



Political Demands For EU reform EUDemocrats, June 2007

*(Research on transparency, subsidiarity & democracy by Anaïs Camus, research on diversity Codruta Liliana Filip)
The 30 demands described hereafter were adopted by the EUD congress in June 2007.*

The following demands are not meant to show an ideal vision of what the EU could be, but the first practical steps to improve and reform the current status.

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WHO ARE THE EUDEMOCRATS

We believe in a “Europe of the citizens”: The agenda of the European Union is far away from the needs and concerns of ordinary people. We want to establish and maintain a network connected directly to the citizens. By joining forces through international cooperation we will campaign for a ‘Europe of the citizens’. - **It is time to act:** The present deficit of democracy in the EU, which is mirrored to a lesser degree in many member states, is a concern shared by citizens and organisations across the EU. Many political organisations and individuals share our goals aimed at the improvement of democracy and basic citizens’ rights. **We connect activists from all across the EU:** As an EU-wide umbrella organisation, the EUDemocrats provides a political platform for those groups and activists that are pro-European and pro-

democracy. We bring people together and organise international campaigns as well as a broad exchange of ideas and know-how.

- A party for international cooperation:

The EUDemocrats is formally a European political party, operating on a transnational level. As a European party, we function as a service-provider to our members: NGOs, parties and individuals from across the EU.

Many opinions one mutual goal: In a network of independent partners, many EUD members and affiliates follow different political directions, but we all agree on one shared belief: For the sake of Europe it is important to reintroduce a Citizens' Agenda into the politics of the future. - **Our political**

spectrum: Our members represent a range of political views from the centre left to the centre right. They all agree to rally behind the statute and political platform of the EUD, which leaves aside all ideological left/right issues to create a common platform in favour of democracy. - **We focus solely on the**

issue of democracy: We want a democratic environment structured around the people and the clear expression of their will. We want to safeguard and strengthen fundamental democratic principles and ensure that citizens are accountably represented across Europe and in the member states.

Overview

*Our over-all objective is to create a more democratic political system for the EU, which rests on four pillars, represented by the four petals of the flower that is the EUD-logo. Those pillars are **transparency, subsidiarity, democracy and diversity**. These concepts are fundamental for improving democracy. Transparency and subsidiarity are two prerequisites for a more democratic Europe and that is why it is important to safeguard and improve them. A better EU cannot be achieved without reforming the institutions in a more democratic manner, which is why we have highlighted democracy as an independent concept. Finally, a more democratic Europe will maintain, as a consequence, the preservation and the promotion of diversity and the respect of every national and local, cultural and religious, traditional and linguistic particularity. Thus, if these concepts and their application in the EU were improved, the whole political climate in the EU would change to the benefit of the citizens. We begin with a brief summary of the concepts and their meaning.*

TRANSPARENCY

Transparency implies that citizens are allowed and able to know what is occurring with the governing entities. In general terms, rules, debates, decisions and budgets must be clear and made available to the public. Informed citizens can efficiently fulfil their duty and appeal to their rights. Furthermore, a transparent political system is a system that cannot be arbitrary or nepotistic since it is checked by the people. Thus, the EUD favours any means that would improve transparency on the European level.

SUBSIDIARITY

Subsidiarity is a basic principle of a political system that rests on devolution and is particularly important in the case of the EU. Indeed, it ensures that specific competences stay close to the citizens. It means that a given

competence should be placed at the lowest level of government whenever possible. With regards to democracy, the proper use of subsidiarity is a guarantee that the voice of the citizens can be heard. Moreover, it also means that a powerful centralising entity can never be implemented.

DEMOCRACY

A democracy is a political organisation ruled by the people. It has taken many forms throughout history from direct democracy to representative democracy. The latter is the most common form of modern democracy and implies the transfer of the sovereignty of the people to representative organs of government. Power is thus usually shared by three main bodies: the executive, the legislative and the judiciary. It is necessary to make sure that none of these bodies can increase its responsibilities and that their powers are separated by implementing a process of checks and balances.

DIVERSITY

Diversity represents the heritage of each member state regarding culture, tradition and language. Economically, socially and politically speaking diversity is a necessary competitive advantage in the process of globalisation. Each country can compete in the international arena with its own models and values. Therefore, it is of high importance to be tolerant of diversity, to accept it and to preserve it. The harmonisation and integration process that takes place across the EU should exclude diversity and should promote it instead of fighting it.

Preliminary Remarks:

Transparency is synonymous with openness, communication and accountability. Transparency is a precondition for participation in political processes by the media and the public. Transparent procedures include open meetings, access to documents, financial disclosure statements, freedom of information legislation, budgetary review, audits, etc. - Transparency has become easier through the development of electronic media and should not be limited anymore. - According to J. Fox (Civil Society and Political Accountability), transparency is a mean towards accountability. - Finally, the topic of transparency – or more specifically: lack of transparency - goes hand in hand with the problems of corruption.

Transparency in the EU:

Disclosure of information: Presently, transparency in the European Union is the exception rather than the rule. Indeed, the majority of laws and decisions are still made in secret. Even the documents that are made public are not categorised or even properly organised. Thus, citizens who wish to know more about the EU have difficulties finding information. According to Jens-Peter Bonde MEP, “85 % of all EU laws are de facto decided in 300 secret working groups in the Council”. Within the Union, secret groups are a real obstacle to transparency and democracy. Indeed, these groups are present in the Council and the Commission and are in no way accountable to the citizens. Furthermore, the civil servants are widely influenced by lobby groups that are barely controlled and not transparent. Their interests, resources and

incomes are not made public and they do not have to register with the Commission nor with the Parliament if they choose not to.

The field of Lobbyism: Lobby groups, if uncontrolled; present a problem for the EU. Even though they play an important role in any democracy, they need to be controlled in order to avoid any abuses of the system. In EU Commissioner Siim Kallas' words, we need to avoid NGOs receiving funds from the Commission despite the fact that the NGOs' main task is described as 'lobbying the Commission'. We need to avoid the harmful paradox of the "Commission paying lobbies in order to be lobbied".

The question remains, how long will it take to accept this realisation and to have real reform of the situation? Currently there are approximately 15,000 lobbyists in Brussels (consultants, lawyers, associations, corporations, NGOs etc.) seeking to influence the EU's legislative process. Some 2,600 special interest groups have a permanent office in Brussels.

Their distribution is roughly as follows: European trade federations (32%), consultants (20%), companies (13%), NGOs (11%), national associations (10%), regional representations (6%), international organizations (5%) and think tanks (1%). Lobby groups represent specific interests and cannot, by nature, be organized democratically. Thus, they are not, in themselves, representative of the whole population. There is a risk, then, that a lobby group which represents only 2% of the population can impose its will thanks to the "unlimited" resources of large companies.

Whistleblowing: In some democracies there is a tradition of what is called "whistleblowing". In other words, civil servants are allowed to express their concerns and raise problems when they believe that the administration is participating in questionable activities. However, the Union used to prohibit this tradition. Whistleblowers were actually prosecuted and punished by the very institutions they were trying to criticise (see the cases of Marta Andreasen, Paul van Buitenen or Bernard Connolly). Back then, it was illegal for civil servants to report cases of even to the bodies charged with controlling the administration on such matters such as the Court of Auditors, the Ombudsman, the Parliament or the Budget Control Committee. The situation has been improved. Now, the official and only legal channel for civil servants to criticize practice in the institutions is either to raise the criticisms towards their own supervisors or to complain to OLAF (the European Anti-Fraud Office). However, the reputation of OLAF is not without doubt concerning their independence and neutrality (see the case of "Der Stern" journalist Hans-Martin Tillack). Their procedures, organization and role were put into question, and the Commission has promised time and again to improve the situation which it has taken some steps towards doing. Thus, in theory protection of whistleblowers has been improved, though only time will tell if this is so in practice.

A report about the BBC showed that the objectivity of information published about the EU by the broadcaster was questionable. Indeed, BBC has been accused of only showing positive information about the EU (for more information: <http://biased-bbc.blogspot.com/> and the "Vote no" report). This phenomenon is linked to the fact that to criticise the Union is often mistaken

with being anti-European and therefore prevents the spread of any critical views on the EU.

Corruption: In an article, D. Lebegue, President of Transparency International-France, draws a mixed picture of corruption in the EU. Indeed, some European countries, such as Finland, are amongst the least corrupt countries in the world. However, ten EU countries are still below the international average. At the EU level there have been many instances where money was wasted through the misuse of subsidies, fraud and corruption. Many of these cases could be avoided with increased transparency.

Following these criticisms from various sources, the Commission published a Green Paper on the topic of transparency. This was followed by the implementation of the European Transparency Initiative. Even if this initiative, which provides more transparency about the beneficiaries of EU money, is a step in the right direction, it only tackles the tip of the iceberg of the whole transparency issue.

(http://ec.europa.eu/commission_barroso/kallas/transparency_en.htm).

14 demands for more transparency:

A. Disclosure of information:

1.) **Transparency by the disclosure of information needs to be the rule** rather than the exception. In other words, all the meetings, documents, agendas, minutes should be made public.

2.) **Transparency should also be applied to the EU budget and spending.** Citizens have the right to know where their money goes. Furthermore, this would allow for a better surveillance of EU funds (Bonde).

3.) On specific and sensible political issues, secrecy can be desirable. **Reasoned exceptions to disclosure of information can be decided by a qualified majority of the European Parliament** or through an improved co-decisional procedure. This ensures that they will not be applied too lightly. Thus this implemented procedure would be a protection rather than an obstacle to greater transparency.

4.) **The secrecy of the Working Groups must be limited or even forbidden.** Today, 85% of all EU laws are de facto prepared by 300 secret groups in the Commission. By limiting their secrecy, the process of decision-making would be more transparent and less power would be given to unelected actors (Bonde).

5.) **The protection of “whistleblowers” should be further improved within the EU.** Indeed, to ease their intervention would encourage internal criticism which would have a beneficial effect and would give the institutions more credibility with the citizen.

6.) **The powers given to the EU’s control-agencies should be reinforced and respected.** The independence of these institutions from the European organs of government has to be ensured, and it could be achieved through the growing influence of national parliaments over these control-agencies.

7.) **Transparency has to go hand in hand with clarity and simplification.** Availability of all the documents is not enough. They have to be edited and presented in a reader- and citizen-friendly manor. Transparency is not only a matter of quantity but of quality as well.

8.) It must be **ensured that the information spread by the EU about itself is impartial**. All opinions (not just those that are uncritical) should find their way into publications so as to avoid unlimited EU propaganda.

B.) Lobbying:

9.) The **EU institutions should consult widely** before proposing legislation and making decisions. "Widely" in this respect does not only refer to numbers but to a range of viewpoints and interests. The most powerful and rich lobbyists should not be the only ones heard.

Furthermore, the representation of small interest groups should be ensured.

10.) A **compulsory accreditation system** should be implemented in the Parliament, the Commission and the Council. A document containing the names, functions, interests and the funding of European lobby groups should be available at anytime. It should also contain the topics they focus on.

11.) A **special concern about transparent lobbying should be directed to corporate lobbyists** to ensure that the decisions are made in the interest of the citizens and not only in the interest of corporations.

(Alter EU, Alliance for Lobbying Transparency and Ethic Regulation, a coalition of more than 140 civil society groups - <http://www.alter-eu.org/statement>).

C.) Corruption:

12.) A **blacklist of companies, individuals, political parties and organisations which practice corruption** should be extended to every member state. This demand follows recommendations made by Transparency International. The list would make sure that faulty companies and organisations would not get public funding on the European level.

13.) **Corruption should be tackled with more consequences** by the EU institutions. Candidate countries that promise to implement changes but do not realise them after accession should have to face real consequences in respect to support and subsidies from the EU.

Furthermore, the EU should give more incentives to member states to deal with their corruption issues.

14.) **Immunity guaranteed to all EU civil servants must be abolished**. According to the "Protocol on the privileges and immunities of the European Communities" of April the 8th, 1965, every single civil servant is protected by the EU from prosecution in relation to their official actions, including their spoken and written remarks. However, regarding the actual size of the European administration today this anachronism from the 1960s can only enhance possible fraud and corruption.

SUBSIDIARITY

Preliminary Remarks:

Subsidiarity is a principle which originally states that matters ought to be kept as close to the citizens as possible. It is applied in order to achieve a bottom-up structure and to limit top-down governance. In its traditional meaning it underlines the supremacy of the individuals (and for that matter, the citizens) over every decision-making authority. The supremacy and sovereignty of the citizens is a basic correlate of direct participatory democracy.

Subsidiarity is also a principle used to determine the sharing of competences in a federation or in a decentralised state. In the case of the latter, subsidiarity

aims at giving more power (back) to the lower entity, at last the citizen, and thus leads to better conditions for the use of direct participatory democracy.

Subsidiarity in Europe:

In the context of Europe, subsidiarity implies that “in areas which do not fall within its exclusive competence, the Community shall take action, in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity, only if and in so far as the objectives of the proposed action cannot be sufficiently achieved by the Member States and can therefore, by reason of the scale or effects of the proposed action, be better achieved by the Community” (art.5, EC Treaty). However, more than 70% of all new laws come from the EU. At the same time the citizens are more remote from the EU than ever and do not feel connected to what is happening in Brussels. Only a tiny minority understands the procedures of decision making at the EU level. In addition the EU's obsession with regulating all details of day-to-day life annoys many citizens and makes them fear losing their cultural identity.

The idea of an early warning system on breaches of subsidiarity included in the draft of the EU Constitution is, although an improvement, not sufficient and a devaluation of the national parliaments. It more or less suggests a petition of parliaments - legally elected by the people - to the Commission, i.e. to a group of unelected unaccountable bureaucrats in Brussels. Even if parliaments have the right to file suits against the Commission's decision, it is the European Court of Justice who ultimately rules on the question, and they have the duty to promote European integration and thus, to favour the delegation of power to the EU.

In Europe, there are three kinds of power: the power given exclusively to the EU, the powers that remain at the member state level and shared powers. By shared power, one must understand that the EU and the member states are both entitled to regulate a specific topic. As they share the power, some rules had to be implemented to ensure that they both regulate only when necessary and with respect to each other's integrity. This is where the principle of 'subsidiarity' becomes more important. Indeed, within the field of shared competence, the EU and the member states have to apply the principle of subsidiarity to know which level of government is the best suited to make a specific decision. However, when in doubt, the powers should always remain at the lowest level, as it is difficult for member states to prove that subsidiarity is not respected by the EU and as it is ultimately up to the Court of Justice to decide whether or not the principle has been breached. This is important since, with no defences against the EU interventions, the member states could end up being de facto deprived of many competences.

The EU needs more flexibility. The more flexible the EU is, the fewer domains fall under the exclusive competences of the EU and the more opportunities arise to use subsidiarity. One method of promoting greater flexibility is the use of “opt-outs”. An opt-out is a temporary or permanent exemption from a treaty provision. This has been used many times: opt-outs of the UK, Sweden and Denmark from the euro zone; the position of the UK and Ireland concerning visa, asylum, immigration and other questions relating to the free movement of persons; or the Danish opt-outs from the defence, EU citizenship, the Euro and police cooperation. However, at present it is difficult to push through any

opt-out, and it seems to be reserved only for countries with political weight superior to the others.

A flexible Europe, however, could turn into a multi-speed Europe. This idea is widely debated. Amongst the advocates of this option one can find two different groups. The 'hard core' integrationists who believe that a multi-speed Europe is needed to save time as it allows some countries to go faster while others can take the time needed to apply measures and policies. The other group of proponents of the multi-speed options, the more critical ones, wants to make sure that their countries are able to opt out of those policies that do not suit their interests.

The opponents are also divided into two distinct groups. Those who fear that a multi-speed Europe will create a privileged inner circle, and those who believe that if they opt-out they will be left behind and their voices will go unheard. Thus, they end up in a more integrated Europe than they would wish. Finally, there is a third group who believes that a multi-speed Europe is only the first step to the ultimate break-up of the Union or a return to a simple trade bloc.

Despite this debate, in reality the European Union - de facto - is already working within multi-speed framework and to the benefit of the EU (see the use of aforementioned opt-outs). Thus, there is an urgent need to set up general and clear rules for this framework.

Subsidiarity is usually used within a federation as a safeguard against over-centralisation.

Yet despite the so called "subsidiarity", the EU is getting more and more centralised. National laws and constitutions, which have been democratically approved, are now fully subordinate to regulations and directives issued by a technocracy, a development which has become increasingly pronounced under the ongoing integration. The sharing of competences between the EU and the Member States is hardly clear and far from being comprehensive.

The rules for shared competences can be either written in a constitution or a treaty or left unregulated. Some argue that it is better left unregulated since dialogue and case by case regulation can be enough, ensuring the fragile equilibrium between efficiency and freedom.

However, in the case of a vague formulation of the regulation, "fake subsidiarity" can easily turn into an instrument of centralisation. Others argue that there is a need for constitutional rules, which might prevent the 'misuse' of instruments by politicians, bureaucrats and interest groups.

General de Gaulle once said that there will be no Europe as long as the European citizens are not directly associated to the European decision making process. Indeed, citizens seem to have been left out of the process (Stephen Boucher, *Notre Europe*) and a more accurate use of subsidiarity will bring them back in.

8 demands for real subsidiarity:

1.) *The use of **means to create a more flexible Europe must be simplified.** A flexible, Europe with variable geometry is necessary for the subsidiarity principle to be more efficient. Such means could be opt-outs, multi-lateral collaborations between willing states, cooperation of bordering regions etc.*

2.) *There must be **general rules for the use of a priori and a posteriori opt-outs.** Each member state, no matter their size, has the right to withdraw from a policy that they view harmful. Therefore we favour the thoughtful and responsible use of opt-outs. Furthermore, the use of opt-outs must not be exclusively possible before the adoption of a policy (a priori opt-out) but after the adoption of the policy (a posteriori opt-out) as well.*

3.) ***Over-regulation must be reduced.** - The existing *acquis communautaire* should be reviewed by an independent body to assess whether its regulations are really necessary to make life more effective and efficient for the citizens. In case of doubt the right to initiate law should be given back to the national parliaments, in accordance with subsidiarity, where there is no reason to keep it on EU level.*

4.) ***Keep it lean: Sunset clauses** or in other words, clauses that ensure that a given policy or law would automatically become irrelevant after a certain amount of time or after its re-evaluation in terms of subsidiarity. In the same way, measures should be taken to ensure that after a specific time, talks that do not lead to concrete results should be reconsidered or given up. Initiatives that are not finalised at the end of a legislative period must be given up.*

5.) ***Member state's competences must be clearly determined** in a treaty to prevent any possible intervention of the EU institutions in domains that are not under their jurisdiction.*

European treaties clearly state that the EU can only act when clearly empowered by the Member States. However, neither the former treaties nor the Constitution clearly defined and thus protected the power that should remain in the hands of the member states. By clearly defining competences, member states could be sure that the EU cannot interfere in matters that are important to national states.

6.) ***The flexibility clause must be abolished.** Despite the name, the clause is not at all an instrument of flexibility. On the contrary, the flexibility clause undermines the principles of subsidiarity and conferral of powers and it allows the EU to intervene in any domain when judged necessary. This thus contributes to the Union's overuse of prerogative and endangers the sharing of competences between the Member States and the European Institutions.*

7.) *An **independent body should be established whose purpose would be to check the good use of subsidiarity** and the respect of each level's competences. This body should be composed of independent arbiters ready to rule on their own conscience. In case of doubt the decision should always be taken in favour of the lower level - closer to the citizens.*

8.) ***Member States, Regions, communities and citizens must be allowed to appeal an independent subsidiarity control body.** It is important that not only national parliaments but all the levels of power, down to the citizens themselves, be allowed to put into question the application of subsidiarity on a specific topic. Indeed, the delegations of competences do not only apply between the EU and member states but between all levels of government.*

DEMOCRACY

Preliminary Remarks:

In basic terms, 'democracy' is used when talking about a political organisation made by the people and for the people. However, democracy can take many different meanings depending on the author or the context in which it is studied. One of the fundamental pillars of a democratic regime is the separation of powers, even if it is not an absolute prerequisite. In other words, the executive (the power to apply laws), the legislative (the power to make laws) and the judiciary (the power to interpret laws) must enjoy a definite independence. Throughout the literature no consensus has been reached on the necessary degree of this independence.

Usually and in theory, the legislative has the power to write laws, approve treaties, enact taxes, authorize borrowing, vote on the budget, appoint and check the executive and appoint judges. The executive, on the other hand, has the power to veto laws, propose the budget, edit executive orders and (also) to appoint judges. Finally the judiciary has the power to determine if a law is constitutional, how it should be applied, nullify it when necessary and is protected against any arbitrary dismissal.

Furthermore, the organisation of a democratic regime can vary from parliamentarianism to presidentialism via hybrid and complex forms such as semi-presidentialism, consociational parliamentarianism etc. Many authors argue that the European Union is an Unidentified Political Object (Schmitter); its (un-)democratic nature is therefore hard to study.

Democracy in Europe:

Our main objective is to make the EU more democratic by giving more power to the citizens. The four means to achieve this are basic democratic principles, transparency, subsidiarity and respect of diversity. The latter three are an integral part of democracy itself but - given their importance - are treated as independent concepts. Then, if we take the basic principles of democracy in the context of the EU there are two major institutional aspects.

Firstly, the separation of powers between the three branches of government. Secondly, the question of which characteristics a European model for democracy must have.

The separation of powers in the European Union is highly deficient. Indeed, the Commission is too powerful and not sufficiently accountable, the European Parliament cannot initiate laws and has few means of checking the Commission, the Court of Justice's role consists among others in enhancing further integration and, finally the Council of Ministers has a questionable role mixing legislative and executive competences since national executives can play a legislative role at the European level.

Furthermore, national parliaments that are elected by and accountable to the citizens have few avenues to voice their opinions on the European agenda. Finally, and most importantly, European citizens have lost their place in the European decision-making process.

This is reinforced by the absence of a European *demos* or, in other words a single European people.

European and national leaders tend to justify their undemocratic means by supposed democratic ends. However, the EUD does not see this as a democratic way of governing a political entity. The European Constitution has

been a perfect example of how the EU lacks democracy. Indeed, the citizens have not been consulted and the process of drafting the text was hardly transparent. Furthermore, only a few countries made the decision to submit it to a referendum instead of leaving the citizens further behind.

The political organisation of the European Union cannot be efficiently applied as long as the path toward a clear political organisation is not decided. Whether the European Union is supposed to become a Europe of nation-states or a United States of Europe will require different adjustments with regards to democracy.

The EUD is obviously in favour of a Europe of democracies and considers the creation of a European superstate with its "European nationalism" as a further threat to democracy, especially in a situation in which the EU apparatus is not legitimised keeping it too far away from the citizens and unable not fulfil the most modest of democratic standards. However, it must also be mentioned that the democracy in member states is far from being close to the people.

Many citizens of EU member states do not feel they are represented by their governments either. This was proven by recent polls. For example, in Germany 80% of the citizens think that their representatives do not "represent" their interests and that they cannot influence political decision making at all (released in December 2006). As long as democracy on a national level is in such a deplorable condition, it would be foolish, even dangerous, to give more power to an even more uncontrollable supranational federation.

6 demands for more democracy:

1.) Democratic procedures and accountability at the national level must be improved. *Indeed, the European Union cannot be democratic if its member states are not democratic themselves. It is up to the citizens of each member state - and therefore the task of EUD member organisations - to fight for more accountability, transparency, subsidiarity and finally democracy in their own countries.*

2.) The separation of the powers between the different European institutions must be improved. *The co-decision procedure between the European Parliament and the European Council must be enhanced (in fields that are under the EU's competences). The predominance of the Commission must be limited and the independence of the European Court of Justice has to be ensured.*

3.) The national Parliaments should have the powers to appoint and dismiss their member of the commission to link it to the voters. The European Parliament should have the power to dismiss single commissioners to make them accountable as individuals.

4.) The nation state, as the primary recipient of popular sovereignty, must be able to influence the European decisions. *Thus, we should reinstate the importance to respect subsidiarity, to clearly establish the sharing of competences between the EU and the member states and to promote any means that would allow nation-states to protect their interests.*

5.) A member of a national executive branch should not be allowed to play a legislative role at the European level without an explicit mandate from his or her national parliament.

Currently the Council of Ministers, which is composed of national ministers, plays a legislative role on EU level. This is obviously in disrespect of the separation of powers. However, if these executives were to receive the explicit delegation of competences in any way from their respective national parliaments, it would be a first step towards democracy.

*6.) The creation of direct links of checks and balances between the EU level and its citizens via **the implementation of popular initiative and referenda** (but only in domains that are of exclusive EU competence) must be encouraged and regulated. It is important that the citizens are heard in Europe. Thus, the creation of a direct link between the EU and the citizens would enhance democracy since citizens could directly participate in the EU decision-making process.*

DIVERSITY

Preliminary Remarks:

The concept of diversity encompasses acceptance and respect. It means understanding that each individual is unique and the recognition of our individual differences. These differences can be of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs, or other ideologies among states. Moreover, diversity is the exploration of these differences in a safe, positive and nurturing environment. It is about understanding each other and moving beyond simple tolerance to embracing and celebrating the rich dimensions of diversity contained within each country. Diversity also includes the insight that a multiplicity of cultural aspects is an attribute that characterises Europe and has made it successful throughout the centuries. Certainly, the categories of differences are not always fixed but can also be fluid. Finally, every state has a right to maintain its identity with all its individual characteristics. Above all: there must be no doubt that any culture is superior to another.

Diversity in the EU:

The EU always (in theory) celebrates the diversity of European culture. “Unity in diversity” is the new motto promoted by the European Commission. However, the excess of regulation through integration is (in practice) a threat to diversity. The motto “Unity in diversity” is a bureaucratic formula fraught with ambiguities and problematic assumptions about the nature of culture, central to which is the question of how far, if at all, cultural diversity can be reconciled with the quest for unity.

Indeed, some scientists and politicians argue that any sustainable democratic political system needs a social and cultural homogeneity. In their opinion the differences between the EU member states must be reduced so as to create a definite sense of cultural belonging between the European peoples, which equates to a European identity. For others, democracy can be implemented in a highly diverse political system on the basis of basic shared values.

The latter are naturally opposed to the concept of an “ever closer Union” through the creation of a forced European identity. The EUDemocrats stands for the second position which promotes diversity among EU member states.

The point of departure of most discussions on European diversity vs. European identity is the above-mentioned idea that a political community needs a common set of values and references to ensure its coherence, to

guide its actions and to endow them with legitimacy and meaning. Thus, the relationship between these two concepts must stay central to the debate about the construction of a European identity. Some questions then become essential: Firstly, do EU citizens need a European identity or more knowledge about each member state's culture, models and history enough?

Secondly, how can a European identity be established, if more countries are to join the EU? Do the citizens want a huge EU with little integration or a small and highly integrated EU? What do the people really want? How can the EU avoid smaller countries feeling threatened by the creation of cultural hegemony by the bigger states?

We also want to stress that the problem of self-determination among the citizens as well as respect and promotion of diversity of any kind arises not only on the EU level but is also an internal problem of some member states. Therefore, due to the sensitivity and the difficulty of the subject, we believe that the question of diversity should be addressed both to EU leaders and the member states. In light of the above-mentioned reasons we have only two demands.

2 demands on diversity

1.) **No European identity at the cost of cultural diversity.** *The EU may not create artificial "European identity" at the cost of the member states' different cultural identities.*

The EU may not enlarge the scope of its power and authority by isolating and classifying the specific domain of "European culture" and then establishing programs to intervene. An EU cultural policy must not be misused to bolster the legitimacy of the EU project. Whatever the EU is promoting on a supra-national level (e.g. an EU history book, cultural standards etc.) must respect the identity of the member states with all their traditions and specific values.

2.) **Any "European Citizenship" process should be fully endorsed by the people of each country or, otherwise, it should be dismantled.** *Indeed, we don't mean that traditions and values should never change, but that they should only change if initiated by the citizens of the member states, i.e. always in a bottom-up dynamic and never in a top down one.*

SUMMARY

30 EUD demands towards a democratic EU

If the following demands are realised, most of today's problems will be solved.

14 demands on transparency:

- 1.) Transparency in the **disclosure of information** must be the rule not the exception.
- 2.) Transparency should also be applied to the **EU budget and spending**.
- 3.) Reasoned **derogations to transparency** can be decided by a qualified majority of the European parliament.
- 4.) **Secret working groups** must be limited or even forbidden.
- 5.) The protection of **whistle-blowers** should be further improved in the EU.
- 6.) The powers given to **EU's control agencies** must be reinforced and respected. They must be controlled by national parliaments.

- 7.) Transparency has to go hand in hand with **clarity and simplification** of information.
- 8.) **Information released by the EU must be impartial** to avoid unlimited propaganda.
- 9.) The EU institutions should listen to a **wide range of opinions** before proposing any legislation.
- 10.) A compulsory public **lobbyist accreditation system** should be implemented in all EU institutions.
- 11.) A **special control on corporate lobbying** should be installed.
- 12.) A **blacklist of companies which practiced corruption** should be extended to every member states.
- 13.) **Corruption should be tackled more efficiently** by the EU on all levels including the EU level itself.
- 14.) The **immunity of EU civil servants** has to be abolished.

8 demands on subsidiarity:

- 15.) The use of any means to create a more **flexible Europe** must be simplified (opt-outs, bilateral and multilateral cooperation etc.).
- 16.) We need generalised rules for a priori (before adoption) and a posteriori (after adoption of a treaty) **opt-outs**.
- 17.) **Over-regulation** must be reduced. The existing *acquis communautaire* must be revised; pure red tape laws must be scrapped.
- 18.) **Sun-set clauses** and other measures must be implemented to keep EU law as lean as possible.
- 19.) The **member state's competences** must be clearly listed in a treaty or a constitution so as to prevent any possible intervention of the EU in domains that are not of their jurisdiction.
- 20.) The **flexibility clause** must be abolished to limit the EU's power of intervening into any domain if they think proper.
- 21.) An independent body should be implemented to check **the good use of subsidiarity**.
- 22.) Member states, regions, communes and citizens must be **allowed to appeal** to this independent body.

6 demands on democracy:

- 23.) Democratic procedures and the accountability **on national levels** should be improved by the civil society of the member states.
- 24.) The **separation of powers** between the different European institutions must be improved. The predominance of the Commission must be limited.
- 25.) National Parliaments **appoint and dismiss their member of the Commission**. The European Parliament has the power to dismiss single commissioners.
- 26.) The member states, as legitimate bodies should be **able to influence** decisions on European level.
- 27.) A member of a national executive branch must **not be allowed to play a legislative role** on EU level without a mandate of the national parliament.
- 28.) **Popular initiative and referendum** must be introduced. They must be limited to the areas of exclusive competence of the EU.

2 demands on diversity:

- 29.) The EU **may not create an artificial “European identity” at the cost of the member states’ cultural identity.**
- 30.) Any **“European Citizenship”** process should be fully endorsed by the people of each country or, otherwise, it should be dismantled.