May 14th 2009	First panel meeting of social workers in Milan (I)
May 14th 2009	First panel meeting of people living in rural areas in Almazan (province of Soria – ES)
May 15th 2009	First panel meeting of social workers in Valladolid (ES)
May 18th 2009	Second panel meeting of people living in rural areas in Almazan (province of Soria – ES)
May 19th 2009	Second panel meeting of university students in Veliko Turnovo (BG)
May 19th 2009	Second panel meeting of social workers in Milan (I)
May 20th 2009	First panel meeting of adults in Milan (I)
May 21st 2009	First panel meeting of elderly people in La



May 22nd 2009	Parilla (province of Valladolid – ES) Second panel meeting of social workers in Valladolid (ES)
May 27th 2009	Second panel meeting of young people in Milan (I)
May 28th 2009	Third panel meeting of county council members in Örebro and Linköping (SE)
May 28th 2009	Second panel meeting of elderly people in La Parilla (province of Valladolid – ES)
May 29th 2009	Third panel meeting of social workers in Valladolid (ES)
June 3rd 2009	Second panel meeting of adults in Milan (I)
June 3rd - 4th 2009	Third panel meeting of university students in Veliko Turnovo (BG)
June 4th 2009	Third panel meeting of social workers in Milan (I)
June 5th 2009	Second panel meeting of young people at risk of social exclusion in Benavente (ES)
June 15th 2009	Fourth panel meeting of third sector workers, open also to citizens, in Linköping (SE)
June 15th 2009	Third panel meeting of adults in Milan (I)
June 17th 2009	Fourth panel meeting of social workers in Milan (I)
June 18th 2009	Third panel meeting of young people in Milan (I)
June 23rd 2009	Fourth panel meeting of university students in Veliko Turnovo (BG)
June 23rd - 24th 2009	Fourth panel meeting of county council members in Örebro and Linköping (SE)
June 26th 2009	Conference on the results of the project in Valladolid (ES)
July 1st 2009	Fourth panel meeting of adults in Milan (I)
July 2nd 2009	Fifth panel meeting of university students in Veliko Turnovo (BG)
July 11th 2009	Final joint panel meeting in Milan (I)
August 5th 2009	Fourth panel meeting of social workers in Valladolid (ES)
October 27th 2009	Preparatory meeting for the final conference with Italian panels' participants, in Milan (I)
November 5th 2009	Second transnational meeting of partners in Milan (I)
November 6th 2009	Final conference "More or less Europe? What European citizens ask for", Milan (I)



THE PARTNERS

CARITAS AMBROSIANA (IT)

Fondazione Caritas Ambrosiana is the lead partner of "Do EU know?" project. It is the pastoral body founded by the Archbishop in the Diocese of Milan in 1974 in order to promote charity in the local communities for the full development of man, of social justice and of peace, with special attention to the poorest and most disadvantaged. Caritas Ambrosiana operates in the cultural, social and political fields. The specific areas are: Addiction, HIV, Elderly with problems, Foreigners, Handicap, Ill treatment and difficulties of women, Marginalized and homeless people, Mental health and psychiatry, Minors, Prisons, Roma people, Women's trafficking and prostitution, Social Policies and active citizenship. Caritas Ambrosiana has an European Office promoting the knowledge of European Social Policies and the participation in European Projects, through activities like awareness raising, information, training, consultancy, support to project designing and implementing. Caritas Ambrosiana has a remarkable experience in the fields covered by the Programme.

www.caritas.it

E-mail: europa.ambrosiana@caritas.it

ECOSE (EL)

ECOSE collaborates with associations, foundations, institutions, schools and public authorities throughout Europe, North Africa and Latin America to promote intercultural and non-discriminative learning, art, culture and informal education. Its targets are the civic participation and the education of youths, social workers, disadvantaged groups, unemployed and elderly people. It develops and disseminates educational materials and teaching models enhancing integrated and cross-cultural learning. It participates in Community programmes (Socrates, Joint Actions, Youth, European Year of Languages 2001, Prince, Culture 2000) and is a member of ALF network.

www.ecose.org

E-mail: info@ecose.org



PROMOCION EDUCATIVA SOCIEDAD COOPERATIVA (ES)

Promoción Educativa S. Coop. is a no profit cooperative declared of "social initiative" by the regional government, dedicated to the training of young and adult people in the field of informal education.

Its main aim is to assist young and adult people in the field of education for social participation and citizenship, by particularly developing the sense of belonging to the EU. It carries out actions complementary to the school activities, it organises courses for elderly people in the field of personnel development, social abilities, new technologies, as well as courses for people in the labour market and unemployed. The cooperative is also working with adults at risk of social exclusion: immigrants, people from rural areas, women victims of gender violation, older learners and adults, who haven't completed their obligatory education.

www.promocioneducativa.es

E-mail: direccion@promocioneducativa.es

SERUS (SE)

SERUS brings together the issues of social economy, civil society and local and regional development from the perspective of the EU, consolidating global tendencies and local initiatives. Operating mainly from Sweden and Brussels, SERUS is continuing the tradition established in the early 90s of the Swedish co-operative sector. By means of active participation to EU policies, SERUS works with social and economic aspects of welfare, communications, lifelong learning, entrepreneurship, employment and R&D amongst other things.

<http://serus.se/english>

E-mail: gordon@serus.se

EUROPEAN INFORMATION CENTRE (BG)

Since its registration the EIC has been involved in different projects, providing information about United Europe, European institutions



and programmes among young people, citizens, university students and academicians, local and regional actors. The EIC has developed its own network of InfoPoints in 8 oblast cities of Bulgaria. Since 2001 the EIC has been a European Documentation Centre, working directly with the University and the academicians and developing a public library with more than 18 000 books on European integration. Since 2008 the EIC has hosted the EUROPE DIRECT centre for the region of Veliko Turnovo.

www.europeinfocentre.bg

E-mail: office@europeinfocentre.bg

POLISH ROBERT SCHUMAN FOUNDATION (PL)

The Polish Robert Schuman Foundation is a non-governmental, non-partisan organization that has the aim of encouraging EU citizens to actively participate in the process of Europe's unification and of promoting opportunities created by the membership in the Community. One of the main objectives is to promote all political and social actions aimed at advancing democracy. The PFRS cooperates with a wide range of institutions within and outside the EU and supports cultural, scientific and educational organizations which contribute to the development of closer bounds between the EU and Member States, and organizational infrastructure for NGOs.

www.schuman.org.pl

E-mail: poczta@schuman.org.pl



CHAPTER ONE: CITIZENS' PANELS

CITIZENS' PANELS IN ITALY

Target groups involved

Panels for three different typologies of citizens were organized: Young people (18-30) interested in European issues; Adults (over 30) active in community life as volunteers or involved in politics at local level as well as ordinary citizens with various backgrounds; Operators dealing with migration and asylum issues.

50 citizens participated in the panels, 20 men and 30 women.

Geographical areas

All the meetings were held in Milan: in Caritas Ambrosiana and in the City Hall of the Municipality of Milan.

Promotion of the project and selection of beneficiaries

The project was presented during the launch conference, which took place on 31st March 2009 in a conference room provided by the Municipality of Milan: "The role of institutions and citizens for a more democratic Europe. Towards the new Treaty".

Information about the project activities and the kick-off conference was uploaded on the web sites of Caritas Ambrosiana, the Municipality of Milano, the Province of Milano and other organizations linked





with the promoter. Information was also channelled through thematic newsletters (Caritas Ambrosiana, Centre Européen de Rencontre et de Ressourcement).

Leaflets promoting citizens' panels were spread in many different contexts: universities, public and private offices. Young people were reached through the existing networks of Caritas (Caritas Regional Delegation in Lombardy, young people that took part in civil service or willing to – also the groups participating in "Cantieri della solidarietà" - , young volunteers involved in non-formal educational activities about intercultural issues, development, globalisation – "Animondo" group) and by co-operating with the Faculties of Law and of Political Science of the State University of Milan (also through the students' magazine "Voci d'Europa") and with the Association "Avvocati per niente" (an association of lawyers providing free legal assistance to immigrants). The project was also presented to young people participating in courses of social and political training organized by the Diocese of Milan.

Adults were reached mainly through the network of volunteers linked to Caritas Ambrosiana in cooperation with the Volunteers Association and by involving the 9 Local City Councils of the Municipality of Milan. Presentations of the project and citizens' panels were in fact made to Local City Councils Presidents on the premises of some Local City Councils.

Candidates willing to participate in the panels were requested to fill in a questionnaire in order to test their basic knowledge of European institutions, their interest in European issues and their motivation to participate in all the panels planned from May until July 2009.

Panels organization and methodologies used

Participants were split up in three groups. Each group met from four to six times from May to July 2009. The first two meetings were aimed to present the project pathway and give basic information on the EU institutional framework, decision-making processes, mechanisms and tools for citizens and civil society organizations' participation, consistently with the changes introduced by the Lisbon Treaty.



Officials from the European Parliament Office and the Commission Representation in Milan took part in the meetings.

One or two meetings were thematic and different for each group. The Young People focused on European citizenship, Charter of Rights, European programmes for young people, information services and structures aimed to disseminate information about the existing opportunities to study and work abroad. Representatives of Europe Direct and of Lifelong Learning Programme Italian Antenna participated in the meetings.

The Adults focused on representative and participative democracy in the light of Lisbon Treaty and on the role that regional authorities and civil society organizations can play in order to make Europe closer to its citizens. Officials from public authorities and representatives of civil society organizations were invited.

The group of Operators investigated the basic elements of the European policy on immigration. The lecturer was a Researcher in EU Law from Università Statale of Milan. A meeting with the President of the Territorial Commission for Asylum in Milan was also organized.

Particular attention was dedicated to consultation mechanisms and tools and to the right to petition to the European Parliament. A key actor was invited in each group and discussed examples of consultations and petitions with participants: the president of the Italian section of the Jeunes Européens Fédéralistes, a representative of Cittadinanzattiva and a video-conference with the person in charge of the Immigration Unit of Caritas Italiana.

One or two meetings of each group were dedicated to the drafting of recommendations. Facilitators and experts on the issues facilitated this process. Group discussions and brainstorming were the methodologies used.

The three groups joined together in the final meeting. Each group presented the recommendations arisen from the group work in a plenary session. The recommendations were discussed and validated in the plenary session too.

Some participants contributed actively to the organization of the final conference which took place in Milan on November 6th 2009, which



was conceived as a space where citizens and institutions at various levels could confront themselves on issues like democratic deficit, employment, education and youth mobility.

Participants supported the project team in the selection of the recommendations to be presented during the conference to European and local institutions' representatives. They presented the recommendations chosen, contributed to the dissemination of the event and participated in the Facebook group dedicated to the project. A group of twenty participants had the opportunity to take part in a visit to a European Parliament plenary session and to the European Court of Human Rights of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg.

Issues arisen during panels

The recommendations of the three groups focused on three main issues: how to fill in the gap between citizens and European institutions by strengthening the cooperation among institutions at European, national, regional and local level; how to improve programmes and existing opportunities to favour young people mobility to study and work abroad; how to improve the integration of migrants and asylum seekers.

Recommendations from the Adults' group suggested a better information on EU issues by the means of an increased role of media, national and regional administrations, a bigger effort in the dissemination of the best practices identified at European level among regional and national administrations and the adoption of symbolic tools to promote the sense of belonging to the EU.

The Operators suggested to improve EU immigration and asylum policies by ensuring a better integration of migrants and asylum seekers, by ensuring social rights and non discrimination, through harmonisation of national legislations and a better use of funding opportunities. The Young People suggested to improve information about European programmes addressed to young people and on-line information regarding the opportunities to study and work in other Member States, to facilitate access to the different programmes, to promote European civics beginning from primary school and to increase the efforts to ensure an effective system of diploma recognition in Europe.



CITIZENS' PANELS IN SWEDEN

Target groups involved

The target groups that were chosen for the Swedish panels included civil servants working on migration issues, third sector workers, county council officials and politicians.

39 Swedish citizens took part in panels, 20 men and 19 women.

Geographical areas

The citizen panels involved practitioners from the following geographical areas: the region of Östergötland, the region of Örebro, the municipalities of Linköping, Norrköping, Hallsberg, Laxå and Örebro.

Promotion of the project and selection of beneficiaries

In Sweden the information activities and the promotion of the project were conducted mainly through already existing networks. In the case of the civil servants and the third sector workers an open invitation was sent out and information appeared in newsletters. The project was also promoted through direct contact with relevant actors by the Swedish project manager. For the county council members, however, presentations and seminars were held in conjunction with ordinary sessions, as it sometimes proved difficult to organize seminars for the high-level participants due to their tight schedules and heavy work load.





The initial purpose was to work with and inform migrants and asylum seekers. However, after discussions and dialogue with supervisors and civil servants, it was concluded that this particular target group would be hard to reach, since their main priorities were not believed to be discussions on European citizenship. Instead, participants in the citizen panels were chosen on the grounds of their involvement in the issues. The intention of the project team was then to reach this target group of beneficiaries indirectly, by addressing civil servants dealing with migration issues.

The high-level county council politicians and officials were reached in connection to their ordinary meetings as a way to secure their participation and important input. Third sector workers were reached through the existing networks of the Swedish partner to the project, SERUS. Informing and actively working with the third sector have long been important activities in the work of SERUS.

Panels' organization and methodologies used

Five sessions were conducted for the county council members (both politicians and officials) in Örebro and Linköping on the dates April 14th, April 24th, May 28th, June 23rd, and June 24th 2009. Panels for third sector workers, in total four sessions, were held in Linköping on April 17th, May 13th, June 15th and in Norrköping May 12th 2009. The session in Linköping taking place on June 15th was open to citizens to join in on the discussions, an example of the broader involvement of local actors in the project.

The methodologies used in the organization of panels were based on the common material developed for the "Do EU Know?" partnership. The sessions were set up as open space seminars beginning with presentations on relevant topics, including the European Union legislative procedure, the Lisbon Treaty and active citizenship in the European context. Different methods were used to stimulate discussion, of which the logical framework approach (LFA) proved most fruitful. LFA is an analytical, presentational and management tool widely used by governments around the world (among others). Its uses include identifying and assessing activity options. Other approaches included



OPERA, a method that uses immediate thoughts and discussion in pairs of two to identify problems and solutions. These thoughts were presented to the whole group, who would then arrange and rank them, the purpose of this being to find a common understanding. Brainstorming sessions were also conducted around the topics.

Issues arisen in the panels

A number of interesting issues arose from the panels, some more surprising than others. One of the most recurring topics was that the mission of the European Union needed to be clarified. To many participants the European system was perceived as incomprehensible and they called for a simplification of certain parts of the Union's work. The founding principle, the promotion of European peace, needs to be made top priority again. Information has to be easily understandable for all citizens. This is especially important as the policy-making process taking place in Brussels feels distant to some, and national matters are of higher interest. In the panels euroscepticism was expressed on the grounds of fear for the development of a European federation. Developments in this direction are not desired by the majority of European citizens, yet panel participants were claiming to see signs of this actually happening. Active citizenship in the form of consultations was questioned in part, due to the fact that not all citizens could be heard in these forums. Through consultations citizens are still divided into different groups and thereby the risk of exclusion of some remains.



CITIZENS' PANELS IN GREECE

Target groups involved

In Greece the project engaged residents in rural areas for the most part, retired citizens over 55 coming from lower or medium social background, and disadvantaged civilians at social, financial and geographical level. Before retirement, they were members of different labor groups, such as industrial workers, blacksmiths, carpenters, tobacco producers, farmers, car racers, owners of small-size merchant shops, free lancers, tailors, couturiers, as well as housewives.

Apart from the retired elders, other social groups participated, like social workers, health carers, municipal staff and representatives of local agencies, as well as youths and adults of various profiles.

252 Greek citizens participated in panels, 153 men and 99 women.

Geographical areas

The areas covered were, for the most part, rural regions in Greece (Komotini, Xanthi, Ellassona, Karditsa, Lamia), where the information on European matters is quite limited and the citizens living there have little opportunities to get involved in such activities. In this way, their participation added a value to the project in terms of promoting the social cohesion and of enhancing the integration of vulnerable and marginalised citizens in the European outlook.

Young people and adults of various profiles were involved in Athens and Syros island.



Promotion of the project and selection of beneficiaries

Bearing in mind the fact the target groups had a sensitive profile and that the attempt was meant to make an impact on their everyday lives as well as to have an educational content and aim, a list of materials was created in order to be used in the meetings with the citizens. These were:

- A slide presentation/introduction with details on the "Europe for Citizens" Programme, the project itself, an overview, facts and questions on the Treaty of Lisbon.
- A learning reference sheet including an outline of the Lisbon Treaty and a questionnaire asking citizens' opinions, theses and recommendations.
- A multiple choice activity sheet based on the Treaty of Lisbon.
- Promotional materials, i.e. lanyards and pencils.

The project was presented to a number of daily care centres for the elderly, with which the national project coordinator had maintained a relationship of cooperation. Centers from rural areas of Greece were picked out of a large number of agencies, in an attempt to engage citizens who may have never had this opportunity.

The educational approach of the project, which proved to be quite attractive, made it more interesting. By coincidence, that period happened to be the pre-electoral period of European Elections 2009, therefore a perfect timing. The national coordinator, after the completion of the meetings with senior citizens, undertook the initiative in June 2009 to realize additional informal meetings with young people in Athens, members and friends of the informal youth group «Workshop for Expression and Culture» and in Siros island with adults, members of the local social and cultural association «Ανάδραση» (Anadrasis). Both have a close collaboration with the national coordinator. The meetings' participants were given the educational materials, they discussed European matters, and recommendations were recorded.



Panels' organization and methodologies used

Five meetings with citizens took place in the following places:

Komotini, Xanthi, Ellassona, Karditsa, Lamia

Each of them lasted approximately 3-4 hours, depending on the interest expressed by the participants.

The meetings were led by two trainers. At first there was a panoramic input on the European Union and an introduction to the Lisbon Treaty, followed by a Questions and Answers session. The content of the introduction was discussed in working groups which later had to fill in sheets and forms where they stated their theses and recommendations.

The answers were used to summarize citizens' recommendations as well as to measure and assess a number of project's results.

Each participant received a pen and a lanyard, as well as a number of informative materials/leaflets from the official EU publications.

Issues arisen during panels

- Health, education, unemployment, climate change, salaries, pensions, law equality, immigration, culture and art are some of the most important keywords that should be given to the EU Institutions to act on.
- Among the main concerns of EU there should be added sustainable development, the safety and dignity of its citizens, the mitigation of their fear of the future and the unemployment that makes people suffer.
- Priority should be given to the implementation of the Kyoto Protocol and to the usage of alternative natural resources.
- A European Constitution, a common EU immigration policy and a common EU foreign policy, which should tackle the national problems of the country, are absolutely necessary for the EU.
- Equality among all EU Member States (especially the smaller ones) is desirable.
- Reservations were raised on whether the enlargement of the EU



was necessary or not. The criteria for future candidate countries to join the EU should be reconsidered.

- The EU financial aid seems to have a great approval and appreciation.
- EU should be a pioneer at international level. It needs open-minded people..
- EU should monitor better the Member States in order to make sure that they conform to the decisions taken and tackle corruption.



CITIZENS' PANELS IN BULGARIA

Target groups involved

Panels in Bulgaria were designed for a target group of young people, aged between 18 and 25, made up of secondary school pupils and university students.

The main purpose of targeting this age group was to raise the awareness of European issues among young people who are the future driving force in Bulgaria and in the EU. They are the most uninterested in the future development of the country and of the European continent within Bulgarian society. There is a general feeling among young people that the future development of the country is predetermined, that nobody cares about what they think, that nothing can be changed in order to make people's voice heard. Another reason for targeting this group was the fact that some of them for the first time and others for the second would participate (or not) in the European Parliament elections. The project team believes that it is important to work with these young people so that they may be able to express a well-informed vote.

The project team developed a step-by-step strategy on the project implementation and its most vital part – the panels and the selection of participants. It was considered of great importance for the targeted group to have as much information as possible on project activities in order to spur them to join the project. It was also impor-



tant for the team to inform all university students of the existence of such European action, of how fundamental their involvement was as well as the fact that they would be listened to.

67 citizens participated in the panels, 21 men and 46 women.

Geographical areas

The geographical area covered by the project was the region of Veliko Turnovo, but the participants in the panels were from all over the country as many of them were university students. They came from different types of communities - the capital, big cities and small towns and villages.

Project promotion and selection of beneficiaries

The process of information went on using several different ways of communicating. One of the ways was through the existing university and faculty student associations. For this reason the project team contacted the university student association and the Faculty of Philosophy student association as well. The team took the floor during the associations' monthly meetings where they presented the project details, aims and activities (project appendix 1 Project Presentation). During the presentation they tried to put much emphasis on the fact that through the project students would not only learn and get information, but they would also be able to express their opinions and to formulate proposals and recommendations, that their voice would be heard through the recommendation documents, that they might influence the future development of Europe by expressing their views. Plenty of questions were raised, mainly on the techniques of making Europe and the Bulgarian government listen to people's voice. On the other hand, the project team put advert posters on the University notice stands informing students about the possibility of joining the project. (Project Appendix 2).

Special meetings were held with the University professors, lecturing on European institutions and integration, so that they may be informed about the start up of the project and its main ideas and purposes. The Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy was informed about the



start-up of the project and the project team signed a memorandum of joint work for the project implementation.

The selection of the panel participants followed the principle "first applied, first chosen". The team received 67 messages from students wishing to join the panels. The project team decided to divide the groups on the basis of the specializations the students were attending. Thus two panels were formed – one with students studying Political Science and the other with students studying Philosophy, Psychology, History, Pedagogy, Languages. The fact of using this approach in forming the groups allowed the project team to be more efficient and informative and at the same time to have certain specializations within the work of the two groups. The characteristics were mainly related to the students' level of knowledge of European issues, integration and EU political institutions. The fact that the students studying Political Science had in their university curriculum the subject "European political institutions and integration process", allowed the panel with them to be more specific, detailed and able to enter Intranet information pages of the EU. The second group of university students attending humanitarian disciplines was more varied, but this turned to be not only a challenge but a privilege too. The different composition of the groups and the different educational background of the students enriched the discussions and the comments during the different panels.

Panels' organization and methodologies used

The Panels were organized in four modules. The project team asked for participants' opinions on the topics of the panels, the thematic areas to be covered, the issues related to the topics that could arise their interest, the proposals participants had in order to make the work more effective and interesting during the process of panels implementation.

The first thematic panel, dedicated to the European institutions and the European process, to the European Parliament and the coming elections took place on April 7th, 2009 for the first panel group, and on April 14th, 2009 for the second group. The topics that were pre-



sented were as follows: the European institutions, their historical development and prerequisites for building the idea of a United Europe; the difference between the institutions that act in Europe; the history of the European Union (a short overview), the pillars of the European political architecture and the division and distribution of powers within the European Union; the legislative process in EU; the role of the European Parliament; the coming elections to the EP in June; the Bulgarian members of the European Parliament. Special time was dedicated to the idea of a Constitution in Europe, to the referendum process and the Lisbon Treaty. Information on Europe before and after Lisbon was given to the participants. The Political Science students' group, having already some knowledge on the European process, was given further information on the European development during the last 50 years, the expected changes after the Lisbon Treaty, the negative voting in France and the Netherlands (the possible reasons for those votes were commented on too). The discussion was very interesting and many views on the active understanding of what "My Europe" means to young people were shared.

The second thematic panel, dedicated to youth policies and young people in Europe, took place on May 19th, 2009 for both the two groups. But before the panel discussions, the European Information Centre together with the University of Veliko Turnovo, the Faculty of Philosophy and the Municipality of Veliko Turnovo, financed a study visit to Sofia. The visit was the result of the expressed desire and expectation from the participants that they should not only be lectured but also be able to talk, communicate and discuss with members of Bulgarian political elite about the problems the young people have during their study and after they graduate, their understanding of the role of state authorities as to the development of the country, the place of Bulgaria in Europe and the relations Europe-Bulgaria and Bulgaria–the world. So the project team had very intense talk with the national institutions in order to be able to organize successful visits and to make sure the participants could meet decision-makers from national institutions. Thus several types of meetings took place in Sofia – meeting with the President's advisors at the Presidency; meeting



with some members of the Parliamentary Commission on civil society and media at the National Parliament; meeting with the Chairperson of the State Agency for Youth and Sport at the Council of Ministers. For the first time the students visited state institutions. They were really very impressed and inspired by the visits and the discussions that took place. At the Presidency the students met the legal advisor of the President of the Republic of Bulgaria, who is the advisor on the relations with civil society and media. Many questions were raised such as the possibility of a referendum in Bulgaria, the lack of possibility of influencing the decision making process in Bulgaria, the lack of a national development strategy which directly corresponds with the "brain flow" towards Europe and USA; the need for an ethical code in media work; the role of Bulgaria in the whole European process, in the EU and in Balkans region.. Serious concerns were expressed by the young people about the incapacity of the state to stop the corruption and to work for the unblocking of the European funds in all spheres, the lack of state action to guarantee secured, stable and constant development to the citizens of Bulgaria. That was identified as the main shared reason why young people leave the country after graduation. At the National Parliament the students met some members of the Parliamentary Commission on civil society and media, and the chairperson of the Parliamentary Commission on complaints and signals from citizens. The students were informed on how Parliament works, on how laws are made, on the process of citizens' involvement in decision making, on how Bulgarian laws have been harmonized with EU laws. The participants had the opportunity to participate in the work of several parliamentary commissions – the commission on youth, children and sport; the commission on civil society and media, the legal commission, the human rights commission and the commission against corruption. They received a general idea about the legal process and the work within the commissions. In the commission on youth, children and sport, the new draft of the law on youth was on the table. The students took the floor to comment on their underrating and feelings as young people in Bulgaria, what guarantees such law should give to young people; they commented on the possibility



for young people to participate in the decision process making, the need for the organization of public discussions and surveys among young people and children on the hot issues and problems they see in their everyday life, etc. In the Council of Ministers, the State Agency for youth and sport, the participants met representatives of "Youth in action" and "Life-Long Education", both EU programmes, and were given detailed information on the possibility to participate in the programmes. On the second day the group visited the Information Centre of the EU Representation in Bulgaria where Prof. Dr Ingrid Shikova, the political advisor of the representation, gave a lecture on the Lisbon process and the Lisbon Treaty. Prof. Dr Rumiana Kolarova from the University of Sofia talked about the coming EP elections, the European institutions and their relations with the citizens. She also presented some case studies on active citizens' role. The impressions, the discussions and the shared opinions during the meetings in Sofia raised plenty of ideas, proposals and recommendations among the young people. At the same time the meetings clearly raised quite many questions on the role of civil society, the role of citizens and active citizenship, the role and need for active involvement on all possible levels of personal life.

The third thematic panel regarded the topic of citizenship and active democratic citizenship. It took place on June 3rd and June 4th, 2009. During the panels the participants were given information about the idea and concept of participatory democracy, citizenship, the European and the American theoretic views on citizenship, the existing regulations on citizenship and the possibility of participation in public life and decision making at all possible levels in everyday life. Some good practices existing in Europe were shared. The gap between institutions was discussed and commented on. Opinions were shared about the fact that what happens in Europe is often more transparent than what happens in Bulgaria, and that the gap between citizens and the institutions and the lack of trust towards the latter is deeper than the gap between citizens and the EU and its institutions.

The final panels "My message to Europe" took place on June 23rd and July 2nd, 2009. The main issues raised during the discussions were



how to formulate the proposals to the institutions in order to make them well focused on, clear and effective for the future of Europe. About 67 proposals on different aspects were drafted and accepted by the two groups. The most important proposals were proposed to the project coordination unit that was asked to include them in the joint project recommendation text. The full list of the proposals are part of the project documentation of the Bulgarian team.

The methodology used for the implementation of the project was discussed with experts on methodologies from the Faculty of Pedagogy of the University. One of the trainers, involved in the project as a trainer, is a professor of Psychology at the University.

Several methods were used. The panels followed the model of "Cafeteria Europe". The participants used to have their lectures in a pleasant and friendly environment. During all panel discussions, group work and role games were used. In groups with a moderator, the participants commented on the raised issues while a speaker presented the group discussions to all participants. Thus the atmosphere during the panels was very vital and fruitful with ideas and comments that were in some way competitive. At the end of each model a special present used to be given to the most active group. There were group competitions during the first and the final panels for the clearest message to Europe.

The participants had the possibility to discuss and formulate proposals during their visits to the National Parliament and the Presidency.



CITIZENS' PANELS IN SPAIN

Target groups involved

In Spain the project involved five target groups.

The first group was composed of university students, as the city of Valladolid, the capital of the region of Castile and Leon, has a long university tradition and has a large population of students. 24 students actively participated in three sessions, which took place in the Institute of European Studies in Valladolid.

The second group saw the participation of 35 people from rural areas. In fact another significant feature of the population of Castile and Leon is its rural character, as over 60% of the population lives in rural areas. For this reason the project team chose a location in a rural province, the village of Almazan (1500 inhabitants), and worked with a group of adults who used to meet regularly for other reasons. 35 participants took part in the two sessions organised in the frame of this panel. Their level of participation, interest and motivation to discuss European issues was really high, as well as their personal involvement in the proposed activities.

The third group was composed of young people at risk of social exclusion and drop-outs, between 16 and 20 years of age who participated in a Professional Qualification Programme aimed at entering the labour market. Twelve young people participated and discussed the issues proposed in the two sessions of this panel.





The fourth group was made up of elderly people. As the majority of the population of the region of Castile and Leon are senior citizens, it was considered important to work with a group of them, who have shown a great interest in the subject, especially considering how far away the process of European integration seems to be from their daily life.

The fifth group was made up of 15 professionals, among whom there were social workers, trainers and operators dealing with adults, university and school teachers,. Opinions and views were exchanged on how to involve the inhabitants of the region in the process of European integration, as highlighted by the Treaty of Lisbon.

A seminar was carried out on June 26th 2009 at the headquarters of the Ministry of Education of the Junta of Castile and Leon, with the support of the Regional Government, in order to spread information on the project and the activities. About 90 people participated in it, including many active participants in the panels.

Altogether, in Spain, 121 citizens were involved in the panels, 23 men and 98 women.

Geographical areas

Castile and Leon is one of the seventeen regions of Spain and consists of nine provinces, most of them with a rich cultural heritage and a rural and elderly population. For this reason it was considered appropriate to select project beneficiaries among the most representative inhabitants of the region. The activities were carried out in three of the nine provinces: Valladolid, Zamora and Soria. The population groups ranged from 16 years old to elderly people, in some cases over 70 years.

Promotion of the project and selection of beneficiaries

The project was promoted in two different ways. On one hand, social entertainment networks in the region were used through the systematic information of Municipality Social Centres, which in rural areas are grouped in so-called Provincial Councils. On the other hand, the project team had the support of the Junta of Castile and Leon, which



enabled the dissemination of the project through its regional education networks (teachers' information centres) and social support networks (especially through the General Direction of Women).

Posters and leaflets were distributed through the above mentioned channels, so as to ensure an adequate coverage and reach the target groups. A lot of school teachers working in rural areas asked the project coordinator to be allowed to make use of the material produced throughout the project.

The distribution of a press kit to local and regional media ensured an interesting coverage, mainly by the means of radio and local TV interviews. In the same period in which "Do EU know?" project was running, Promocion Educativa organised workshops on equal opportunities between men and women. 40 villages in the region took part in those sessions, which attracted the attention of more than 6000 people. This was another opportunity to promote the project activities.

Promocion Educativa chose to prioritize the above mentioned target groups in the selection procedure. The invitation to participate in the project was therefore sent specifically to those groups and was not open to all citizens. During the selection of beneficiaries, the project team made sure to combine the need to ensure homogeneity in each group with the possibility to open panels to other participants interested in them.

Selection criteria were basically determined on pre-registrations and were related to the ability of individuals to participate in this type of activities (for example people at risk of social exclusion, elderly people, people from rural areas). On the other hand, the criterion of multiplication was applied. Those candidates whose activity or role in the group could develop a multiplier effect (i.e. university students and social agents), were given a higher score.

Panels' organization and methodologies used

At the beginning the project team intended to give a similar structure to all panels. Later on they realized that the best working methodology was to follow the special rhythm of each group. Working with



people at risk of social exclusion, with social agents or elderly people was not the same. For this reason the initial proposal, which was to be developed in two sessions, was subject to possible modifications. The amendments were related to the following characteristics:

- Number of sessions: For university students, depending on their learning activities, the work was concentrated in three sessions with a longer duration. The same happened with the Social Agents group. Having in mind the great interest and capacity to work of this group the team organised 4 sessions with them.
- Use of Power Point presentation: The use of PowerPoint presentations proved difficult to understand for the elderly and rural people; so their exposure was shortened and more time was devoted to active discussions on the feeling of belonging to the European Union and on the ways of strengthening their active participation in European public life.
- Use of elaborated specifications for development work: They gave good results with specific groups, for example university students, social agents and rural people. It was impossible to use them with youths at risk of social exclusion, with whom the project team worked on the basis of specific news and commentaries from newspaper reports.

Materials were produced with the special assistance of educational social partners from the region and with the support of other partners working on European social intervention projects. The team distributed them among several colleges in the region. Some of these worksheets encouraged teachers to develop learning units based on contents related to active citizenship and Lisbon Treaty (the month of October 2009 was particularly profitable after the Irish approval and the Czech government's signature).

Issues arisen during the panels

One of the most debated issues in Castile and Leon was the distance and remoteness between European politicians representing citizens and common people (some of the target groups of Spanish panels).



Another important issue was the need to extend information and organize dissemination campaigns about the European integration process among people living in rural areas and elderly people. The lack of qualified social agents among the rural population was particularly relevant. The mayors of rural municipalities often have very little information on European issues and therefore a less developed sense of belonging to the European Union.



PROJECT ACTIVITIES IN POLAND

The Polish Robert Schuman Foundation joined the "Do EU know?" project in the very final stage of the submission of the application. Due to this reason, the foundation could play a limited role in the partnership and did not organize citizens' panels. Ten seminars on the European integration process and Polish issues connected with the EU membership were organized between February and October 2009 in Warsaw. Seminars were addressed to students, journalists, NGOs representatives. They were also opened to all interested citizens. The majority of participants were students of Warsaw University, who were selected according to the system suggested by the University. No selection criteria were foreseen for ordinary citizens willing to participate in the seminars. Each seminar was attended by about 30 people.

Each seminar lasted two hours. The first part provided an introduction to the issue at stake by invited experts. The second part consisted in an open discussion with participants.

The Polish Robert Schuman Foundation also organized a conference in Warsaw with the title "Europe in the time of crisis". It was addressed to representatives of non-governmental organizations, experts from Polish and European think-tanks, politicians, scientists and journalists. About 110 participants from ten different EU countries participated in the event.



CHAPTER TWO: RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE EUROPEAN AND NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

INTRODUCTION

The formulation of policy recommendations is a process of participatory democracy since it allows the direct involvement of citizens in the direction and management of political life as well as a process of consultation with decision-making centers.

The importance and need for a wide participation of citizens in European governance was stated also in the Constitutional Treaty which was rejected. It included in the first part a title on "the democratic life of the Union" with an article on representative democracy and an article on "participatory democracy". This principle however has been maintained in the Lisbon Treaty, which includes an article on "participatory democracy" within the title on the "provisions on democratic principles".

The transnational project "Do EU Know?" contributed to promoting participatory democracy. The 114 policy recommendations that follow are the result of a time-consuming endeavor of 529 European citizens from Italy, Sweden, Greece, Bulgaria and Spain, who – after discussing the issues that concern them – selected some top priorities, giving them the form of proposals in relation to the way in which the EU should deal with the current economic and social challenges. Through the recommendations the citizens aimed at influencing developments and contributing to the definition of better European policies in a more responsible Union.

During panels citizens were asked to discuss and draft recommendations on a common theme: the distance between citizens and European institutions. In addition citizens were left free to propose and discuss issues that they felt particularly important and they care for: employment, education and lifelong learning, youth mobility, immigration, common foreign and security policy, social cohesion, climate change and environment, European integration processes and enlargement.



The majority of recommendations arisen do not have a "technical" formulation, as they express the opinions of ordinary citizens who generally were not specialists, coming from urban and rural contexts, also from remote geographical areas where the information about the EU is very limited. Nonetheless, the project team decided not to modify the recommendations arisen, because they realized the importance of safeguarding their spirit.

Recommendations are affected on the one hand by the cultural and social background of the target groups involved, on the other hand by the cultural traditions and the history of the Member States concerned. In some cases they reflect the duration of the membership to the EU of the countries taking part in the project and also the attitude of those countries towards the European Union.

Recommendations also reflect the features of the target groups which participated in the panels: the age, the cultural and educational background, the level of participation to the public sphere, pre-existing knowledge of European issues, the sectors in which participants work or are / were active (i.e. social sector, public administration, politics, volunteering).

The recommendations regarding the core theme, the distance between citizens and European institutions, are particularly interesting. Their key messages have highlighted the importance of information and communication about European issues, the exchange of knowledge on existing best practices, the opportunity of improving the transparency and accountability of politicians and institutional offices at all levels, the need to simplify decision-making processes, the relevance of civil society organizations and local authorities as intermediate bodies between citizens and EU institutions, as well as the importance of participation and education on EU issues.

Nearly all recommendations converge on the conclusion that more Europe is needed to give an answer to citizens' daily problems and to the global challenges that governments need to face.



RECOMMENDATIONS ARISEN IN ITALY

ADULTS

1. Involvement of local authorities

→ The EU should invest more in the promotion and dissemination of the existing opportunities aimed at exchanging and sharing information and know-how through the involvement of public authorities and local key actors.

2. Best Practices dissemination

→ The EU should set up a register of European best practices, identified by the EC General Directorates on the different issues of competence, to be promoted and disseminated among local public authorities.

3. Promotion of the sense of belonging to the EU

→ The EU should promote the celebration of the European Day, 9th of May, among Member States, local administrations and civil society. 9th of May should be elevated to the dignity of MS national holidays. Other symbolic tools promoting the sense of belonging to Europe – for instance a "kit for the European child" or a positive communication regarding the impact of EU on citizens' daily life – should be sustained.

4. Improving information on Europe

→ The EU should increase its efforts in order to make national broadcasting stations achieve the threshold of 7% of informative contents on European issues in all Member States by 2017 (60° anniversary of the Treaty of Rome).

5. A European Common Electoral Legislation

→ EU should promote among MS the adoption of a common electoral law to regulate MEPs' election.



6. Profile of MEPs' candidates

→ EU should develop a specific training programme on the profile of European deputies, by defining at the same time competences and requirements. The programme should then be adopted at local level.

YOUNG PEOPLE

1. Enhancing the value of Erasmus Programme

→ The EU should aim at harmonising the selection criteria of Erasmus Programme candidates, as well the evaluation systems and objective criteria to be used to compare similar but not identical courses of different university models, so as to limit the discretionary power of universities and professors, in order to allow students from all Member States to enjoy equal treatment.

→ The EU should also strengthen the already existing mechanisms of control and supervision and introduce different systems of verification, to check if students effectively benefited from the opportunity to study in the hosting university. A measure that could be taken into consideration is increasing the number of exams that a student should take during his/her stay. In this way the negative prejudices about Erasmus could be dispelled and a better quality could be ensured, with the aim of enriching students' university and cultural store.

2. Improving the EU system of recognition of qualifications

→ The EU should guarantee European citizens the effective enforcement of the fundamental principle of free movement of persons and services, by making the present European system of recognition of academic and professional qualifications more effective and by overcoming the obstacles that still remain.

→ The EU should boost and facilitate the access to the mobility opportunities provided by Community programmes, like Youth in action, which are not very well known by its possible beneficiaries.



3. Improving online communication for youngsters

→ The EU should improve online communication, specifically the one addressed to young people. For this purpose, one and only portal should be created. This portal should be systematic, it should allow young people to retrieve information in a clear way and to enable them to gain access to the various opportunities of studying and working in the EU. The EU should also develop a database enabling the match between labour demand and labour supply at Community level, facilitating a global overview of the European labour market. It is therefore important to invest more in online communication.

4. Strengthening "European education"

→ The EU should focus on European civic education of children². Since the beginning of their educational pathway children should learn what Europe is, its history and what it does for its citizens. For this reason the EU should encourage schools to devote at least one hour per month, beginning from the fourth year of primary school, to "European education". This pathway should be declined at different levels, including the study of the European integration processes and the functioning of EU, play time activities, research, creativity, in order to get to know the multi-cultural character of the EU.

→ The EU should invest economic resources in order to allow children and teenagers attending primary and secondary schools to visit EU head offices, especially Parliament and Commission, during their extracurricular trips. Valuable initiatives addressed to children like "Spring of Europe" should be more disseminated. Europe should be brought to citizens and citizens should be brought to Europe³.

²Children are the new European citizens, the future electors; they were born in a Europe which is already united, they benefit from being part of it, nevertheless they do not know it.

³Nowadays adults are the slice of population that is the most distant from the idea of Europe, disinterested and sceptical of the European integration process, often because of disinformation. Their children could contribute to disseminate a sense of belonging and sharing also within families, bringing home what they have learnt at school and triggering a virtuous cycle that starts first of all from knowledge.



5. Involving local organizations in sponsoring EU programmes

→ The EU should better sponsor the European programmes addressed to young people by strengthening the dialogue with organisations working at local level and dealing with young people (i.e. AGESCI). These organisations could in turn promote EU programmes among young people who get in touch with them or join them.

SOCIAL WORKERS WORKING ON MIGRATION AND ASYLUM

1. Integration

Integration is a bi-directional process which involves both immigrants and hosting community. This principle has been expressed also by European institutions several times.

→ The European Union should reinforce its role in terms of monitoring, promotion and assistance addressed to Member States, so that MS may adopt policies and programmes involving third country nationals and hosting communities. These policies and programmes should aim at:

- promoting the knowledge of the hosting country language, civics and health education;
- disseminating information on rights and duties, in particular among newcomers;
- encouraging mutual knowledge, promoting cultural exchanges and enhancing the culture of origin, in order to facilitate intercultural dialogue, preventing or overcoming possible hostile and defensive attitudes from the hosting community.

We think we can identify the "family" as the privileged core of integration. We therefore ask that Member States implement policies aimed at supporting migrants' families and facilitating the integration of its components (for instance cultural and linguistic mediation in public services like hospitals and schools, etc.).



2. Social rights and non-discrimination

→ In compliance with the principle of non-discrimination, Member States must ensure foreign citizens who legally reside in their territories the same treatment as European citizens, in particular with reference to:

- access to housing
- access to work, education and training (recognition of skills, recognition of diplomas, collection of social security payments, possibility to work in public administrations in sectors not linked with State powers...).

However, it is necessary that fundamental rights (as defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights) are guaranteed to everybody, independently from their status of legality or illegality.

3. Harmonisation of national legislations

Freedom of movement is one of the fundamental freedoms of the European Union. Nowadays, third country nationals residing in Member States are excluded from this opportunity. We think that in order to achieve people's real freedom of movement in the perspective of European integration, it is necessary:

- to achieve the progressive harmonization of legislations governing this subject matter, aimed at defining common status (as it happens with the status of third country citizens who are long-term residents in the EU); to define common procedures of entry and permanence on the Community territory;
- to define common policies aimed at integrating third country nationals and to promote a better cooperation among Member States.

4. Legal stability

→ As precarious legal status is one of the major obstacles to the integration of third country nationals legally residing in the EU, we



think it is necessary to promote the legal stability of the persons legally residing in the EU, and to prevent precarious stay situations.

5. International protection

The EU has been taking several steps in order to regulate the recognition of protection forms addressed to the people who are obliged to leave their countries of origin because they are victims of persecution, by defining the forms of protection (Directive 2004/83/EC), the procedures (Directive 2005/85/EC and Regulation 343/2003) and minimum reception standards (Directive 2003/9/EC).

But the EU action is limited to the phase preceding the status recognition, leaving Member States the competence to regulate any possible following action.

→ The ongoing process of harmonization, in order to be really effective and in compliance with the free movement of persons, must be completed by unifying legislations and defining a "European status" that can ensure beneficiaries:

- freedom of movement within Schengen area;
- equal rights and duties in all Member States;
- the provision of integration measures (housing, health and psychological assistance, teaching of hosting country language...), aimed at ensuring full integration of persons in the hosting country;
- the possibility to submit the application for international protection in a country different from the one of arrival (see Regulation 343/2003).

6. Funding opportunities

We realize that there are big differences among EU Member States as regards the resources invested to promote integration processes of third country nationals.

→ Every Member State should commit itself to invest a minimum percentage of its budget in order to support private and public projects and actions whose aim is promoting integration policies.



RECOMMENDATIONS ARISEN IN SWEDEN

CIVIL SERVANTS WORKING ON MIGRATION

1. The purpose of the European Union

The development of the European Union has been progressing too rapidly and its main purpose, the promotion of peace, has been lost along the way. There is a need to once again return to the origins of European co-operation and clearly articulate the purpose of the Union before further advancements can be made. This could be accomplished by taking the following steps:

- The mission of the EU has to be described more clearly
- This mission of the EU has to be limited to concern issues that demand or benefit from supranational governance
- The decision-making process should be simplified and streamlined in order to implement directives and initiatives more quickly
- The opportunities to influence through consultations have to be made easier, where feedback will be given to show that the consultations are making an impact on and are being seen by the EU-system

2. Exchange of knowledge

The European Union has long strived to create a sense of a common European identity. This has yet to evolve in the minds of the Swedish citizens and politicians. European citizens need means to communicate their hopes and wishes to the European Union and not vice versa, where closer contacts between citizens across national borders are encouraged. The following propositions could serve as solutions to said problem:

- Education and exchange programmes should be set up
- Support mechanisms for exchange i.e. financing, should be made easy
- Twinning projects and exchanges closer to specific issues (fac-



tual matters) should be connected in order to directly influence the work of the European Union

Creating active exchange between citizens could lead to the feeling of being part of the European project, to a sense of participation, through the development of a common European identity and attitude.

3. Participation

The responsibility to further interconnect the Union lies not only with bureaucrats and politicians, but success is highly dependent on citizens getting involved to further this objective. Citizens need to feel a connection to the European Union in their day-to-day lives, where the different levels of governance (European, national, local) are closer.

- The participation in parliamentary elections has to rise
- Media have a role to play in strengthening the common European identity by putting European issues higher up in their daily reporting.

COUNTY COUNCIL MEMBERS

1. Endogenous power seek

Euro-scepticism is expressed based on a feeling that the European Union is turning into the European Federation. It is believed that actors within the European Union are working for a federal Europe, with the goal of securing their own interests. There exists an inner drive in the European system to create a federation. Swedish society does not share the same goal, and this leads to an increased euro-scepticism. Discussions in the union now revolve around the need for a common spokesperson for foreign affairs on behalf of the European Union. Some wonder how far the step is from a minister of foreign affairs to creating an entire European cabinet. The motivations of the European Union have to be better communicated. It is therefore necessary to:

- Increase dialogue
- Increase awareness of the different wishes within the Union



2. Portrayal in the media

National governments are not taking responsibility for developments within the country. Instead, they place the blame on the European Union, and this creates distrust and scepticism among citizens. The media can play an important role in turning this behaviour around. A number of measures are recommended:

- Journalists have to be better educated on EU matters
- Increased coverage of EU news on the national level
- Increased dialogue between nations and regions and citizens on the EU

THIRD SECTOR WORKERS

1. Simplifying

The European system is perceived to be bureaucratic and hard to grasp. In order to change this conception it is recommended that certain parts of the work of the European Union are simplified:

- Emphasize the founding principle of the Union, the promotion of European peace
- Simplify the process of calls for proposals and reporting systems
- Clarify information and make it easily understandable
- Direct more support and financing towards people and civil society in matters that concern citizens.

2. Distance

Citizens are feeling trapped and powerless in a large and incomprehensible bureaucracy. The geographical aspect to this should not be ignored. The policy-making process taking place in Brussels feels distant, and the citizen is more connected to the national policies. Of highest concern is the regional and local on-goings. We recommend that in order to reach the citizens of the Union:

- The mission of the European Union needs to be clarified.

3. Citizens' participation

In the present situation, it is hard for citizens to justify adding yet another commitment to an already busy schedule through EU-involvement. Local issues and to some extent also municipal issues attract the most commitment, and in isolated instances also national issues. There is no more room for EU-involvement in the citizens' lives. The European Union is working on far too many issues, this has to be counteracted.

→ Supranational co-operation has to be prioritized and the rest re-nationalized.

RECOMMENDATIONS ARISEN IN GREECE

1. A common policy for migration

Illegal immigration has taken explosive proportions, pushed by the serious long-standing problems faced by the countries of origin of migrants, mainly countries of the so-called Third World. Furthermore, in the light of the impact of the world economic crisis, the vulnerable economies of these countries find themselves in an increasingly dismal position, a situation which inflates the illegal migratory flow towards the EU. At the same time, the very same economic crisis has caused major problems to the economies of the EU, the most important being unemployment. Illegal immigrants and local populations, as well as national institutional bodies, are already called upon to manage the ever-growing conflict of labor and cultural interests. This management is complex and fragmentary.

→ Illegal immigration is a major social issue and a common European problem. The EU must formulate a common policy on migration, which on the one hand will reduce the push factors, i.e. will eliminate the causes that generate and inflate the EU-bound migratory flows, and on the other hand will outline the pull factors, i.e. will adopt specific common measures, rules and conditions of economic migration, that will be adopted by all EU member-states.

2. A common foreign policy

The idea that the European Union must speak with a single voice on world matters is as old as the European integration process itself. Yet, the Union's progress in tracing a common foreign and security policy has been smaller than the progress recorded in the creation of a single market and a single currency. A European Constitution is absolutely necessary to the EU. The new positions of President of the European Council and of High Representative for the Union in Foreign Affairs and Security Policy are good steps towards EU common foreign policy.

→ Europe must intensify its efforts to act as a single power, steadily turned to cooperation and peace, in order to best secure the in-



terests of each member-state, to safeguard the independence and territorial integrity of the EU and to promote European interests worldwide. The EU should and could be a pioneer at international level.

→ The European Union must keep up its efforts to create a single entity, as close to the state as possible, so that true European integration becomes a reality.

→ The EU must break free from the US and have its own independent voice in international forums and its own strong, competitive economy.

3. A greater attention to a series of issues

It is a fact that the EU tries to improve the economic and social prosperity of European citizens. Numerous programs and actions, as well as common policies, have yielded many positive results. However, a series of issues – such as health, education, climate change, salaries, pensions, art, isonomy, unemployment and illegal immigration - need a European approach and greater attention must be paid to them.

→ Particular consideration must be given to the above matters, in terms of more recommendations to the institutional bodies of the member-states, more funds and greater attention to their efficient and correct use by member-states.

4. Maintenance of the integrity of the EU

For half a century now, the European Union keeps growing with the accession of new members. Present-day EU, with 27 member-states and a population close to 500 million people, is more secure, it can exercise a greater influence and be more prosperous. At the same time however disparities and divergences within the EU have also grown and some problems have arisen in relation to the attainment of objectives and the cohesion of citizens. The EU cannot expand endlessly.

→ The institutional bodies must maintain the integrity of the EU and at the same time set specific geographic borders for Europe,



which should not be exceeded. Prior to any new enlargement, they must deepen the social cohesion of the 27 member-states and set strict criteria for new candidate countries that have not yet cooperated with the international community in a satisfactory way.

5. A more balanced integration process

«Europeanization» - the extent to which the Union's political and organizational dynamic penetrates and is «internalized» in the organizational rationale of the national policy of the 27 EU member-states and policy-making process harmonized with the European process - is still being pursued by many new member-states as well as by some older ones.

→ The institutional bodies of the EU should exercise added control on member-states so as to monitor their abidance by recommendations, regulations and decisions taken.

→ The institutional bodies of the EU should adopt measures which will ensure equality between member-states for the promotion of further unification and cohesion of the EU and the elimination of phenomena of hegemonic pursuits, prevalence and domination of some member-states over others.

6. Improving business environment

Ascertainment: The employment rate in the EU is low and, conversely, unemployment is high and growing, particularly among young people and women, but not limited to them. Under these conditions, the disappointment and distance that European citizens feel in relation to the EU will keep growing. At the same time, they constitute a fertile ground for the emergence of political and social claims and conflicts.

→ The institutional bodies of the EU and member-states should improve the business environment, reduce administrative burdens on enterprises, reduce the number of useless regulations, and eliminate the obstacles to professional mobility both within professions and among member-states.



→ A special lesson on entrepreneurship should be included in school curricula, so that children can learn the ways they can define, manage and adapt their skills of their professional life.

7. Better information on Commission's work

Ascertainment: The citizen's acceptance of the EU keeps shrinking. The so-called democratic deficit persists, and citizens increasingly feel that the decision-making center (i.e. Brussels) is remote and that decisions are taken by the atherosclerotic bureaucracy of institutional bodies that fails to understand the daily problems faced by citizens. Citizens remain marginalized.

→ The EU should give priority to specific objectives and measures for the reduction of bureaucracy and support this initiative with a large information campaign.

→ The EU should create a multi-national task force, formed by executives/persons wishing to contribute to society, with the objective to promote the work of the Commission in full details, reaching out to simple citizens by going to the places, where citizens live, work and spend their free time. There is little citizens can do themselves and the EU institutions are the ones that have to make a move.

8. Better visibility of Community policies

The skeptical, if not outright negative attitude that citizens display in relation to the EU is intensified by the ease with which many national governments point the finger at «Brussels» when faced with unpopular decisions, whilst presenting popular or non-controversial decisions as national successes. This situation leads unavoidably to difficulties in the creation of a European «demos» that would constitute the lever of further unification.

→ The institutional bodies of the EU should issue recommendations to member-states when they use Community policies to their own political and party advantage, and apply – if need be – even sanctions.



→ The institutional bodies of the EU should give top priority to the promotion of Community work through campaigns, a dedicated website, on-going regular meetings with citizens, award-winning competitions and art events.

→ An information brochure on the EU should be published and distributed in schools at the beginning of every school year.

9. Emphasis on citizens' daily problems

Citizens' trust in politicians keeps dwindling. Among the numerous reasons behind this state of affairs, there is the unreliability and inconsistency of political discourse and political action, the accumulated problems to which no solution is ever found, the huge information opportunities available to citizens, etc. Citizens are disappointed, they «turn their back» to both politicians and politics and abstain from policy-making at all levels. High abstention rates and the withdrawal into private life contain messages of strong dissatisfaction with national and European political systems.

→ The EU – in addition to major issues – should give emphasis also to the daily problems of citizens, particularly in the case of more vulnerable groups, who do not have the possibility to make major claims. It should strengthen the feeling that every citizen is important and that dignity is a common European component. It should take measures and recommend to member-states to invigorate the feeling of security of citizens and reduce corruption.

10. Increasing leadership on environmental matters

In April 1998 the EU member-states and the European Commission signed the Kyoto Protocol, subsequently ratified in May 2002. According to the Protocol, the EU and its member-states have the obligation to reduce emission by 8% in the period 2008-2012 taking the emissions of 1990 as base year. However, the EU policy on climate does not end in 2012. Many policies already adopted will have serious impacts after the period in which the Protocol's obligations are binding. The EU is ready to participate in an international open dialogue. It has also highlighted a series of fundamental data for the im-



plementation of a successful worldwide policy on climate: the need for increased participation of countries and sectors, the development of low-carbon technologies, the continuation and enlargement of the use of market-based means and the need to adapt to the unavoidable impacts of climate change. However, the application of the Kyoto Protocol appears to be insufficient and it is obvious that the European Union cannot reverse the greenhouse effect on its own.

- The EU must put additional pressure on the countries that have not yet complied with the requirements of the Kyoto Protocol.
- The EU must take measures in support of local companies as to the production of alternative forms of energy.
- The EU must constantly invite the other industrialized countries with high emissions of greenhouse gases to comply with international agreements.
- The EU should undertake an initiative for the establishment of international governance in the field of environment, based on a consensual international, regional and national institutional architecture, supervised by the World Environmental Organization, capable of tackling present-day environmental challenges.



RECOMMENDATIONS ARISEN IN BULGARIA

UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

1. Legal regulations and promotion of citizens' participation at all decision-making levels

An evident lack of public debate is to be noticed in the problematic areas regarding the development of the EU. This lack of possibility to debate at all levels and to find the inner relations between the levels as regards everyday problems is a threat to democracy as it discourages citizens' participation in the process of decision-making, deprives the sense of voting and isolates the process of policy making.

Recommendations:

- The EU should encourage large-scale public debates on citizens' daily problems at all levels, with the active involvement of citizens.
- There should be EU regulations to make public evaluation of policies obligatory, especially at regional and local levels, as well as regulations governing strategic planning based on need analysis, financial coverage of potential needs, prioritized by public evaluation.
- The EU should spur member states to introduce a state mechanism for the support of civil society and of the institutions working with young people (Universities, schools, businesses, NGOs, cultural and youth clubs and centres, school boards) and encourage them to plan a guaranteed no-interest fund aimed at the participation in EU programmes when there are approved projects. A tax-reduction system could be encouraged for the businesses that support young people and their projects or projects aimed at youths.
- The EU should review EU legislature in the field of civil society as there is no difference on how NGOs are registered – for public or for private sake. There should be clear tax policies on the funds allocated for activities with youth.



→ The EU should set up a EUROPEAN YOUTH AGENCY aimed to support youth's development in the continent. The new agency could provide virtual information about mobility, employment possibilities, grants for youths, exchange possibilities, partner research, etc. What already exists is so unorganized and mixed up among all GDs that its difficult to find it. If there was a single youth agency, the information flow, analysis, policies would be centralized and easily dealt with. At the moment there are more than 30 agencies.

2. Need of territorial equality

The EU is carrying out different policies in order to overcome territorial differences. In member states and particularly in Bulgaria there are still huge differences between the centre and the periphery and in all related areas – capital – oblast cities; oblast cities – municipal cities; municipal centres – towns; towns – villages. No specialized policies are implemented in the different areas.

Recommendations:

- The EU should plan special policies addressed to poorly developed regions and to the populations in these regions, especially to young people – youths to be kept in the regions and "brains flow" to be stopped.
- The EU should regulate Public Private Partnership in the youth and educational fields by taking different financial measures; it should also support youth social entrepreneurship.

3. Employment, education and young people mobility

The education of young people, even following certain European standards and regulations, is not on the agenda. It is far from everyday developments and needs and does not follow world tendencies. It is kept away from real life which makes it unattractive, not prestigious and just obligatory. Due to these reasons, phenomena such as abandoning school, studying to get a diploma, brain flows are to be seen. Lack of special policies addressed to different formal and informal groups among young people causes confrontations among them,



lack of trust towards state authorities and uncivil behavior. Finding a balance between general competences and education for European citizenship is extremely important for the future of the nation, for European development and to form a European culture based on social interaction and understanding. The issue is important also because if professional qualities and competences are crucial to both employers and employees, they are also of great importance for the development of the country and the EU as a whole. Some main content fields need to be covered by unified European policies that should be obligatory for member states and standards in education.

General education and its european dimension

- The EU needs to work with members states on changes related to professional education at all levels. States usually expect businesses to solve the problem, which usually makes many damages at all levels and in all spheres. The EU should draw regulations about state intervention in professional education, allow tax reductions for the businesses that provide professional training, that do "social business" policies. In Bulgaria school and academia curriculums are completely separated from everyday life.
- There is a need for full analysis of education and of the relation education – skills and competences. Education is cut off from everyday life agenda. A EU intervention is needed in order to unify the standards of education in Europe.

Career development of young people

- There is a tendency as regards education and training which follows the centre-periphery relationship. At the central level there is strong motivation and competence while at the level of small villages and towns there is complete lack of them. Lack of mechanisms that allow young people to become fully integrated and motivated and to follow the career of state clerks; in fact the work is related to the years spent in the administration, not to the education and competences got.



Education to obtain qualification and re-qualification of young people

→ The number of long-term unemployed people that are trained in different courses is decreasing. There is an urgent need for a state mechanism that permits young people to study and work at the same time and that recognizes training courses as working time.

→ Special attention towards young women and young mothers at work is needed. Specific programmes for young women at work, for working women and for young mothers should be introduced. Special emphasis must be given to some ethnic groups, for whom, together with courses of professional development, courses on health, citizenship and everyday culture should be included. The state needs to support such actions.

→ There should be national policies towards young mothers, aimed to continue their professional education and their acquisition of skills and competences while out of office.

Education to obtain general civic competences and education on European citizenship

→ The EU and member states should implement policies aimed to increase the knowledge and education of young people as regards European citizenship and the rights as well as the duties of European citizens. The schooling regarding duties, rights, people's mobility, the mobility of diplomas and certificates, the study of foreign languages should start at an early age. The lack of knowledge on law, history, intercultural understanding and tolerance was commented on within youth groups. Also the necessity of setting European standards of knowledge was dealt.

→ The groups also stressed the importance of forming a new legal culture among citizens, particularly among young people and children – a culture based on knowing not only one's rights but also one's duties, on the knowledge of legal norms, so as to form legal values and bring about a new type of social behavior.



→ Other themes which were discussed were the development of an economic culture among young people and their preparation for the Common Market; the development of a culture of social involvement (development of small businesses, team - building, working with people, relations employer – employee).

→ Knowledge of social competences: problem solving, labor conflicts, alternative ways of solving social conflicts.



RECOMMENDATIONS ARISEN IN SPAIN

UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

1. Harmonising European educational and vocational systems

→ The EU should harmonise European educational and vocational systems by introducing common criteria and standards for the different educational levels which are recognised in all Member States. This should include the facilitation of pupil and student mobility within Europe, uniform admission procedures, examinations and evaluations.

2. Investing in the quality of all educational levels

→ The EU should invest more in the quality of all levels of education, focusing on diversity and innovation in education. This could include the early learning of a European language, improvement of the technical equipment in schools and the exchange of best practices among EU Member States.

3. Developing teachers' cooperation among member states

→ The EU should fund and provide an on-going teachers information pack available to all schools in order to develop understanding and cooperation between individual member states and institutions in a European context.

4. Increasing open debates and bottom-up approach

→ MEPs and EU officials should increase open debates. The methods could include monthly meetings in public spaces, suggestions and proposals (possibly online), large scale consultation events. The EU should foster a bottom-up approach.

5. Promoting EU spirit and citizens' participation

There are cross-cutting disciplines in the general curriculum of our universities that can promote the spirit behind the construction of the European Union in line with the Treaty of Lisbon.



→ We must better use the resources offered by various programs for EU-level university partnerships in order to enhance the spirit of European citizenship among the associations of university student

→ The progressive increase of citizen participation, proposed by the Lisbon Treaty, must begin with proper promotion of participatory spirit among young people, especially in universities. For this reason, we must devote special efforts to promote the participation of university students in various programs for the dissemination of European citizenship.

PEOPLE LIVING IN RURAL AREAS

1. More attention to the local areas needs

→ Training politicians, mayors, decision-makers must concentrate more on developmental issues and listen more to local needs.

2. Public transparency of administrations' decisions

→ Increasing the knowledge of all the decisions taken by public administrations touching life in the region among the inhabitants of the region.

→ Organising regular meetings of government representatives with citizens, where serious expected actions influencing the management of the region could be well discussed.

→ Creating a system of sanctions of individual representatives of public administration in cases when they ignore complaints and official initiatives submitted by citizens.

3. Promotion of public opinion

→ Promoting opportunities for people in rural areas to talk constructively about community changes, differences between people including the presence of ethnic minority groups, and the scope for nurturing shared futures related to rural living.



→ We always receive proposals to participate in already designed activities, but we rarely have the opportunity to participate in the designing of these activities.

4. Spreading more information about the EU

→ The city councils of small towns do not have enough information on what happens in the European Union. We still have a long way to the European Union!

→ In the towns of Castile and Leon there are a lot of very old people, so it is difficult to organize activities promoting principles and values as proposed by the European Union.

5. More actions for women and the rural environment

→ Rural areas rely mostly on women, but policies on women find it hard to reach rural areas. For the small population of these localities, actions aimed specifically at women and the rural environment are to be performed.

YOUNG PEOPLE AT RISK OF SOCIAL EXCLUSION

1. Improvement of communication and co-operation at local level

→ Increase and improve communication and co-operation among municipalities and schools (between founder and executive).

2. Improvement of educational activities

→ Develop free-time/after-school activities, from nursery schools, through primary to secondary schools.

→ Include environment education as a proper educational subject.

→ Ensure proper material equipment for the improvement of education.

→ Financially motivate teachers to develop after-school/free-time activities and make the educational process more attractive.



→ Ensure appropriate number of foreign language teachers also for primary schools in villages or/and provide additional education and prequalification for teachers to become foreign language teachers.

→ Ensure basic business education starting from the higher grades of primary schools.

3. Youths' participation and its problems

→ We are interested in programmes that promote youth participation in activities aimed at insertion into the labour market.

→ Many of the programmes and projects of the European Union and the Treaty of Lisbon take into account people who have no trouble in studying, working or economic problems, so we cannot engage with them.

→ Some projects such as Erasmus or Leonardo have good intentions and are very good, but in order to participate in them, we need to spend some money, and we often are not able to finance these activities.

→ In order to participate in many of these exciting activities it is required proficiency in English or another language spoken in Europe, but the education we have received has not been good at language learning. There should be projects that enable those who haven't studied enough to attend the programmes or at least to learn a language.

ELDERLY PEOPLE

1. More confidence in the EU

→ Before any substantive progress can be made, citizens must be confident that the EU is the right organization in which to place their trust for the future. At the centre of a debate such as this, if citizens are to participate, there must be evidence that it is the citizens who are involved in a meaningful consultation that helps



citizens to make the decisions that affect their lives.

→ If our EU leaders can't place their trust in us, why should we place our trust in them? To date, whenever we place our trust in the EU leaders, they betray our trust. A clean sweep of the EU corruption would be start, and this is these citizens' proposal.

2. Getting the EU closer to Third Age People

→ The local government institutions, municipalities, County Councils, working directly with elderly people in the villages of the region, are not always aware of the importance of bringing the EU closer to the local people.

→ There should be a permanent network of EU information and programmes for Third Age people, known by all stakeholders in the area.

→ It is important that elderly people are consulted about the interests and possibilities for actions in the EU in order to understand better the different cultures and participate more in travelling and contacts with other senior citizens from other European countries.

3. Elderly people's active participation in EU projects

→ Although references to elderly people in various documents are taken into consideration, the elderly often realize that development projects for the dissemination of the interests of the European Union are not designed with their involvement. The activities are organized for them, but they do not always participate in the creation and design of these activities.

→ We welcome initiatives such as this Project Do EU Know, in which we can at least express our opinions about what we think of Europe and help us to become more interested in many projects, like the programmes Leonardo and Grundtvig.



SOCIAL WORKERS

1. Same working conditions for all EU citizens

→ The EU should create the same working conditions and rules for all EU citizens; it should include the principle of equal pay for equal work between men and women as well as workers from other EU Member States.

2. Transparency and accountability

→ The EU should increase the transparency and accountability of politicians and civil servants, reducing the legal immunity of policy makers and introducing legislation on lobbying at national and European level.

3. Improving social protection levels for all citizens

→ The EU should increase social protection for vulnerable members of society in all phases of life, such as elderly people, the disabled or poorer members of society, homeless and unemployed, as well as carers. These measures should be given particular attention in times of economic recession.

4. Improving migration policy

→ The EU should take measures to avoid countries on its external borders from becoming over-burdened by a flow of migrants. The EU member states must ensure that illegal immigrants are not offered jobs in the grey economy.

5. Constant updating of the information on EU policies

We lack permanent and updated information on support programmes for dissemination of the principles of the European Union, especially the contents of the Lisbon Treaty. What we learned at the university is somehow back in the time.

→ The EU should promote constant and updated information on its policies.



6. Education and knowledge in the EU social intervention topics

→ Social workers and officials of local and regional governments are often experts in community management, rather than people involved in the spirit of social intervention from the perspective proposed by the Lisbon Treaty. We need more special education and knowledge in this area.



CONCLUSIONS

The "Do EU know?" project, promoted by Caritas Ambrosiana in cooperation with civil society organizations working in the field of social inclusion, active citizenship and information activities on EU matters, has confirmed the importance of forms of participatory democracy. It has been a meaningful experience to improve partners' awareness as regards the participation of citizens, civil society and institutions to the European Union's life.

Our experience with citizens' panels has confirmed that **information is the first step to participation**. People involved in the project expressed their will to speak to EU institutions, to contribute to the construction of a closer and more democratic Europe. But widespread chances to know more about Europe and learn how to be active European citizens are often lacking. This is the reason why some participants asked partners to go ahead, to be involved in similar future activities also after the end of the project and to keep being informed about EU issues. Some of them asked to create permanent discussion groups on European matters: in particular young people, but also elderly people in Spain who asked to be put in the conditions to learn English, the use of internet and Facebook!

It has been quite surprising and interesting to realize that the citizens involved, through a definitely spontaneous process, highlighted the same reasons for the distance between them and the European institutions that the European Commission identified in its White Paper on European governance of 2001. The main reasons outlined were the following: the efficacy of the European Union in giving answers to concrete citizens' problems is scarce; the information and communication on what the EU and Member States do within the European governance system is not clear or is insufficient; citizens do not understand who does what in Brussels; the European institutional framework is too complex. The key message arising from "Do EU know?" citizens' panels is that there is more need for Europe. **Citizens feel that it is necessary to ask for more Europe to institutions at all levels**, to media and also to educational systems.



From the bottom-up approach followed by the project and from the final conference, it clearly emerged that an effective co-operation between the different levels of the European multi-level governance system is lacking. Information on European issues does not reach the places where citizens can get information, it is often unsystematic and addressed to an elitist public.

Furthermore, information on EU matters does not reach the levels which are closer to citizens in a sufficient way. The different administrative levels (national, regional, local) that separate citizens from European institutions are not very well informed, trained or involved in the European administrative governance. Governments and media often make an instrumental use of decisions made at European level, particularly if faced with unpopular ones, and do not make any effort to communicate the positive advantages that the EU brings to its citizens.

The task of the "Do EU know?" partnership has been to encourage involvement, interaction and participation, and to build a bridge between EU and its citizens. **The task of European institutions is now to show the citizens that their voices are heard and listened to**, their questions answered and their opinions taken into account.

The sense of citizenship needs to be developed and continually cultivated through the transparency of governing bodies so as to enhance dialogue with the people. **If the European Union wants to grow democratic and inclusive, it needs to be constantly open to its citizens and able to receive their contributions, opinions and ideas.**

These considerations are addressed not only to European institutions, which have shown an increased effort and put in place concrete actions to fill the gap with citizens in the last ten years, but also and especially to national institutions. Member States have committed themselves to take all appropriate measures to ensure fulfilment of the obligations arising from the Treaties or resulting from actions taken by the institutions of the Community, to facilitate the achievement of the Community's tasks and to abstain from any measure which could jeopardise the attainment of EU objectives (principle of loyal co-operation).