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EDITORIAL

By Jean-Claude Thébault

Reconnecting with the European citizen

Listening to the voices of citizens is more important today than ever. Even if Europe is slowly emerging from a long crisis, citizens continue to feel that European and national decision-makers are unable to meet their expectations: decisions taken at national level are disconnected from their needs, while trust in the European institutions is low. A legitimacy deficit has also become apparent: citizens feel decisions are taken at a level too distant and disconnected from them.

Europe is at a crossroads. The months and years to come will be decisive for the future of the European Union, with many voices offering differing opinions on which direction it should take. With voters about to elect a new European Parliament and the changes it will bring, further impetus is provided to continue the reflection on the kind of Union we want for the next five years.

Giving citizens a direct voice in this debate is essential. European integration should go hand in hand with reinforcing the Union's democratic legitimacy,

engaging every citizen in discussions on how the European Union should evolve in the years to come, both economically and politically. This is what the European Commission has aimed to do in two main ways: first, by organising more than 50 Citizens' Dialogues across Europe, across European regions, across generations and social strata; and second, by mobilising and bringing together renowned European artists and intellectuals in a reflection on how to stand up against populism for a common European future.

These efforts are both important and complementary. Engaging with the 'creative' thinkers of Europe – as sources of innovation – aims at giving new meaning to Europe, one that can speak to today's realities. It should not be confused with conceiving the European project as merely a cultural project. A renewed vision for Europe, however, cannot be created without its citizens. This is why a bottom up approach is being taken to build a narrative for Europe, where Europeans shape the resulting discourse.

This issue of the *BEPA Monthly Brief* highlights these two initiatives at a time when the 'New Narrative for Europe' project has culminated into a Declaration and the Citizens' Dialogues are offering a sense of direction.

1 When Renaissance meets cosmopolitanism: A new narrative for Europe

By Jaime Andreu*

The pilot project ‘New Narrative for Europe’ has reached its first milestone. The adoption of the Declaration titled “The Mind and Body of Europe”, in Berlin on 1st March 2014, completes a year-long process. Artists, intellectuals and scientists affirm that it is their mission “to offer a narrative from our perspective that we are confident will stimulate the debate on the future of Europe. Renaissance and cosmopolitanism are two cultural ideals we look to and consider vital as part of the Europe of today and tomorrow”.

An original approach

The long road to the Declaration started in Strasbourg on 12th September 2012, when President Barroso called on “European thinkers, men and women of culture, to join this debate on the future of Europe”. One month later, the European Parliament adopted a budgetary amendment introduced by Morten Lokkegaard MEP, who proposed a pilot action called ‘New Narrative for Europe’ aiming to reconnect Europe with its citizens. The main output of the action was to be a manifesto, now referred to as the Declaration.

To implement this pilot project, the Commission followed a rather original path favouring a bottom up approach. The Commission played the role of facilitator, letting artists, intellectuals and scientists manage the project autonomously. The resulting Declaration is therefore ‘their’ Declaration, not an official document of the Commission. Furthermore, it is important to underline that the Declaration is addressed to the European general public, not to politicians – even if it was unveiled in the presence of President Barroso and Chancellor Merkel.

The Commission set up a so-called Cultural Committee, coordinated by Paul Dujardin (CEO and Artistic Director of the Centre of Fine Arts of Brussels (BOZAR)) and composed of relevant personalities from the European artistic, intellectual and scientific world. They were

selected according to their already proven commitment to the cultural and intellectual dimensions of the European integration process.

The preparatory work for the Declaration was organised around three so-called General Assemblies on the “forms of Imagination and Thinking for Europe”. It is important to underline the personal commitment of President Barroso to the project: he not only attended and actively participated in the discussions, but also made sure that the Prime Minister of each hosting country also attended the assembly. As a result, Prime Ministers Tusk and Letta, as well as Chancellor Merkel all shared their visions of Europe during the events organised in Warsaw, Milan and Berlin respectively.

The work done by the members of the Cultural Committee and their invitees was vital for drafting the Declaration. By discussing in working groups and exchanging directly with the President, the participants have shown not only their personal commitment to Europe, but also the need to discuss and speak up about the way in which Europe is explained to the general public. From the very beginning, President Barroso clearly explained the reasons for this new narrative: “A new narrative for Europe not because we don’t remain loyal to the *raison d’être* of the European community and the European Union; of course this remains valid. But because I think we need, in the beginning of the XXI century, namely for the new generation that is not so much identified with this narrative of Europe, to continue to tell the story of Europe. Like a book: it cannot only stay in the first pages, even if the first pages were extremely beautiful. We have to continue our narrative; continue to write the book of the present and of the future. This is why we need a new narrative for Europe”.

Moving towards a New Renaissance?

The Declaration defines, first of all, Europe as a state of mind “formed and fostered by its

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spiritual, philosophical, artistic and scientific inheritance, and driven by the lessons of history [...] that goes beyond a grouping of nation states, an internal market and the geographical contours of a continent [...] shared by citizens across the continent [...] shared by the men and women who, with the force of their beliefs both religious and secular, have always provided light in the darkest hours of European history and have generated new communities of spirit and labour [...] rooted in its shared values of peace, freedom, democracy and rule of law [...] that also exists beyond its borders.”

The authors recall three historical moments that have had a marked impact on Europe: the end of World War II and the ensuing peace as a supreme value; the fall of the Iron Curtain, with democracy as the supreme quality of citizenship; and the bursting of the bubble, which generated a drop in the levels of confidence in the institutions and caused people to question the basic values of the European Union.

To answer the question of how to reconnect Europe with its citizens, how to recover the public's lost levels of confidence, the Declaration proposes the idea of a New Renaissance, mirroring that of the 15th and 16th centuries, promoting a global model of sustainable development and going beyond Europe's frontiers. “This [states the Declaration] must be achieved by caring not only for biodiversity but also for cultural diversity and pluralism”.

The Declaration recalls that culture is a major source of nourishment and supply for Europe. It also insists on Europe as a political body that requires science to find innovative responses to the societal questions, where the arts are required to inspire a new model of educating citizens, and where the value of our common cultural heritage is recognised since it fosters a sense of ‘belonging’ among European citizens. This political body also requires a great dose of cosmopolitanism by promoting a new global model of society based on “ethical, aesthetic and sustainable values”.

The text concludes by asking for a triple commitment of (1) political leaders who understand the need for a new political language; (2) artists and intellectuals to move beyond their comfort zones and take on new responsibilities

towards Europe as a political body; and (3) citizens to take part in a public European space where they can discuss their experiences and concerns. In other words: not a single narrative, but multiple narratives.

A point of departure

The adoption of the Declaration does not mean, however, the end of the project. On the contrary, the Declaration is intended to act as a catalyst for a wide-ranging debate about what the new narrative for Europe should be.

The Declaration is now in its dissemination phase. This dissemination is carried out at two levels. On one level, the Commission's Representation Offices are organising events in the member states, in close cooperation with the Cultural Committee members, to debate the content of the Declaration by bringing in complementary contributions, new ideas and – why not – criticisms on its wording. The second level of the dissemination phase is directly conducted through the activities of the Cultural Committee. In this respect, three round tables will take place to debate in more detail the different aspects of the Declaration's content. The Cultural Committee members will also attend several prestigious cultural events.

The project will come to an end next autumn. A prestigious event will be organised in the BOZAR, in Brussels. It will be the moment to present a book on the process of establishing the ‘New Narrative for Europe’, and it will also be the moment to release a report on the sustainability of the project. Indeed, the current project has shown the continued desire for the cultural, intellectual and scientific worlds to discuss Europe, and they would like this effort to continue: to develop Europe's narrative as a never-ending story.

Where for several generations of Europeans the driving logic to explain ‘Europe’ has been the pursuit of peace, democracy and prosperity, the time has come to know how the young European generation connects with Europe, those who are soon to take on their responsibilities and tasks – as Guillaume Klossa said. And for this to happen, as Beppe Severgnini argued in Milan, it is now up to the Erasmus generation, those who have enjoyed Europe, to speak up.

2 Bringing the citizens back in

By Joachim Ott*

On 27th March 2014 – after exactly 18 months – a series of 51 Citizens’ Dialogues organised in all 28 member states of the EU with European Commission President Barroso and 21 Commissioners ended with the first pan-European Citizens’ Dialogue in the Commission’s Visitors Centre in Brussels.

Objectives of the Citizens’ Dialogue

Why did we embark on this journey in uncharted waters on 27th September 2012 in Cádiz? This initiative was launched when the economic crisis had turned into a fully-fledged crisis of trust in the European Union, its political leaders and its institutions, as well as European governance in general. Commission Vice-President Reding felt that it was the right moment to start a “broad debate of a truly European nature” in order to overcome widespread feelings among European citizens, feelings that they had lost control over the decisions that were taken on their behalf. Commissioner Barnier expressed this concern many months later in a Dialogue with French citizens in Saint-Denis: « On fait l’Europe pour les citoyens mais sans eux ».

What we wanted to achieve first and foremost was to show that ‘Europe’ is not an anonymous and technocratic machinery. We wanted to give Europe a face and show that the European Union is run by committed politicians with a vision, who stand to their political responsibility for the decisions they make.

How we engaged citizens

The philosophy of the Citizens’ Dialogues was simple: the political leaders of the Commission go to town halls, theatres, market places or other public locations and listen to citizens. Without prepared speeches, without the usual safety net of selected participants, panels and pre-arranged conclusions. Just the Commissioners together with a national or regional politician or the mayor of the host town.

The principle of “open doors” was applied: whoever wants to come is welcome and is encouraged to take the floor. All questions are allowed and the debate is real. And we did not stop at the 28 capitals; whenever possible the Dialogues took place in the regions of the country.

The Citizens’ Dialogues were meant to be a learning exercise for all involved actors. This applied to the involved Commissioners, but also to the participants, the media, civil society and the host towns. One of the most precious side-effects of the Dialogues was the emergence of numerous informal networks and European Public Spaces to ensure that the discussions continue.

“While people around the world are looking to Europe as inspiration, in Europe there is pessimism. There are many citizens that do not trust our project. I think there is an issue here about engagement with the citizens, to have a real pan-European dialogue to avoid prejudices, to avoid stereotypes, to avoid what some extremists are saying, that ‘Europe is the cause of the problem and not part of the solution’. We have constructed something very precious – let’s not destroy it. Don’t turn your back to Europe; make Europe better through democratic debate and participation.”

President José Manuel Barroso
Pan-European Citizens’ Dialogue,
27th March 2014

Have we been successful?

Vice-President Reding opened her meetings with participants from all walks of life with the question: “Do you feel that your voice is heard in Europe?” There were regional differences, but in general 2 out of 3 participants answered “no” (quite in line with a number of representative Eurobarometer surveys). There

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was – and is – a huge demand that politicians come to town, explain why they do what they do and demonstrate their willingness to take into account what concerns citizens. It was not intended, but many of the Dialogues (in particular those organised in the member states that were the most affected by the crisis) revealed a moment of catharsis and allowed also that the emotional aspects of the fundamental shift in European integration could surface.

Re-building the trust of Europeans in the European Union is a long-term task. Successful policies that stabilise the social fabric of our societies are a pre-condition to achieve this, but it is the citizens (as the electorate) who give legitimacy to the decisions that are made in their name. The European Union needs to be “owned” by its citizens. Otherwise it will remain a static bureaucracy and not a living democracy based on competing ideas for its future.

Over the 18 months of the Dialogue series nearly 17,000 citizens came to the debates; over 105,000 participated actively via the web and social media. Millions of Europeans saw the Dialogues on TV or read about them in the media.

What were the key concerns of Europeans?

The economic situation, its social impact and the threat of a ‘lost generation’ came up everywhere; issues related to free movement, forward looking investments in education and research or the need for integrated policy making approaches were on the top of the list of participants’ interests. Many citizens felt strongly that economic integration must be accompanied by more democracy. They also sent a clear signal that solidarity and responsibility have to go hand in hand. Whether from member states that weathered the crisis well or programme countries,

they all stressed that, for them, the EU is about solidarity.

The experience with this new tool for direct political communication informed a policy report that was adopted on 24th March 2014 by the College. Nearly 9 out of 10 participants were in favour of more face-to-face dialogues with European and national politicians. Some of the national politicians who had been involved in the Citizens’ Dialogues took up the idea and started similar initiatives in their respective home countries.

The overwhelming majority of the participants in the concluding pan-European Citizens’ Dialogue felt that they had become part of a process that needs to go on. In view of re-defining European citizenship or in view of the elections in the European Parliament that rightly take place with the motto “this time it’s different”, it is important that citizen buy-in continues.

In the long run, the Citizens’ Dialogue could evolve into a “sounding board” where citizens can discuss with political leaders important institutional and political developments before they are brought into the policy cycle. From this perspective, the pan-European Citizens’ Dialogue of 27th March 2014 marked not an end, but the beginning of a new approach.



3 L'Europe cherche ses Alices

Par Philippe Perchoc *

Le travail de mise en phrases de l'aventure européenne reste une part de l'aventure, une tâche perpétuellement inachevée comme l'Europe elle-même. A diverses époques, chaque génération d'Européens réécrit inlassablement l'histoire du partage de notre continent à travers les arts, la peinture, la sculpture, la littérature et l'ensemble des approches sensibles. Cette histoire est un travail des sociétés européennes sur la société européenne, elle est aussi, plus récemment, celui des institutions européennes.

Celles-ci, la Commission et le Parlement inclus, se sont lancées depuis les débuts des années 1950 dans une grande tentative d'écrire, ou de faire émerger, un discours sur l'Europe qui soit à la fois le reflet de l'esprit du temps et de leur volonté de rendre l'intégration européenne plus légitime. Or, il est difficile de forger une histoire démocratique et plurinationale d'un continent entier.

En effet, si il est difficile de trouver un compromis dans la grande diversité des sensibilités européennes en matière économique, il est encore plus complexe de trouver une formule qui permette de laisser émerger une identité européenne qui transcende l'addition de ses composantes. Les identités nationales européennes sont nées dans les oppositions radicales qui marquent les histoires du continent, l'identité européenne doit surpasser ces oppositions pour atteindre une dimension supérieure qui ne soit pourtant pas désincarnée. Charles de Gaulle, le Président français, demandait déjà « comment peut-on gouverner un pays qui a 246 variétés de fromage », on peut imaginer ce qu'il en est de l'Europe ; cette tâche est impossible, mais peut-être nécessaire.

Raconter l'histoire européenne

Pour cela, l'Europe n'a pas seulement besoin de consultants en communication, ou de sondeurs, elle a besoin de conteurs. Walter Benjamin, le grand philosophe allemand, faisait remarquer qu'après la Première Guerre mondiale, les conteurs étaient de moins en moins nombreux. Les histoires sont remplacées par l'information,

qui porte un sens beaucoup plus pauvre que les premières, mais se déroule sous nos yeux comme un fleuve sans barrage, à travers les chaînes d'information en continu. Les grands poètes comme Paul Valéry ont forgé la construction sémantique de l'Europe non pas par le biais de l'information, mais par des images vraies, partiellement, qui frappaient l'imagination, totalement. Ainsi, plutôt que de vouloir toujours dire une vérité sur des millions, par les sondages, par les enquêtes, par le marketing, peut-être faut-il dire une vérité sur une poignée.

Car l'Europe est trop souvent réduite à une mathématique par l'économie, par les marchés, les échanges, les déficits, les droits de douanes. L'Europe ne pourrait se comprendre qu'avec des chiffres. Pourtant, elle a toujours été, dans les siècles précédents, une littérature, des centaines de littératures, et c'est cela qui lui manque aujourd'hui.

Aussi, le travail d'universalisation de l'Europe subjective joue un rôle tout aussi important que le discours désincarné qui est parfois produit par les structures. L'Europe porte un nom, mais elle porte des centaines de millions de prénoms. C'est quelques-uns de ces prénoms, quelques-unes de ces expériences européennes, qu'il faut partager, autour de questions qui touchent tous les citoyens, comme celle du grille-pain suédois, racontée dans un ouvrage récent.

L'imaginaire pluridimensionnel européen

Une cuisine, des Européens, une vieille allemande qui discute en français avec de jeunes universitaires. Echanges de questions banales entre voyageurs, « d'où venez-vous ? ». Et cette dame qui répond. « Mon père venait de Stuttgart ». « Ma mère ». Silence. « Ma mère ». La vieille dame est là, debout, fragile, près du grille-pain suédois ; « Ma mère n'était pas ma mère, vous savez ? Je l'ai appris il y a peu. Mais. Bon, j'ai 69 ans. Mais vous savez, ce n'est pas parce qu'on est vieux qu'on n'a pas besoin de savoir qui sont nos parents ». Puis, elle raconte que, de cette mère, elle ne sait rien, sauf une date et une ville,

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Lund, un pays inconnu, la Suède. Le grille-pain suédois est une histoire qui est à la fois celle de cette femme, celle de millions d'Européens qui passent une frontière pour savoir qui ils sont, mais probablement aussi l'histoire du continent tout entier. Car l'Europe est la matière de l'Europe, celle d'un imaginaire qui ne livre pas immédiatement ses clefs.

Or, il suffit d'ouvrir les journaux, d'écouter les experts en politique qui officient dans tous les cafés d'Europe, d'allumer la télévision pour comprendre que l'incertitude est aujourd'hui largement partagée. Si le premier récit européen a été celui de la paix ; le second récit, celui de la prospérité, le troisième récit manque cruellement. La tentation est donc de retourner au premier récit, puisque le second semble hors de portée pour une partie des Européens. Pourtant, c'est bien un troisième récit qu'il faudrait écrire, et ce geste est éminemment politique.

Les institutions comme une forge de l'imaginaire européen

Ici se pose alors la question du rôle des institutions dans la construction de cet imaginaire, de ce nouveau récit. Il est double. Le premier rôle est de permettre aux œuvres de voyager, de rendre aux Européens le voyage possible vers leur propre découverte, à travers la traduction, les rencontres, les transpositions. 24 langues officielles sont autant de prismes au travers desquels les Européens peuvent saisir le monde qui les entoure et qu'ils forgent depuis des siècles, et il faut donc en permettre l'accès, donner à voir cette Europe. L'Europe cherche ses Alices pour ouvrir des portes sur son imaginaire. Celui-ci a autant de miroirs que de cultures, et il faut leur permettre de jouer leur part.

Dans un hôtel de Brest, en France, la gérante confiait qu'elle avait été invitée par des amis à Bruxelles, mais qu'elle ne viendrait jamais. Un mois auparavant, elle avait été prise d'angoisses lors de sa première visite de Paris, trop grand, trop peuplé. Elle me confiait « Et Paris, ce n'est que la capitale de la France. Alors la capitale de l'Europe. Vous imaginez ? Ça doit être grand comme New York ! A non, je n'irai jamais ». Cette expérience française, on peut l'entendre dans de multiples langues dans de nombreux coins de l'Europe.

La véritable image de Bruxelles, de ses petites maisons de briques, de ses trottoirs bigarrés de sacs multicolores, de ses trams à l'ancienne, de ses Eurocrates qui aiment aussi les frites, n'était jamais venue jusque-là. Brest est un Finistère, mais nous avons chacun le nôtre.

Le rôle des institutions, s'il doit en avoir un, c'est donc d'aider l'Europe à prendre conscience d'elle-même. En effet, l'Europe, c'est bien plus que des institutions, ces dernières en forment le puissant révélateur.

Construire des monuments européens

Le second rôle des institutions, tel que je l'imagine, c'est d'être une sorte de Richelieu, pour mener une politique artistique et monumentale propre qui puisse frapper les esprits. Il nous faudrait des bâtiments qui soient immédiatement reconnaissables, que l'on puisse donner à voir sur les pièces et sur les billets. Il faut que l'Europe devienne visible.

En visitant le mémorial des marins morts pour la France, à la pointe Saint Michel en Bretagne, je me disais qu'il nous faudrait un grand cénotaphe, une tombe sans corps, de tous les Européens qui ne sont pas morts parce que l'Europe a remisé la guerre au musée. Ainsi, les vivants pourraient rendre visite à leur doubles imaginaires qui seraient morts de n'avoir pas fait l'Europe.

Autre idée, imaginée lors d'un séminaire avec des étudiants européens à Berlin : faire un véritable quartier européen à Bruxelles, comme à Washington. Piétonner la rue de la Loi, construire un immense monument au centre du rond-point Schuman. Un symbole, européen, artistique, qu'on pourra caricaturer, adorer ou détester. Mais européen. Pour cela, il faudrait que les institutions jouent leur rôle de mécènes, créateurs d'une nouvelle Florence pour une nouvelle Renaissance européenne.

Probablement, cela n'est pas possible. Il n'y a pas de consensus, la crise économique est forte. Mais les conteurs ne sont pas des journalistes, ils ne sont pas des politiques. Et ils sont pourtant tellement nécessaires. Si ce n'est pas possible, donner des prénoms à l'Europe, traduire les conteurs d'une langue à l'autre, c'est pourtant nécessaire.

5 Think Tank Twitter

Think Tank Twitter (TTT) aims to provide regular information and updates on what is produced by think tanks and research centres across Europe (and beyond) on EU policy issues. As an analogy to the original Twitter, each summary – or tweet – does not exceed 140 words, rather than characters. Those who wish to signal new publications for possible inclusion can send them to the email address bepa-think-tank-twitter@ec.europa.eu

Modi's Moment? India's 2014 elections

From 7 April to 12 May 2014, the world's largest democracy, India, will hold parliamentary elections. After a successful 11 years in charge of the state of Gujarat, Narendra Modi, leader of the BJP, is widely touted to become the next Indian Prime Minister. Western opinions of Modi are shifting; the EU countries recently ended their boycott of him. If Modi becomes Prime Minister, his record suggests that he could be assertive and nationalistic. He is expected to pursue foreign investments to develop India's infrastructure and, in this regard, has long cultivated close ties with Japan. Modi can be expected to continue his strong rhetoric on Pakistan. He has slammed Beijing for its 'expansionist mindset', but is likely to try to rebalance commercial ties between the two countries.

<http://www.fride.org/publication/1188/modi%E2%80%99s-moment?-india%E2%80%99s-2014-elections>

From Subsidiarity to Better EU Governance: A practical reform agenda for the EU

The evolving political discussion surrounding subsidiarity has resulted in its support (ranging from passive to more active) from member states and the European Commission. The Commission's impact assessment is a useful tool to move towards Regulatory Fitness and Performance-type programmes to promote subsidiarity. To facilitate the yellow card procedure, the timeframe could be expanded, the grounds for a reasoned opinion could be widened to include proportionality, and the threshold could be lowered. However, member states are concerned with the perceived lack of Commission response or substantial follow up to the reasoned opinions during this procedure. With European Parliament elections in the offing and the start of a new Commission term later in the year, the momentum of 2014 can and should be used to intensify these discussions.

<http://www.ceps.eu/book/subsidiarity-better-eu-governance-practical-reform-agenda-eu>

Learning from Past Experiences: Ways to improve EU aid on reforms in the Eastern Partnership

This paper analyses the impact of EU reform mechanisms in five Eastern Partnership countries: Moldova, Georgia, Ukraine, Armenia and Azerbaijan. There is a shift in the EU's approach increasingly favouring a 'more for more' tactic, incentivising well implemented reform with the promise of further investment. A comparative picture of budget-support use proves that it helps with legal approximation to EU standards in various sectors. Highlighted concerns include: a lack of monitoring mechanisms for the implementation of budget support at national level (by civil society and the administration itself); and low social endorsement and visibility of EU-supported reforms, which results in low social pressure on government to complete reforms. This paper advises that goals be clear and focused, and implementation be better monitored and rewarded.

http://www.pism.pl/files/?id_plik=17080

US Views of Technology and the Future

This publication presents the findings from a survey of US public opinion about future technological advances. Despite their general optimism about the long-term impact of scientific advancement, many Americans are wary of some controversial changes that may be on the near-term horizon. Personal and commercial drones, robot caregivers and the issue of designer babies all garner negative opinions. The only significant difference between genders is found in opinions about wearable or implantable computing devices towards which women are pessimistic and men ambivalent. As for age differences, the study found that younger people were more optimistic about time travel than the old. Opinions relating to climate control are the most negative: just 19 percent of Americans believe that humans will be able to control the weather.

http://www.pewinternet.org/files/2014/04/PIP_US-Views-of-Technology-and-the-Future_041714.pdf

Missing a Generation in EU politics. How to involve young Europeans?

Political participation of European youth is worryingly low. Their scepticism about the balance of power among the European institutions and a lack of politicisation of the debate, have led to a loss of interest in EU elections. Following an analysis of the results of a pan-European youth survey, this paper suggests that there is a strong perception that young people and their interests are under-represented at the EU level. Furthermore, there seems to be a huge knowledge gap regarding the EU institutions, elections and politics that further keeps young people away from the ballot box. Proposals on how to tackle the issue are grouped under three main headings: widening the political dimension towards Europe; strengthening the representation of young Europeans; and improving information on elections.

<http://www.futurelabeurope.eu/downloads.html>

Closing Space: Democracy and human rights support under fire

After decades of growing global reach, the field of international support for democracy and human rights faces a worrisome trend: widening and increasingly assertive pushback around the developing and post-communist worlds. Following a wave of suspicion of externally assisted democratic promotion in the early 2000s, recipient governments are erecting barriers to international democracy and rights programmes that they deem too politically intrusive. Publicly vilified international aid groups and local partners engaged in democracy promotion, are harassed or closed down, and non-conforming international organisations are expelled altogether. With aid-receiving governments increasingly accusing aid providers of crossing lines with regard to the political nature of their assistance, the question arises of whether it is possible for aid providers to agree among themselves and with recipient governments where those lines should be drawn.

http://carnegieendowment.org/files/closing_space.pdf

Europe's Social Problem and its Implications for Economic Growth

Fiscal consolidation has generally attempted to spare social protection from spending cuts, but young Europeans have been more affected by cuts than the old. Income inequality is also on the rise. Before the crisis it was associated with higher household borrowing and has since resulted in lower consumption growth. This has provoked higher private debt, higher unemployment, poverty and more limited access to education, which undermine long-term growth. Addressing unemployment and poverty should remain a high priority because these problems undermine public debt sustainability and growth. Tax/benefit systems should be reviewed for improved efficiency, inter-generational equity and fair burden sharing between the wealthy and poor. These reforms are required at national level, but better coordination of demand management at European level is also necessary.

<http://www.bruegel.org/publications/publication-detail/publication/823-europes-social-problem-and-its-implications-for-economic-growth/>

The Eurosceptic Surge and How to Respond to it

Amid a growing mistrust in the EU, Eurosceptic sentiments are finding political expression that the authors categorise into four distinct groups: the far-right parties, emerging right-wing parties, conservative parties, and left-wing parties. By influencing mainstream politics, the populist parties do not need to command a majority in parliament to impose their agenda. The danger is that the response of the mainstream parties will be to retreat into technocratic cooperation and seek to continue business as usual rather than make space for real left-right debate. The impact that the Eurosceptics will have in the new European Parliament is dependent not just on their overall numbers, but also on their cohesiveness as a group. The challenge is to drive wedges between the Eurosceptics rather than encouraging them to form an anti-elite bloc.

[http://ecfr.eu/page/-/ECFR98 EUROSCPTIC BRIEF AW \(4\).pdf](http://ecfr.eu/page/-/ECFR98%20EUROSCEPTIC%20BRIEF%20AW%20(4).pdf)

6 BEPA News

Arrivals and departures

Graça Carvalho returns to BEPA, after having left in 2009 to carry out her mandate as MEP, and joins the Analysis team as Principal Adviser, where she will deal with higher education and the transition from education to employment; youth employment; social innovation; relations with the EP and developments in Portugal.

BEPA is also delighted to welcome Joanna Parkin, who joins the European Group on Ethics (EGE) team as Policy Analyst as of 16th April. We also welcome a new trainee to the Outreach Team, Theo Morrissey, who has a BA and MSc in geography and environmental policy.

Agnès Hubert, Adviser in the Analysis Team, retired from the Commission on 30th April. We wish her the best for the future.

Events

BEPA participated in the launch of Sentinel 1A from the Guyana Space Centre on 3rd April. 16 years since the start of the Copernicus programme, the first in a series of six Earth observation missions was put into orbit. This marks a milestone for the European spatial policy led by the European Commission, and illustrates its commitment to spatial activities. The Sentinel 1A is equipped with a radar imager to provide an all-weather day-and-night supply of imagery with applications ranging from sea ice, forest and oil spill monitoring to emergency humanitarian mapping and ship detection for security purposes. Once all four Copernicus satellites are launched, most physical processes at work on the Earth's surface (urban, ecological, oceanic, atmospheric, magnetic etc.) will be under constant observation.

On 7th April, President Barroso met ten representatives of the "Group of Eminent Persons of the Atlantic Basin Initiative". Among others, José Maria Aznar, former Prime Minister of Spain and Chair of the Group; Jerzy Buzek, former President of the European Parliament; Jean Ping, former President of the United Nations General Assembly; Paula Dobriansky, former US Undersecretary of State for Democracy and Global Affairs; and Miguel Ángel Rodríguez, former President of Costa Rica, presented the

"Atlantic Declaration" to President Barroso. This Declaration and a call for action titled "Generating Growth, Human Development and Security in the Atlantic Hemisphere" were adopted last month. Five areas were identified to strengthen the Atlantic framework: energy access and diversification; economic growth and human development; the common heritage of the Atlantic Ocean; promoting human security; and the need to cultivate cultures of lawfulness and effective democratic governance.

The sixth Science & Technology Advisory Council (STAC) meeting took place on 14th April and included a working lunch with President Barroso and Vice-President Kroes. The STAC members discussed the upcoming report which will focus on foresight and the six themes (access and use of resources; production and consumption; housing; mobility and communication; societal participation; and health and healthcare) covered during the Foresight Network seminars that took place in late March and early April. The workshop results will feed into the next Eurobarometer survey focusing on European citizens' perceptions on science and technology innovation and their impact on the future of the EU. The STAC meeting took place in the context of the upcoming conference titled "Science is the Future of Europe", which is co-organised by BEPA, the CSA team and the JRC, on behalf of President Barroso.

Forthcoming Events

The presentation of the second volume of the European Commission's history, covering the period from 1973 to 1986, will be held on 14th May in the presence of President Barroso. Spanning from the first enlargement of the Union to the signature of the Single European Act, this volume analyses the deepening of the European project at a determining stage of the integration process. The first volume is available on the EU's Bookshop website: <http://bookshop.europa.eu/bistoire>

The Opinion on the Ethics of Security and Surveillance Technologies, developed by the European Group on Ethics (EGE), will be delivered and presented to President Barroso on 20th May.