



## **SOCIETY OPENING THROUGH YOUTH PARTICIPATION**

The evolution of the EU intra-states relationships all these years showed that the course to flourish institutional integration was never easy, but still produced tangible results in the end. In the post Maastricht period the transition from the intergovernmental European Community to the European Union with more and explicit competences allocated to, especially in economic matters, wasn't as effective as expected. The European Union's bureaucracy expanded, decision making system was formed under the scope of maintaining different and contradictory political equilibria which resulted to diminish EU's legitimization within European Citizens.

### **European Integration at Risk**

The main concern on the evolutional course of the EU derives from the fact that the European Citizens show an escalating disapproval towards the consolidated European Institutions. This fact was explicitly shown through the referenda rejection of the Constitutional Treaty in France and The Netherlands in 2005 and the disapproval of the Lisbon Treaty as an aftermath of the Irish referendum negative outcome in 2008. This stance, that was further deteriorated after the incorporation of the twelve new member-states since 2004 and onwards, underlines the mistrust of the European citizens towards the effectiveness of the European Union in dealing with their everyday life conditions and resolving their problems through its pursued policies.

Therefore a twenty-seven member-states European Union cannot continue its course under the existing decision making system. As long as national interests prevail towards the strategic planning of innovative policies and pursued actions, the European Union cannot produce tangible results in favour of its citizens. In this context the allocation of decision – making

competences to the European Parliament seems to be the only way to ensure effectiveness and democratic authorization of the European institutions, leaning the way, based on the principle of subsidiarity, to further Europeanization of political competences which cannot be dealt with on the national, region or local level.

### **The Role of the European Political Parties**

The creation of the European Political Organisations under the provisions of the Revised EU Treaty in 1997, gave the European Union the opportunity to create the political structures through which it could communicate directly with its citizens through the participation of national political parties, recognizing the need to innovate the European Union institutional structure, in order to effectively deal with the contemporary global challenges of market effectiveness, energy efficiency, production competitiveness, enhanced job creation, economic stability and growth fostering.

### **Promoting Youth Participation**

Accounting more than 55 center right and Christian – Demographic National Youth Political Organisations from 38 European countries and representing over 1.500.000 young people, the Youth of the European Peoples Party has shown all these years a committed political action in order to confer into the legitimisation of the European Institutions among the Young European citizens. Our main goal is to hear the youth, to express their will, to understand and promote their needs through solid political proposals. We are the first generation that was born and raised within the European Union, that profited from the free movement of citizens within the Shengen Area, that experienced the prosperity from the free trade of goods and the realisation of extended infrastructure works through European funding that ameliorated our life.

Nonetheless today we face the challenge to establish a two way communication network between the Youth and the European Union. We should promote the European institutional structure toward young Europeans

and actively participate in discussions whether instruments of direct democracy would increase legitimization of the integration process.

On the other hand we must ensure that the European Union listens up the young people, accepts their proposals, stand up to their worries and hopes in order to flourish their potentials for a better and lifelong education, to cover their needs in terms of boosting the creation of quality and high – skilled jobs and eventually co-forming and guaranteeing a better future. Our main challenge as the YEPP is to co-form our proposals with young people individually, to become the stage for them to promote their thoughts for a Europe that every young man or woman dreams for.

### **Youth Campaigning during 2009 European Elections**

On June 2009 the citizens of the European Union will participate in general elections to democratically elect their representatives 30 years after the introduction of an electoral system for the formation of the European parliament. We as the Youth of the European Peoples Party believe that we have reached the moment to overcome the political tradition and to make young people believe again on the prospects of a united and politically committed Europe. The next months to the June ballots will be a big bet for us.. We aim to bring the youth closer to the European Union through participation. We will succeed in raising their electoral participation as a result of a solid choice due to the potential of co-forming our proposals to the European Union. Therefore the YEPP along with its national youth political organizations aims to:

- Put in use the new electronic forum of YEPP for the upcoming European Elections and achieve a direct communication with the European Youth individually, in order to foster a political dialogue that will lead to the formation of our propositions.
- Successfully cooperate and represented through YEPP officials in seminars, forums, and virtual discussions that our national youth political organizations will organize in their country individually.

- Form answersheets, in close cooperation with our members, on which young people will be able to express their positions on how the European Union could help by ameliorating their every day life. It will be up to our national organizations to promote through extensive campaigns these forms in order to get the big picture on the concerns of the European Youth
- Give to our members as much political material as possible in order to promote the information of the young people for the European Union, its institutions and decision making system.
- Other proposals from our members through the organization of national conventions, according to their national campaign plan and promote it through our political network to the European Authorities.

*Adopted at the Athens Council Meeting, 24 January 2009*