

MAGAZINE OF THE
YOUNG EUROPEAN FEDERALISTS
ISSUE 2/2006

thenewfederalist

new series
VOX POPULIS



E-GOVERNANCE
PETITION
DEMOCRACY
ELECTIONS
POLITICAL BLOGGING

JEUF

PARTICIPATION

WHAT'S IN HERE?

contents

03 **dear reader** daniela grech

04 **constitution? straight to the emergency room!** jan seifert

EVOLVING EUROPE

05 **europe and the sauna** george kipouros

06 **a european in the italian parliament** daniela grech

09 **change in italy and a visit to ventotene** federico brunelli

10 **a hope for democracy in belarus** vaida jazepcikaite

11 **hungarian parliamentary (s)elections** daniel bartha

12 **what caused the turmoil in france** fabien cazenave & damien routisseau

13 **the plight of polish workers in ireland** elizabeth lannoo

14 **europe and asylum: a promise betrayed** jean pierre gautci

EVOLVING

REACHING EUROPE

15 **e-governance for eu democracy** asimakis valavanis

16 **do eu blog?** jon worth

17 **the next generation** anne-christine roisin

18 **european civil service - a wonderful project** jessica pennet

REACHING

THINKING FEDERALIST

19 **vox populis** radostina zhelyazkova

21 **second citizens' convention in vienna** friedhelm frischenschlager & reinout prez

22 **european parliament, quo vadis?** emmanuel vallens & anders ekberg

24 **the services directive: take it or leave it** lieven tack

FEDERALIST

ACTIVE JEF

25 **the jef europe foundation** thomas heissmeier

26 **two stars make a supernova** ecatarina matcov

27 **life in jef sections** vaida jazepcikaite

28 **contact**

ACTIVE JEF

WHAT'S THIS?

thenewfederalist

The New Federalist is a publication of the Young European Federalists (JEF-Europe). It is sent to all JEF-Europe sections and members as well as to international politicians, political parties, governmental and non-governmental organisations and institutions.

Opinions expressed in the TNF are – except if otherwise stated – the personal opinions of the authors, which are not necessarily the same as those of JEF-Europe, the JEF-Europe Executive Bureau or the Board of Editors.

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EDITORIAL

dear reader



DANIELA GRECH

Editor in Chief

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Welcome to the summer edition of The New Federalist! As you will see, the team behind this issue has built on the great work done by the previous Editorial Boards, both in terms of content but especially in terms of layout, to provide you with a new issue of the magazine of the Young European Federalists which we hope will attract and interest more and more of you with each edition.

The June number is brought to you by a new editorial board resident in all parts of Europe, and we are very proud to have been able to overcome many difficult obstacles and distractions, including full-time jobs, university exams, crashed computers and the World Cup(!) to get the articles and opinions of our contributors in time for you to enjoy them during the summer months!

As I write this piece, the Council has come to an end, and the only achievement that might be described as so was the “experimental” opening up of the Council meetings in co-decisions procedures. Votes and deliberations as well as legislative proposals are now to be made public. While this is some sort of step ahead, it still not enough, especially when one sees the dismal result reached as regards the prolongation of the “reflection period” until the end of 2008. Hence, while waiting for the Big Break in Europe, or actually...for anything to happen that might be remotely considered as a success for the future of the EU, the contributions of our June issue focus mainly on the idea of democracy in terms of the rights to vote, to choose and to demonstrate. Hence this edition goes through the different happenings that have taken (or are still

taking) place in the Member States, and even beyond. Moreover, we have also included topics which have not been dealt with before in our magazine, like blogging, e-Government and Human Rights, as well as a rehash of a highly discussed topic in JEF – that of the European Parliament seat as contested between Strasbourg and Brussels.

As part of our ommitment to increase the interest range of our magazine, the new editorial board has also included innovative sections, such as the Vox Pop and a more comprehensive page dedicated to the activities of JEF-sections, an interview with a politician elected into the Italian Parliament, as well as the Double Interview, wherein two stars of JEF-Europe, the outgoing and incoming Secretary General have agreed to answer identical questions, but in a very different way!

To conclude, I would like to say a very special thank you to the members of the Federal Committee who entrusted me with The New Federalist as from March, the absolutely brilliant Editorial Board, the Executive Bureau, and of course, the Secretariat. And as a very last note, I take this opportunity to spend a few words on the latter, as an ex-Secretariat member, to welcome Vassilis to the JEF-Europe office, but also to say a public thank you to our outgoing Secretary General, Joan Marc. In the name of all of us who had the luck to work with you, I would like to say thank you for the endless hours spent in the office working for JEF, your commitment and the way you always made things end up just a little bit more fun than they were meant to be. Fins ara y bona sort Jefe!!! ■



Meet
Arnold Cassola

06



Review
Galaxy Europe

16



Listen to the
VOX POPULIS

19

we want to hear your opinion!

Do you have any comments, suggestions or opinions that you would like to share with us? Would you like to express yourself on any topic, whether raised by one of our contributors, or else it is one which you would like us to tackle in upcoming editions? Then write to us! We want to hear what you have to say!

Email us on tnf@jef-europe.net.

Your views might be published in the next edition of The New Federalist!

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

constitution? straight to emergency room!

A year has passed since the European integration has encountered its biggest punch in the face since de Gaulle's "empty chair" policy. Ironically enough it is again a French president, who is the cause for the current stalemate. But it is not only him lying in the political emergency room but also our key project, the Constitutional Treaty. I wonder if I expose myself here as the inhumane federalist for admitting that I feel much more sorry for a pile of articles than for Monsieur le Président. With him being dismissed in about 12 months time new horizons might open up and we can examine where we stand today to learn from the miseries of Monsieur Chirac and his European Stammtisch – Summit mates.

The delivery problem

The one thing we should always remember from the Dutch, French, Spanish and Luxembourg referendums is that the biggest number of no-voters did so, because they were dissatisfied with their government, unhappy with the economic situation or feared the whole idea of globalisation and "neo-liberalism" on the wider front. If we (and even more so the governments) want to win back these people for European integration, then we do indeed have to address the delivery problem. Historic links, peace and past economic prosperity are understandably not the kind of thing the long-term unemployed in Eastern Germany cares much about. So, Europe and its national governments need to deliver more and better. But we all know that there are limits to what an intergovernmental Europe can do in terms of macro-economic management and job creation. For me it goes without saying that tackling the social concerns of citizens is the priority of any Executive and thus it saddens me that the Commission and European Council go out with a "delivery promotion" now. Have they not delivered so far?! But moreover, does this agenda not build up even higher expectations to what Europe can really do with the limitations of the existing decision-making mechanisms?

The issue of communication – and argumentation

The delivery agenda brings us to the second challenge – arguing the case for Europe. It cannot be that a (Dutch) Prime Minister comes up to the electorate to tell them that a no-vote in the referendum will bring back war in Central Europe. If that is all we can say in defence of the Constitutional Treaty or indeed any further integration, we better buy an apartment house and stay in Ventotene. On the contrary, my impression was still that JEF was the one driving force both on European and national level to get at least some bottom-up activity both to influence the Treaty text as well as later during the ratification process. Still, we face three problems, which we have to tackle if we do not want to loose out in 2007-2009 (again). Firstly, we need to sharpen our arguments, come up with the right examples for the right target groups and then get ourselves out to where we can influence people. Secondly, we are not the only ones in the "European family". Both for national and European level I believe that there is so much more UEF and European Movements can do with us. Let us change them from the inside and turn them into the kind of citizen-campaign organisations that will mutually stimulate our work. Finally, we need to reach beyond our own circles. How many interesting new groups have come up during and after the referendum campaigns? Let us embrace those groups with our meetings, tender applications, local debates, lobby activities or simply at the bar. Those are the people and the discussions we need to aim at. If we were boring, we would get stuck on ratification procedures. But we are the most exciting political youth organisation in Europe. And our goal lies clearly ahead of us: the adoption of this or a better Constitution. ■



JAN SEIFERT

President JEF Europe

historic links, peace and past economic prosperity
are understandably not the kind of thing
the long-term unemployed cares much about

EVOLVING EUROPE

europe and the sauna



**GEORGE
KIPOUROS**

FC Member
JEF Europe

A Nordic country will be taking over the rotating EU presidency from Austria for the second semester of 2006, in a period when the EU is in need of some Mediterranean sunshine. Finland is called to take on the EU leadership on July 1st and to focus on globalization and the EU, to improve competitiveness, security in Europe and climate change. Further enlargement is also high on the agenda, while the future of the EU and of the Constitution has been marketed as a primary axe.

“The sky is clearing. The storm clouds of last year are dissipating slowly and I think we have succeeded in giving the debate a push forward,” said Austrian Foreign Minister Ursula Plassnik when speaking about the period of reflection. Finland, however, does not seem to be so fond of the reflection period’s results and has directly criticized a prolonged “period of reflection”, decided on after the French and Dutch rejections, as an unsatisfactory measure. Still, on the concrete proposals side, most seem eager for EU heavyweight Germany to take over the presidency in 2007.

Finland intends to ratify the EU Constitution treaty as soon as possible. In a recent interview Finnish Prime Minister Matti Vanhanen stated “I recognise that the debate in other Member States is different. The message from Finland is that it is a good treaty”. He also commented that the Constitution would not be changed in any substantial way with re-negotiation anyway. Nonetheless, whether Finland will push for further ratification in other Member States as well is still uncertain.

On the further enlargement side, it is now becoming clear that Austria’s presidency has not been the spectacular boost for the integration of the Balkan region into the EU as many had hoped. In a decisive year for the region, with momentous changes in Serbia Montenegro, Kosovo and possibly Bosnia,



Josep Borrell and Matti Vanhanen

the Finnish presidency is keen to further enhance the EU’s soft-power approach of generous funding and technical assistance to domestic reform processes. Romania and Bulgaria will most likely get a timed entry ticket during the presidency.

As far as Turkey and Croatia are concerned, Mr. Vanhanen promised “fruitful cooperation”, but also strictly pointed out the conditions that they must meet in order to pass the EU threshold. In Turkey’s case, the Cyprus question, over which Turkey and the EU have been deadlocked for the past two years, is planned to be tackled through a Finnish initiative.

Europe as a district of the global village has already been a priority of the Austrian Presidency, with quite a number of high profile meetings being held with out of continent countries, including Latin America and the USA. In this direction the ASEM Summit (Asia-Europe Meeting) will take place in Helsinki on 10 and 11 September 2006. The Summit will bring together the leaders of 38 Asian and European countries and the European Commission and is supposed to provide them with a forum for open, face-to-face discussions and genuine dialogue under the overarching theme of Global Challenges - Joint Responses.

Environmental friendly Finland has already vowed to promote the green agenda both in Europe and with the neighboring giant Russia. The main target is to show that protecting the environment doesn’t necessarily harm economic growth, and can even strengthen it; Finland itself is real case example of the policies now to be promoted on the European level. After all, the effects of global warming have already been making a visible appearance in mainland Europe.

The official priorities of the Finnish EU presidency will be presented to the country’s Grand Committee of the parliament this summer on June 21st days before the Austrian presidency presents its own results in a report that will be considerably shorter than anticipated.

Even though Finland is not famous for its hot weather, it can brag about another hot experience, the Sauna. Let us hope that the Sauna’s steam will stimulate EU politics and the European integration process! ■

EVOLVING EUROPE

a european in the italian parliament

DANIELA GRECH

Editor in Chief

With Italy being their closest neighbour, the Maltese were obviously very interested and involved in the process leading to the election in Italy of the Prodi government, even moreso because of the greatly celebrated election of a Maltese politician to the Italian Parliament. Underground JEF resources and contacts, together with a friendly email - Maltese style - secured me an interview with Arnold Cassola, during his lightning visit to Malta days after the results of the much contested elections in Italy were announced. Armed with a borrowed recorder, my most charming smile, and a number of questions printed on a paper (just in case of course), I met with Mr Cassola in a quaint little cafeteria in my hometown, and a very interesting half an hour ensued ...

A Prominent Maltese politician, co-founder of Alternattiva Demokratika (the Maltese Green Party) but also the Secretary General of the European Green Party and newly elected Member of the Italian Camera dei Deputati; one can truly say that Arnold Cassola has certainly go beyond the national borders we're so accustomed to in terms of his political career - would you agree?

I agree but actually I have been gone beyond the borders of Malta a long time ago. As I introduced myself in the campaign I used to say that I have 'sangue Italiano, molto cuore Maltese e spirito Europeo' (Italian blood, "a lot of" Maltese heart and a European spirit). I think it is maybe a bit difficult to get out of the mould of the 2nd World War, we still see each other as nations - we are nations - but let us remember that for example even Malta itself after 2004 is Europe. The foreign policy of Malta is the EU foreign policy, the same foreign policy as Germany, Italy or France, so this is nothing new for me because it is part of my ideals, that's why I like a lot the European thinking in politics and this I think is also going to be one of the ways forward for the future.

If you look at the Jo Leinen report in the European Parliament, which has just passed, I think there is already a mention again of a European list for elections, which means that on the same list you would have twenty-five different people from twenty-five different countries to wage a European-wide campaign. So I have had the luck to be one of the few people to really do a European-wide campaign, event though albeit amongst Italian nationals in all the continent of Europe apart from Italy (including Asia and Russia and Asian Turkey). So I con-

sider myself to be lucky and of course in this I worked throughout with the European Green party and with the National Green party so this is a really pan-European Green effort which managed to make it [to win the elections].

In fact, JEF is one of the main supporters of having European Parties contesting European elections and giving European solutions to European Challenges. Do you think we should continue to pursue this aim?

I think that integration is no doubt bringing about the discussion of common issues, as for example the Resolution on Malta dealing with migration; the fact that the European Parliament recognised that the migration issue is not a national issue which should only be taken up by Malta, Spain or Italy and the frontier countries but that it is actually a European issue is showing us the European dimension - European Foreign Affairs. Naturally we still have differences but I think we are moving towards integration, though it is much more difficult now that the Constitution has not been approved. But we will go in that direction - that is what I believe and I think that is also what is keeping peace in Europe.

Proof of this is Italy at the moment. There is an atmosphere of hatred among the different parties - an atmosphere of "huma and ahna" (them and us). The result is more votes for Berlusconi in the Senate (100,000) but less seats because of his gerrymandering which worked against him, and now Berlusconi not accepting the results until today (17th April). Had there been no European Union, what would happen? The EU gives stability, guarantees democracy, and it has been proven in history throughout the 50 years of its existence.



Arnold Cassola and Italian Premier Romano Prodi

Could you tell us what led to your decision to candidate yourself for the Italian General elections of April 2006?

Nothing much really! I am Italian by birth. My father was Italian, and I was born Italian in a British state, because Malta did not exist until 1964, and all the people born in Malta had a British passport, and were British subjects. You are young people and you don't realise that. It was only after 1964 (Independence) that Malta existed as a legal entity in the world. So I was born Italian like my father and grandfather in a British State, and afterwards became interested in politics and I thought this would be a very good experience to campaign in a big country like Italy for any future elections. The way big parties form coalitions - like for example our two big allies are "DS" and "Margherita" - is a novelty for me but the way people treat small parties is really nothing different from Malta so even that teaches you how to also come up with solution to try beat the big ones, and we [Verdi] did manage to take a third seat from the big ones who still today cannot understand how we managed to get the third seat.

Whilst being the second most voted candidate among the Italians living in Europe, you have narrowly failed to get elected as a Maltese Member of the European Parliament in 2004, how would you account for this?

Well, I thought that it would be extremely difficult to get elected by the Italians in Europe for a basic simple reason - the system. You actually have to write the name "Cassola" on the ballot - it's not that you have a list like Malta, and you put a cross next to it just because you like



Arnold Cassola and the JEF Europe Executive Bureau

a name, so we thought how can we get the name Cassola known all over Europe? But when I look at it today I think it is easier to get elected in the whole continent of Europe than in Malta because of the mentality, the Italians in the whole of Europe, when they read a CV of somebody they never heard of, and they like his CV, they will vote for him, without knowing him, they did it and proof is there. It is easier to do that then for a Maltese to say that they will not vote for a Green because they're "Red or Blue" (Labour or Nationalist supporters), even though a lot of people know me.

Personally I even would consider 23,000 votes in Malta to be of a heavier weight than the 19000 votes in Europe because for a Maltese to swap from "red or blue" to green is an enormous psychological effort and it takes enormous courage and those who did it were really courageous, they broke the mould of half a century, but they have started a new era. Also, without those 23,000 first count votes I would have never been a candidate in Italy, because that gave me credibility. Amongst all Greens in Europe everybody was shocked how one could get that percent and not get elected, so

those votes that the Maltese gave me and Alternattiva made me credible in Europe, so I'm grateful to those Maltese, because this is also their win too.

Many politicians focus on national issues, even in the European Parliament elections, to secure more votes. You have chosen to give priority to European issues instead and have succeeded anyway. How do you account for this?

Let's be honest. Normally in European elections most of the debates are on national issues. And I think that it is also in the Italian elections, even though I was in Sweden or in Spain or in England, amongst most of the people, the major issues were mostly local issues, employment, hospitals etc. So I think that a European-wide election only and exclusively based on European issues will at the moment not bring you the results nor the votes. I think it has to be mixed whereby on the background of an ideology you have to embed as in a jigsaw, the local elements because after all, people want to know if their children can go to schools, or get proper hospitals, have work or not. If you speak about the constitution of Europe, or about the visions of the future of Europe, if people have to emigrate as happened to all these people; they would be, and in fact were, more worried about the brutta figura (bad image) Italy was getting abroad because of Berlusconi's stupidities. That in fact turned out to be a European-wide propaganda for Prodi and his team.

**sangue italiano
molto cuore maltese
e spirito europeo**

berlusconi has made italy lose its european vocation

In fact Prodi got 49% of the votes in Italy but in Europe he got 60%. The Italians abroad felt more and more aggrieved by the brutta figura every time Berlusconi insulted the Finnish President, the Dutch people, the German MEP and Calderoli insulted Muslims with his T shirts so that was a major factor. Italy lost a lot of prestige – in Europe, Italy was not respected anymore and Berlusconi had made Italy lose its European vocation. So even that, going to the polls with Prodi, apart from the experience, the thrill, the honour, being one of the twelve and being Maltese, it was also working for a Prime Minister with a European vocation, with a European dimension in a European frame of mind viz-a-viz Berlusconi who was trying to belittle Europe – by saying that Europe is only bad, Europe is only the EURO etc...

After your success in Italy, what's next on your agenda?

Next in the agenda is learning how to be a Parliamentarian! I've never been a parliamentarian in my life – it means switching from being the Secretary General of a European Party to being an Italian Parliamentarian which is not only being at the service of the people in Italy but also bringing forward the aspirations of the Italians living abroad, dealing with consulates, transports, trains, VISAs and all such issues which each country might have.

The next concrete exciting thing is the voting for the President of the Republic which will be done in Italy next month. So it will be a new life, moving home...and of course enriching - I hope - my political experience to put at the disposal of Alternattiva Demokratika in Malta.

So eventually back in Malta then ...

Well, continuing as I was before! I've been six and a half years now in Brussels, but in these six and a half years I have done politics in Malta with Alternattiva Demokratika. I am at the disposal of AD in whatever way AD deems useful, the only difference being now that instead of being in Brussels three hours away [by plane], I'm only one hour away so maybe I can even be slightly more involved now that what I was before.

The name of the party you co-founded Alternattiva Demokratika, is quite self explanatory. Do you believe that we need a Democratic Alternative even within the European Union?

I think the European Parliament is quite democratic – it is an expression of the people's will and you have a wide range of Political Parties and

Political Groupings. What is needed however is a more democratic structure in the Council, even the Commission but even more in the Council. At the end it is still these National Governments which are not elected by the European people as European leaders who decide en bloc everything. As I said before one can see how this resolution amending the Dublin convention, which Alternattiva brought up initially one year ago, recognising the need for derogations for Malta, passed with 90% of the votes in the European Parliament, and it was great to see the parliament in favour of this, but the big States, Spain, Germany France will block it, even one of them can block it, and this is an injustice. There has to be a balance of power and not a veto power which blocks Parliament which is the political expressed democratically elected will of the people.

Mr Cassola, on the topic of the European Constitution... there are different viewpoints concerning the usefulness and effectiveness of the current reflection period... what is your opinion, are we reflecting enough?

I think we are still waiting. I mean we are dormant. The reflection period was supposed to be what...six months? It's been more than a year now. There has been a proposal by Duff and Voggenhuber, it's a Green report and shared by a quite a number of PP [People's Party Grouping] people which says let us revise the Constitution, let's come up with a new text, let's make it more people friendly, easier to understand, and let's have a vote, a European wide referendum in all the countries on the same day with a double majority – a majority of the States and a majority of the people. That will be the ideal but I have my doubts whether this will happen, whether the States will want that, will Austria do something about it now in this presidency? I don't know...

Something has begun, but the UK totally rocked it, the British Presidency did nothing – so that was the hibernation period and not the reflection period. Now we are out of hibernation, the people have started talking, politicians also, but how to get the message about the Charter of Fundamental Rights, so essential for each European citizen?

Do you see a way out from this impasse?

The process has to restart. Let's start the process first and then how to move and when is another issue but at least let's start it. There is not institution that has started it. So we need a Presidency to take up the challenge before it. The Finnish Presidency will perhaps be more energetic than the Austrian one, more than the British definitely, though it doesn't take too much. We just have to see ...

More than two months have passed since that interview, and Mr Cassola is now performing his role as an Italian Parliamentarian in Rome, and contributed to the election of Mr Napolitano as Presidente della Repubblica. It is easy to see that the ideals espoused by this politician are very much akin to those followed by many JEFers, and I can thus only hope that this meeting with Arnold Cassola will only be the first of many such encounters between JEF and politicians with a vision. And in conclusion, to Mr Cassola, I can only say, using my best Italian as is appropriate in the circumstances ... in bocca al lupo! ■

EVOLVING EUROPE

change in italy and a visit to ventotene



**FEDERICO
BRUNELLI**

Treasurer
JEF Italy

The centre-left coalition led by Romano Prodi has won the elections: for Italy there arises the chance to reprise its traditional role of a country in the avant-garde of the process of European integration that was distorted under Berlusconi's government.

The electoral programmes were different with respect to the issue of Europe. UEF and JEF Italy made proposals for the re-launch of the constitutional process to the coalitions: the centre-right did not welcome federalist requests and its programme didn't include a strategy to come out of the current block on the Constitution. However the centre-left's programme clearly stated that Italy will be committed to joining the group of countries pushing for a wider integration of the EU, to the re-launch of the European Constitution with a European referendum to be held together with next elections of the European Parliament, to propose and support a European plan for employment and growth, and to engage for a European foreign and defence policy. Prodi delivered a remarkable speech (unfortunately completely ignored by the big national mass-media) in front of the European Parliament on February 1st, indicating Europe as the way of progress for Italy.

We are all aware of the importance of writing a good programme, but implementing it is the real challenge. The winning coalition is diverse, hosts

lots of small components and a party (the Communists) that voted 'No' to the European Constitution when the Italian Parliament ratified it. Moreover, the majority in the high chamber is slight and fragile. However this weakness can hopefully become a spur to enact a strong pro-European policy and to obtain the popular consensus that was not so clear-cut in the ballot's results. Federalists will monitor the adherence to the electoral programme, ready to complain if there are deviations from the positions reported in it.

Nevertheless, we must not make the mistake of considering one political party as interlocutor for our action; we can find people in all three parties who can fruitfully collaborate with us. We must always remember that the division between progress and reaction is no longer right-left, but the one stated in the Ventotene Manifesto: "The dividing line between progressive and reactionary parties no longer coincides with the formal lines of more or less democracy, or the pursuit of more or less socialism, but the division falls along a very new and substantial line: those who conceive the essential purpose and goal of struggle as being the ancient one, the conquest of national political power (...) and those who see the main purpose as the creation of a solid international State (...)"

Another noteworthy point is the election of the new President of the Italian republic. After seven years, Carlo Azeglio Ciampi, whom the federalists thank for his commitment to the European unity, left his post to Giorgio Napolitano, a personality that has expressed his vision of a united and federal Europe many times, taking part in some federalist events. Napolitano wanted to be present at the commemoration of the 20th anniversary of Altiero Spinelli's death: on May 21st he went to Ventotene (where Spinelli is buried), together with three ministers of the new government. GFE (JEF-Italy) was present, and a 8-metre banner stating "European Constitution Now!" was hanging just in front of the stage. GFE and the young federalists were quoted by the President as 'the avant-garde of the European young people'.

The new political situation in Italy seems to be more favourable to the European project. Italy can play an important role in pushing for an initiative of pro-European governments. I hope that we will not miss the chance. ■

**federalists will monitor the
adherence to the electoral
programme**

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/enables:dialogue//visit:
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EVOLVING EUROPE

a hope for democracy in belarus

Peace, democracy, liberty, equal rights are all objectives that we generally aim for. The recent world crisis in the world seems to imply that these values are fast being forgotten and have become almost unachievable; the war still continues in Iraq, nobody knows when the Middle East crisis will come up to the end, the oil wars go on in Africa. Furthermore, the recent presidential elections in Belarus (March 19th) show that human rights, liberty and democracy are being neglected even in the neighbourhood of the European Union.

On the 8th of April the “new president” Lukashenka was sworn in for his third mandate. According to him, “Belarus has prepared a substantial background for achieving its long term political and economical goals and just the mono-thinking world society tries to create anarchy and chaos in Belarus. The westerns use the principle of “divide and ruling”, therefore, the expansion of army and military service will be the priority in upcoming several years.”

On paper, Belarus seems to have achieved stability and growth that many countries can only dream of. Its economy in 2005 achieved an 8% growth. The government succeeded in lowering inflation over the past several years and in keeping with this policy, Lukashenka re-imposed administrative controls over prices and currency exchange rates and expanded the state’s right to intervene in the management of private enterprises. Furthermore, the rate of unemployed people (officially registered) is just 1.6%. Isn’t that amazing? Huge economic growth, low unemployment rates. It seems that Lukashenka really knows how to deal with the economical issues.

The economic improvements were noticed by the voters in the recent presidential elections in 2006. More than 82 % of Belorussians supported the “new president” (as Lukashenka call himself) - and expect him to lead for the better future of the country. In fact, Lukashenka should not really have any trouble - every tenth person is a KGB agent, all the media is under the government control, and any foreign opinion, except Russian, is impossible.

Life in Belarus looks pretty and Lukashenka, as believed, will be a perfect president. Moreover, the opposition leader Milinkevich won just 6% of votes. Still several questions arise: if there is such

enormous society support, why do people go to the streets? If there is stable economic growth (as the government reports), why do people want change? Why doesn’t the government want foreigners to come and observe the election? Why do the young generations want a new leader?

Young people want a CHANGE. They are tired of walking in silence in the streets, they want to see the opportunities in life, they want a NEW BELARUS, and new political system. They want democracy!!!

The country has changed after March 2006. The extremely unfair elections, and the various violations encouraged thousands of people, despite the threats of the authorities, to go on the streets of Minsk to raise their voices in favour of change. Furthermore, the number of Belarussians who are ready to fight for freedom is growing with every day. Along with this, Aleksandr Milinkevich (leader of the opposition) grows in the eyes of the public as well as gathering an enormous support from the Western countries.

The president – Lukashenka is not happy about the activities of the opposition and his regime is trying to stop the progress of the possible change, to turn time back, to when Belarus was frozen by fear and dictatorship. For those who still dream of a free Belarus however, this is too late. The time for change is now. ■



**VAIDA
JAZEPČIKAITĖ**

Member of the
Editorial Board

give the citizens of belarus a voice! jef takes action

Night. Dark. Cold. On the 15th of March, just before the elections of the 19th of March, JEFers from across Europe took to the streets to show their support for the oppressed civil society and opposition movements in Belarus. Over a hundred statues in more than 20 cities from Skopje to Edinburgh were gagged, symbolically preventing them from speaking freely, much like the current situation of the people in Belarus. Signs stating “Give a voice to the citizens of Belarus” were also hung around their necks, clearly stating the demand of JEF. Across Europe the media made extensive coverage of the JEF action. With its massive support from JEFers, Belarussian resistance movements, other NGOs and youth across Europe were able to give a strong message in support of democracy in Belarus. The action was also covered in opposition-friendly media inside Belarus, ensuring that people there knew that youth across Europe care about their struggle for democracy. Also, inside Belarus, a JEFer organising the election monitoring was arrested and forced to leave the country, further highlighting the severe situation inside Belarus. It is clear that we as young European federalists have to stand-up for freedom and democracy in our neighbouring country, and with this action JEF definitely showed that we can!

JEF’s message to European political leaders was crystal clear: we will not tolerate what is going on in Belarus, and we urge you to put pressure on the Belarussian and Russian authorities to change the situation!

Åsa Gunvén and Benedicte Roer, JEF Europe

EVOLVING EUROPE

hungarian parliamentary (s)elections



DANIEL
BARTHA

While Europe was focusing on the Italian elections another EU Member State voted on its future as well. Even though the Hungarian interests are not as high-ranking in terms of the EU, the election campaign and its results could well affect the European attitude of the country.

The Hungarian election system seems to be quite complicated; even many Hungarians have limited knowledge of its structure. The two-round, mixed election system combines elements of the single-member-constituency and the list election systems with a mandate threshold, which essentially means that only the parties that have obtained more than 5 percent on a national basis are allocated seats from the district and national lists. Therefore because of this system, public opinion polls are anything but reliable and for this year's elections most of the predictions were totally wrong as well

After the first round there was no doubt that the ruling Socialist-Liberal coalition would probably win the majority again. This was already a milestone in the modern Hungarian history, since traditionally the governing parties could not repeat an electoral victory due to the increasing number of protest votes. Nonetheless, looking at the background, we don't see that big a difference.

This election was interesting in yet another aspect: the two candidates for the role of Prime Minister who were the focus point of the current election. Their populist political voice, the nonsense promises and the heavy political attacks provided enough space for the two smaller parties, the Alliance of Free Democrats (SZDSZ, the small coalition party, liberals) and the Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF, conservatives) to make themselves heard. Since the MDF were as well the target of the biggest opposition party Fidesz (right-wing, nationalist) and their campaign was built on the idea of having an alternative to the right wing party, they declared after the first round that they will never help Viktor Orbán, the candidate of Fidesz into power even though they have shared the power between 1998 and 2002.

The reason of the success of Ferenc Gyurcsány, the candidate of Hungarian Socialist Party (MSZP) was that his promises were much more limited and the promotional campaign much better marketed. Another key element was the appearance of the

Christian Democratic People's Party (KDNP) as the satellite of Fidesz, in which leaders made radical statements against the young generation, the gay people, called the Liberals deviant and declared that they won't let religion become a private matter.

One of the hottest topics of the elections was the current situation of the Hungarian economy and the introduction of the Euro. Budapest has to make radical steps to stabilize the state budget and eliminate the huge deficit. At this point it is getting harder and harder for the country to meet most of the Maastricht criteria, and the new Gyurcsány government already announced a 3 billion euro cut in public spending as a kick off to the structural reforms. Today, even the most optimistic experts predict that the country will only be able to join the euro-zone in 2012. The only positive aspect for Hungary in the past weeks in this regard is that the Czech Republic also announced a delay, and the situation is not much better in Poland either, which indirectly helps avoid the crash in prices, and prevent future speculations against the Hungarian currency.

Regarding the Hungarian Foreign Policy the socialist-liberal government is aiming to sustain the relatively good connections with the neighbouring countries, which have always been a touchy issue because of the huge Hungarian minorities. Both of the coalition parties are very much pro-European, but the Hungarian-Russian friendship which is heavily based on the Socialists can play a much bigger role, especially regarding the energy policy. One of the most ambitious goals of the government is to become a prime destination in the EU for the Russian investors. Hungary also supports the Visegrad cooperation (V4: Hungary, Slovakia, Czech Rep., Poland) and is targeting an effective regional cooperation within the EU even though the V4 states are the biggest competitors of each other for foreign investments. ■

**one of the most
ambitious goals of
the new government
is to become a prime
destination in the eu
for russian investors**

EVOLVING EUROPE

what caused the turmoil in france

In January 2006 France went through a social conflict of a rare extent after the proposal by the Cabinet of a bill aimed at tackling youth unemployment, the so-called “First Employment Contract” (CPE). The lack of consultation fostered a blockade of such proportions that some journalists called the students, who were involved in the demonstration, the “CPE Generation”.

The aim of this law, as proposed by French Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin was that of giving young people an easier access to the labour market. This proposal followed the “New Employment Contract” (CNE), which had passed a few months before which allowed an SME (small and medium sized enterprises) employer to terminate a contract at any time during the first two years of employment. Despite the opposition of Trade unions, the CNE did not spark much controversy, since it was limited to businesses which employed less than 20 workers. However, this was not so for the CPE, which was to apply to all enterprises.

Previous Governments had tried to introduce similar measures, but de Villepin faced the worst wave of demonstrations since 1995. The main reason for this rejection of the bill was the feeling of instability sensed by the people who felt targeted by the CPE, and who thus felt that the bill would result in less Labour rights for young people

Of course, in France, demonstrations are rather “clichéd”, with young people calling for the revolutions and all. But this time, the conflict was noticed for the exceptional unity that bound the trade unions, and students unions, which lasted throughout the movement. Another novelty was the trans-generational aspect of the demonstrations, with families seen marching together, forming giant protests of up to 3 million people. It was also one of France’s only social conflicts in which the unions had the blessing of the European Trade Union Confederacy.

Unfortunately, what was noticed particularly by European and American media were the incidents that occurred during the demonstrations. It has become a habit to see protesters who have nothing to do with the protest stirring unrest by raiding the anti-riot police until the latter takes charge of the march. Needless to say, this violence has been one of the defects of the conflict, even though it was exogenous to it.

This struggle ended with the CPE being withdrawn, after some hesitation, from de Villepin’s side. The lack of consultation and the need for dialogue were certainly at the root of the conflict, given that PM had not discussed the project with the unions beforehand. Not even the ministers for Education and Social Cohesiveness had been informed of it.

This is all quite disappointing, when one remembers that French politicians call more and more on the Scandinavian model of “flexicurity” for the labour market. The lack of consultation that characterised the drafting of the law was the exact opposite of the methods of our northern counterparts. Moreover, even if the CPE, for instance, was going towards more flexibility, it did not achieve a proper balance between flexibility and security for the worker. The major obstacle is that France does not have a government which discusses first and imposes afterwards, nor does it have unions willing to compromise.

From a Europe-wide standpoint, it is quite inconsistent to call for a European market, when our governments lead different Labour policies without consultation with their European counterparts. It is about time that an actual Political Europe be put in place to allow the EU to implement, in cooperation with national governments, a proper Labour policy. ■

**FABIEN
CAZENAVE**

Vice-President
JEF France

**DAMIEN
ROUTISSEAU**

Member
JEF France

**the major obstacle is that france
does not have a government
which discusses first
and imposes afterwards**

EVOLVING EUROPE

the plight of polish workers in ireland



**ELIZABETH
LANNOO**

FC Member
JEF Belgium

On May 1st three additional countries, Finland, Portugal and Spain, opened their borders for workers from new EU member states.. They have joined Ireland, United Kingdom, and Sweden, which had already opened their labour markets upon the entry of the Eastern and Central European member states on May 1st 2004. In those countries, Polish, Hungarian or Baltic nationals can apply for a job freely: they do not require a work permit. According to the European Commission's report, all parties have benefited from that decision. Over the last two years, the economy has grown more in these countries than in other EU Member States. Though the number of workers from Central and Eastern Europe has noticeably increased, there has been no massive influx as some had feared. Ireland saw the largest share of European migrant workers: 3.8 % of its total work force. I wanted to check how things worked in practice and went to Ireland last April.

One of the first people I met in Dublin was Pawel, a construction worker from Poland. He came to Ireland in August 2004 working for a Polish company. But after a few months he was told by a representative of the trade union that the company was not paying him the minimum wage.. The union also helped him to find a new job with an Irish company where he gets the same wage as his Irish colleagues. Pawel now tries to assist other exploited construction workers from Poland. He told me about some colleagues who were promised a contract when they started working, but after a few weeks, the employer refused to sign. The workers were fired and could not claim money, since they had no proof that they had been working. At SIPTU, the biggest Irish trade union, they receive similar complaints everyday. The trade union tries to inform migrant workers about their rights, distributing leaflets in eleven languages at construction sites with an overview of minimum wages per speciality. It also takes on cases of individual workers. The trade unions are often the only line of defence of the migrant workers, but cases of exploitation are manifold.

Trade unionists and social workers claim that the Irish government has failed to inform migrant workers about their rights upon arrival. Only recently the employment and education department, FAS, has launched an information campaign towards

migrant workers. FAS has made leaflets and DVDs in all the languages of the new EU member states, informing people before coming about the labour market and about life in Ireland. They also warn that without knowing English, it will be difficult to find a job. But the large majority of migrant workers in Ireland are still not informed about their rights.

There are positive stories to be told as well, such as the case of the slaughtering plant Slaney Meats, where more than half of the work force is non-Irish. They are getting paid exactly the same as the Irish, and are even being offered contracts and education in their own language

The case of Ireland is interesting. It shows that even by opening borders, exploitation of migrant workers does not stop. Labour inspection and trade unions still have an important role in exposing those cases. The experience of Ireland also shows that it is of utmost importance to inform both migrant workers and local people about the rights of the former. Let us hope that the other European countries, which are admitting those workers only now or will open their borders only the next few years, will draw on the experiences of the Irish and try to avoid the same mistakes. ■

**the economy has
grown more in the
countries, which
opened their labour
markets completely,
than in other
eu member states**

EVOLVING EUROPE

europe and asylum: a promise betrayed

As summer begins, boat loads of people arrive at southern European shores bringing with them people carrying no documents or assets and who to many seem to mean nothing but a burden on their economy. Many find it difficult to look a bit further and realize that each and every one of these immigrants comes with a package including a history, a life and most of all hope...

We speak of 20 Eritreans disembarking into our shores yet never of the hundreds being arrested for the peaceful expression of their opinion or religious beliefs, the political prisoners being held indefinitely and without trial and the torture of those fleeing or evading military conscription in that country. We speak of the 100 Somali's brought in by the Armed Forces but do we know of the state collapse and political violence there? We speak of Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo, but how many are aware of the almost genocidal situation in Darfur?

Although the number of asylum claims lodged in Europe has continuously dropped over the last few years, the political importance in Europe of how a government is managing its national asylum systems has not diminished. In fact the development of a common European asylum system is one of the most complex and politically charged policy areas ever tackled by the European Union. Public opinion is also catching up and asylum has become a major topic of discussion in various European countries especially the ones on the borders.

Over 2005 Europe was marked by a consistent pattern of human rights violations linked to the interception, detention and expulsion by states of foreign nationals, including those seeking international protection. At least 13 people were killed when trying to cross from Morocco into Spain allegedly as a result of Spanish and Moroccan law enforcement officers using disproportionate and lethal force to prevent them entering the enclaves.

Men, women, children continue to face obstacles in accessing asylum procedures. In Greece, Italy, Spain and the UK, some are unlawfully detained, and others are denied necessary guidance and legal support. Many are unlawfully expelled before the claims can be heard whilst others are sent to countries where they risk serious human rights violations. The fact that EU member states are

among those doing this illustrates the European Union's failure to acknowledge that it faces a crisis of protection, rather than asylum.

This extends also to new Member States, among which the tiniest of them all. In Malta, the human rights of irregular immigrants including asylum seekers and refugees continue to be violated through the implementation of the automatic detention policy and conditions of detention which have been criticised by many fronts as amounting to cruel and inhuman conditions. Since 2002 an estimated 5583 people had passed through the four administrative detention centres whilst in March 2006 these held 1017 people. The centres are overcrowded and temperature in the winter months has known to fall below 6°C whilst no heating or even adequate clothing is available. Over 2005 asylum procedures were improved by they still fall short of international standards. Moreover, in November 2005, the government enacted an amendment to Article 10 of the Refugee Act which would allow Malta to deport asylum seekers while their appeal against the rejection of their asylum application was still pending. Harsh conditions, ill treatment and brutality by law enforcement officials were reported from the detention centres.

A growing concern which is often linked to the issue of asylum seekers and refugees is the issue of racism and discrimination. Over the past months, many countries in Europe were affected by what have been rightly termed hate crimes, crimes directed against an individual for no other reason than by virtue of the colour of his skin. Incidents have been reported of migrants being beaten on the road while a series of arson attacks has affected many individuals and organizations who have spoken openly in favour of human rights.

This reality is unfortunately often ignored but it is and will remain a shameful blot on Europe's human rights record. When exactly, will we all start to face and accept reality? ■

**JEAN PIERRE
GAUTCI**

President
Amnesty Intl
Malta

REACHING EUROPE

e-governance for eu democracy

**ASIMAKIS
VALAVANIS**

Vice-President
Greek National
Youth Council

It has become a common ascertainment that computer mediated communication is coming to refute, annul, or at least alter the up to date communication and information structures, since it is now all the more interfering with the process of forming the message. Such a process, therefore, acts as a reformer of the concept of democracy itself, as well as of pluralism in its bosom, since it influences one of their more important ingredients, which is no other but the communication channels.

Communication and information technologies and the creation of cyberspace, internet – being it their product as well as their result – constitute an important intersection of the history of mankind and the actual historical evolution of technologies themselves just as much, as they are gradually but unbreakably linked to the fulfillment of the most basic personal, social, political needs of citizens.

The fast communications and information technologies developments, the alteration in message and information production and transmission process has led to the emergence of new terms. Terms like “electronic governance”, “electronic democracy”, “new public management” are more often than not coming to change the initial ones for “governance”, “democracy”, “public management”, under the pressure of computer mediated communications.

e-governance in particular is to promise the transformation of classic governance

E-governance in particular is coming to promise the transformation of classic governance in a way that makes it a more efficient, responsible, transparent and lawful one. This is so, due to the fact that traditional governance is in quite a few cases equated to bureaucracy, lower functionality, reduced efficiency, absence of pluralism. Moreover – and maybe mostly at least nowadays– e-governance aims to create the appropriate framework for the market of goods and services to develop, by strengthening the perspectives of a huge plethora of enterprises. But if there is a sincere will to neutralize the side effects of a traditional bureaucracy on the exact concept of democracy, the exclusive use of e-governance for commercial purposes should not be allowed. The citizens’ interaction with the public administration

constitutes the modern and vital demand for the European Union, one that has to be met.

Individuals as well as organizations are interconnected with the public administration, interacting directly or indirectly with it, all named as “the players of e-governance”. Interaction may take one of the following forms:

- Government to Government (G2G)
- Government to Employee (G2E)
- Government to Citizens (G2C)
- Government to Business (G2B)

Of course, a lot more forms could be there, but we confine ourselves to the ones that refer to the public sector.

In a Europe of 25 Member-States, 20 official languages, thousands of dialects, 453 millions of citizens, 732 members of the European Parliament it is not possible to safeguard the traditional European values, the open-door policy and the unhindered communication of the citizens with the decision-making bodies, without a most intense exploitation of the new information and communication technologies. The concept of the ideal democracy within the framework of the European Union, as well as its route to the political integration could not be possibly achieved, should the citizens be left behind.

It is true that the European Parliament – through its portal – as well as the European Commission have been making some worth-mentioning attempts lately to communicate with the citizens through the new cyberspace technologies. However, this is not enough; the common European policy for the diffusion of the internet use in as big a part of the population as possible should be intensified. Its goals are ambitious but should be served even more consistently by all.

The free, unhindered, cheap, functional access of the European citizens to the web and their interconnection with the European bodies cannot be seen as a mere facilitation for time and effort saving – such would be an erroneous political approach – but vital need, which if covered – and to the extend it will be covered – will facilitate the common route of the EU Member-States and will strengthen the bonds between the citizens and its bodies. ■

REACHING EUROPE

do eu blog?

If you've used the internet sometime over the last year the chances are you will have come across blogs. There are more than 41 million blogs in existence, and a considerable proportion of those are in Europe. A blog is essentially a personal website, a journal or diary, often allowing readers to comment on and analyse what has been written.

But why should the EU care? Such a number of sites means blogging is starting to be big business, so the single market... bla... bla... No! That's not why the EU should get involved. Blogs are an online conversation, a way to reach out and talk and discuss with people. So if the EU is serious about getting its message out to citizens, it should get serious about blogging.

The old communications dilemmas for the European Union are well known. No EU media, no way for the Commission or European Parliament to get its message across to TV, radio or the newspapers. The early years of the internet were the same; one-to-many broadcasts from the main news providers such as FAZ, Le Monde, BBC etc.

Yet things have started to change. The availability of simple and free tools such as Blogger.com and WordPress.org has allowed blogging to become a mainstream business. Add a digital camera and a personal ability to write, and you have all you need to be an amateur journalist. So if the mainstream press are not writing about your area of interest, it is within anyone's grasp to do something about it and start a blog.

European Commission Vice President Margot Wallström was the first to take the plunge and set up her own blog [weblog.jrc.cec.eu.int/page/wallstrom] and her commitment and devotion to the blogging cause are the yardstick by which all other EU blogs will be judged. Despite an inundation of eurosceptic comments, Wallström has persevered, and over time a picture of a determined and compassionate Commissioner has emerged.

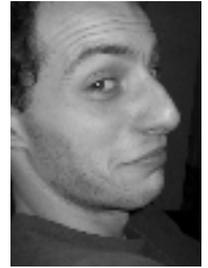
A handful of MEPs have also followed the blogging trend. Former JEF President and MEP in the Socialist Group Richard Corbett is a regular writer [corbett.pir2.info/blog] as is German Liberal Jorgo Chatzimakakis MEP [chatzi.blogspot.com]. Yet Corbett falls into the trap of many MEPs who keep their websites up-to-date: comments are disabled

on his blog, preventing the possibility of instantaneous feedback.

Beyond the sphere of elected politicians, an increasingly dense network of comment about EU matters is developing, with the excellent Fistful of Euros [fistfulofeuros.net] leading the way. Brussels Journal [www.brusselsjournal.com] balances this from a eurosceptic perspective. Mainstream media is catching up too, with Mats Engström of Aftonbladet [blogg.aftonbladet.se/1593 – in Swedish] and Mark Mardell of BBC [news.bbc.co.uk – then click 'Europe'] making the first steps. From the pro-European / federalist side, JEF-France's Taurillon [www.taurillon.org – mostly in French] and Federal Union's blog [www.federalunion.org.uk/blog] are the main contributions to date.

There are of course severe limits to all of this. Not all of the European population has internet access, and a person needs to already know something about EU politics before they will stumble across a blog on the subject. Hence EU politics blogs tend – thus far – to be agglomerations of individuals who already have reasonably fixed positions. Language is a further barrier with a predominance of English and northern European languages so far.

Further, blogging requires effort and commitment, and a determination to overcome ridicule from those commenting on what is written. It's rough and personal, untested and unknown. It's not something for those politicians that are content in their ivory tower in Brussels. But it might well be one of the ways to help the EU reach out to the people. ■



JON WORTH

Former President
JEF Europe

Read his blog at
blog.jonworth.eu

the next generation

ANNE-CHRISTINE ROISIN
Project Manager, JEF Europe



JEFers around Europe have been often criticised for seeming to live sometimes in a world of their own, dreaming of a Europe based on unity, democracy, transparency and, of course, federalism. More than a different world, this might seem for some to be a whole new different galaxy. In all fairness, this is quite true. In fact, since March 2006, a new galaxy has been created – made up of colourful planets rotating around the idea of bridging the gap between the institutions and young people...Galaxy Europe!

The idea behind the Galaxy Europe campaign was that of promoting and getting to know young Members of the European Parliament coming from all the different European political groupings (yes ... the lovely colourful planets in the website represent the Liberals, Socialists, Christian Democrats and People's Parties, Greens and the Non-attached).

REACHING EUROPE

take control



**CARSTEN
BERG**

Initiative and
Referendum
Institute Europe

One year ago the European Heads of State declared a phase of reflection on the future of Europe. Reconnecting European citizens with institutions seemed to be the key, but still today it remains totally unclear what they want to do. In parallel many European citizens and civil society organisations got their heads ballooned and explored how to give the European project a new direction. We need a movement from bottom-up, this is consensus. To start an action everywhere in Europe involving many European citizens at the same time sounds cool and beautiful. It is about democracy and we can make a difference, but we need something concrete and fruitful.

It is this particular context, in which different youth organisations like the European Youth Forum, the European Students Forum and different JEF-sections are developing a Europe-wide bottom-up project: the European Citizens' Initiative (ECI). This campaign calls for the introduction of the right to start European Citizens' Initiatives. So far we as Europeans Citizens are still imprisoned in national politics. There is no chance yet to get together as Europeans on the transnational level and set the political agenda of the EU. The right to start European Citizens' Initiatives will help to overcome this problem.

Being issue-focused, the right of initiative will contribute to shaping an open European public space around key debates that reflect citizens' real con-

cerns. In other words the ECI will not only help to close the gap between citizens and institutions, but also foster the development of a vivid European civil society.

The central idea of this campaign is to collect one million signatures of people from all member states, demanding the introduction of the ECI by the EU. The campaign is now in the preparatory phase, working towards a series of events, widespread publicity and a large-scale drive for signatures in the autumn.

At this stage the campaign is supported by more than 35 organizations and prominent former convention members like the French conservative Alain Lamassoure, the Spanish socialist Carlos Carnero and the representative of the German Bundestag Prof. Jürgen Meyer. Furthermore the president of the constitutional affairs committee Jo Leinen (honorary member of JEF-Europe) in the EP and Gabriele Fragnière, former rector of the College of Europe, were among the first signatories and active supporters.

Commit yourself, sign as well and spread the word to motivate others becoming active in this Europe-wide action. For more information: www.citizens-initiative.eu or contact carsten.berg@citizens-initiative.eu. By creating this campaign we are showing that we have the will and capacity to take the European project into our own hands. ■

JEF saw "Galaxy Europe" as a unique opportunity for young people to be only one click away from the candidate that might be their choice for the next European Parliament elections, and thus to exercise their right to vote based on European issues, and not solely on national ones.

Hence it was a great satisfaction for us to see that more than twenty-five MEPs aged under 36 years agreed to participate in the Galaxy Europe contest with the common aim of sharing their political ideology and standpoint with young Europeans, and why not, to also win the prestigious award of being the "Best Young MEP of 2006"... In fact, throughout the whole campaign, voters around Europe had the opportunity to get to know five or six MEPs "contesting" each other every week, by reading their points of view on EU related issues and by having the opportunity of giving their comments online – simulated democracy at its best, culminating with a weekly vote of their favourite young MEP from the ones running.

The Galaxy Europe webpage had a record number of hits at 32,500, with 7500 of which going to Holger Kraemer, a young German MEP coming from the Liberal Grouping who was thus proclaimed the winner!

In addition to promoting the work of the MEPs among young Europeans, JEF-Europe also aimed to increase its visibility through this campaign in the European Parliament and to build a network of young MEPs that could collaborate with our organisation at a European and local level, with national sections. Although we could already foresee the existence of a constructive relationship between some young "galactic" MEPs and national sections, this project has served to demonstrate and prove yet again the relevance and the reliability of JEF as a partner in the European Youth Arena.

As a final word, I would like to thank all the people, national sections and organisations that all helped to make this project a success. ■

REACHING EUROPE

european civil service - a wonderful project

Article 47 of the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe (TCE) created the right for one million citizens throughout the EU to submit a proposal to the European Commission. This right means a lot to us as Young European Federalists: it creates a tool for action, a tool for debate, a tool to mobilise people on European issues.

One year after the French and Dutch “No”s to the TCE, the EU seems paralysed and lacking a real impulse. In the Duff-Voggenhuber report, the European Parliament is asking for initiatives coming from the citizens and the Commission’s plan D is also calling for more debates. In that context, it is our duty as a political organisation committed to the promotion of European awareness to try to do the best with this period of reflection and to take over the initiative on new political goals.

The idea of a European Civilian Service is not a new idea. Many pro-Europeans argued in the past in favour of such a common programme as a real alternative to the military service.

The ECS shall offer to all Europeans between 18 and 30 years of age the opportunity to obtain professional experience in a country other than their country of origin. The participants would be working for a period of 6 months to one year with other young people from various Member States on a common mission. These missions may include cultural activities, environmental protection, humanitarian actions in case of natural or industrial catastrophes, civilian protection, actions promoting social integration, cohesion between younger and elderly people, etc. The civilian service would be fulfilled in an NGO or a public service organisation.

In countries where conscription military service still exists and/or where a civilian service model is already in place, this form of commitment should become an alternative.

As many young people as possible shall participate in the program, creating a broad and shared sense of European collectiveness. To avoid a negative or coercive impression, the service should be assumed on a voluntary basis. Nevertheless, both EU and Member States will have to make sure that they are able to answer the possibly large demand.

One major factor for making the Civilian Service attractive for young people is official recognition

as a valuable educational and professional experience. Furthermore any exclusion of young people for financial reasons must be prevented. Hence, participants of the Civilian Service must be compensated sufficiently enough so as to integrate people with fewer opportunities as well.

The positive effects of such kind of programme are evident. Other examples have already demonstrated that exchange programmes represent the best promotion tool for the European Union, combating all forms of prejudices and nationalism. But above all they contribute to the creation of a genuine European citizenship.

Some may argue that the ECI is just an extension of Erasmus or the European Voluntary Service, but this is only partially correct. We send a strong signal to our political leaders by demanding more money for exchange and education programmes. Contrary to recent budgetary decisions, these programmes represent a real priority for many Europeans.

There are two main differences between the European Civilian Service and Erasmus. The ECI concerns all young people - not only students - and it should not consist of individual programmes, but collective initiatives.

Above all it is a beautiful project for the medium and long term, deserving our support and patience. Let’s be ambitious and keep in mind that we want to stay “a generation ahead”. I think it’s a great and aspiring programme for Europe and as such an initiative to be supported by our organisation! ■



JESSICA PENNET

FC Member
JEF Europe

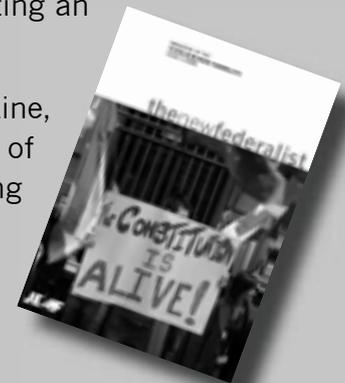
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VOX POPULIS

VOX POPULIS goes out on the streets and listens to what people all around Europe have to say regarding a certain topic. Today, we talk about democracy.

RADOSTINA ZHELYAZKOVA
Member of the Editorial Bord



Natalia and Marko from Bulgaria



Martin from Germany



Elitsa and Maria from Greece

Does democracy justify the use of violence to protest against government decisions?

Do people in Europe have different visions of democracy?

Is democracy the overall aim or is it just a tool facilitating the societies to achieve their objectives?

Natalia	No, it doesn't. Violence cannot be justified by any means, especially by democratic regimes.	I think they do have different views as in different countries traditions and history have drawn kind of frames and that is why different people see democracy in a different way	On one hand it is an aim as it is the best type of regime which people can think of by now but on the other hand one can consider it as a plain objective so that its "tools" can be used in becoming a humane society.
Marko	No, democracy does not justify the use of violence. There are many other democratic tools to protest against a government or a decision.	No, I don't think that people in Europe have different visions of democracy. Democracy is democracy all around the world.	I think it is just a tool. Like W. Churchill has said: democracy is the worst form of government but the problem is that there is no other better form of government discovered yet.
Elitsa	I fear that abusing our democratic rights can put in danger the very basis of democracy as a system.	I believe that at least we, the Europeans, share a common vision for what we call democracy.	I think that democracy is a prerequisite, which aims to ensure that as many people as possible achieve their objectives in the society they are living in.
Maria	Violence should be condemned unless the government decisions or actions are not democratic anymore.	Living in the country where the idea of democracy was born I have myself a vision for a democratic system but I cannot expect from a Czech for instance to see it in the exact same way.	Democracy can be both an overall aim as well as the means to achieve a free and just society.
Martin	Nothing justifies violence against other people. A political system should teach its citizens a peaceful way to express themselves and their opinions.	Obviously they have! Since democracy is based on plurality it would be weird if there would be only one model to understand it.	Democracy is a powerful method to have it your way, but for everyone.



Vanessa and Marc from Spain



Santa and Māris from Latvia



Maria and Amanda from Malta

Does democracy justify the use of violence to protest against government decisions?

Do people in Europe have different visions of democracy?

Is democracy the overall aim or is it just a tool facilitating the societies to achieve their objectives?

Vanessa	We all have the right to protest against and inside the society, but the violence must not be the way to defend our ideas.	Yes, the European people share differentes visions of democracy exactly because most of them are free to choose their ideas.	It is the aim of the societies. Democracy can't always satisfy the wishes and demands of every single person but aims to please the whole society.
Marc	If we have to protest at all, it needs to be done in peace, mainly using as a weapon the freedom of speech.	Unfortunately yes, not all the people think the same way.	Democracy must be the overall aim of societies. Everybldy should have the right to be free.
Maria	I think it rarely does. I think that whether violence is democratic or not, it's still violence and there's no excuse for it.	Yes I think they do, however, if they are members of the EU there are certain democratic rules which should be adhered to by the respective governments.	A country has four main spheres: political, economic, social and environmental. Development - the ultimate goal of society- means balanced growth in all four areas. Political growth can be measured with the terms of 'democracy'. In a way, it is an end in itself since it is desirable due to the benefits it brings to the electorate.
Amanda	The use of violence should never be justified. However, if people resort to violence to protest against a democratic government decision/action it means that either the latter was not quite as democratic or the people do not understand the meaning of democracy!	Definitely! Notwithstanding the fact that the core concept remains the same, people coming from different regions of Europe have their own baggage of experiences which influence their various visions of democracy.	Democracy is a tool used in order to achieve decisions within a certain society. Since everyone is entitled to their own ideas then its up to the democratic processes to indicate which is the idea of the majority, but without having to ignore minority issues!
Santa	Well I have to say that I don't like violence in general and maybe that's why I don't think that democracy and violence can exist together, in one system. I think that the people are the ones building up the society and not the state.	Certainly there are different ways to understand and explain democracy. For some it is a chance to survive, realise their goals; for others – it is just an excuse for being able to criticise others, etc. But that's exactly what I find so interesting and useful because we are all different and that makes life more colourful!	In my opinion there is no ideal political system in the world, but democracy is the best one from everything else we have. And as I already mentioned before it is a tool for one to reach their goals, but for another – a way to express them self.
Māris	I don't think that violence can be the solution. But there are some situations when there is simply a need for discipline and "stricter attitude", for example - self defence. But one should always keep in mind that violence has mainly only a short-term effect.	Yes there are, because this is directly related to the traditions and the inheritance which the different people have. But these different visions and opinions among the Europeans, for example, have a positive effect.	I think it is a tool, which however can be applied to every specific situation and need. Generally it is for the best, but there are also cases when democracy is misused for manipulating people.

THINKING FEDERALIST

second citizens' convention in vienna



**DR. FRIEDHELM
FRISCHENSCHLAGER**

Secretary General
UEF

**REINOUT
PREZ**

Project Manager
UEF

After the success of the First European Citizens' Convention, which was held in Genoa on 3-4 December 2005, the UEF has decided to continue with the organisation of what is going to become a series of conventions.

The Second European Citizens' Convention will take place on 29-30 June in Vienna, and will be organised jointly by UEF Austria, JEF-Austria and UEF supranational.

At the end of June, European Citizens will have a chance to meet again in the framework of a European Citizens Convention and discuss key issues of the European project, take account of any progress made in the last months and recommend future action in regard to the constitutional process. The Vienna Convention will gather about 300 people from all over Europe: members of the European Parliament and of national Parliaments, representatives of Civil Society and the general public. This Second Citizens' Convention will focus on the theme "United States of Europe?!". Should we call for a United States of Europe, like the Belgian Prime Minister Guy Verhofstadt did only recently in his book "The United States of Europe"? How should we achieve that goal, and what are the difficulties Europe is currently facing? How far away are we from a truly United Europe? The Second Citizens' Convention will analyse and discuss these challenges, looking at various policy fields.

The Second European Citizens' Convention is a response of the UEF to various policy papers published by the European institutions in the months following the launch of the Period of Reflection in the late summer of last year. Following the European Commission's Plan D on Dialogue, Debate and Democracy and its White Paper on a European Communication Policy, the Convention takes on particular importance. The timeliness of the Convention is demonstrated by the fact European ministers themselves are looking for answers on how to win back the citizens for the European project. However, it would be wrong to just look for a better communication strategy. The EU indeed needs better government for the European Economy, which can pursue a socially-balanced and growth-friendly policy, engaging fully Europe's human capital. The EU also needs to enhance further its role as a power for peace, making full use of the instruments available and increasing the scope of its action.

Several high-ranking speakers have already confirmed their participation: Mr. Didier Donfut, Belgian State Secretary for European Affairs, Mr. Pat Cox, President of the European Movement International and former President of the European Parliament, Mrs. Anne-Marie Sigmund, President of the European Economic and Social Committee and Monika Wulf-Mathies, President of the European Movement Germany, will be present - to name only a few.

The Second Citizens' Convention aims to reach a broad public. In order for the Second Citizens' Convention to be successful, Federalists must engage in a close dialogue with other civil society organisations and convince them of the importance of progress towards a federal Europe for enabling the Union to address the most pressing concerns of the European citizens.

Information, further developments and announcements regarding the Second Citizens' Convention are available on UEF's website. Here you can also find the draft programme of the Convention as well as the registration forms and practical information concerning your travels to and your stay in Vienna: For further information, please visit the following link: <http://www.federaleurope.org/index.php?id=4125> ■

**european ministers themselves
are looking for answers on
how to win back the citizens**

strasbourg, the natural home

Most people agree that the double seat of the European Parliament and the ensuing so-called “travelling circus” which costs the European taxpayer 200 million euro a year are nonsense. Hence the need to locate the EP in one city only: Strasbourg.

Throughout Europe, “Brussels” has become the symbol of all the EU failings: centralisation, aloofness from the citizen, lack of legitimacy, lack of leibility. One of the reasons why the “Brussels consensus” has been rejected by European citizens (in recent referendums and elections) is the inbreeding of the EU élite, whereby politicians, civil servants, stagiaires, lobbyists, all live together, disconnected from the everyday life of ordinary citizens. This assessment is not a prejudice or a caricature. It is based on personal experience.

Of course, much the same could be said of any capital. But the expectations laid on Brussels should be higher, because the EU is not a traditional, politically integrated, Nation State where citizens tolerate their country’s democratic deficit. Therefore the “ivory tower” syndrome is much more harmful to European integration.

Besides, not all federalists, let alone all Europeans, want the EU to follow the mould of twentieth century Nation States, be they federal ones. Many want it to initiate a new type of polity, which would do away with the blood-tainted principle of sovereignty. So why necessarily copy federal States and their centralised institutions?

Physically separating EU institutions is one of the answers to this new eurosclerosis we are in. As South Africa rightly understood with its three capital cities (Pretoria/Government, Cape Town/Legislative, Bloemfontein/Judiciary), it would clarify in the public debate who one is talking about and prevent journalistic shortcuts such as “Brussels decided...”

The Council of Ministers should remain close to the Commission because it plays a major role in executive matters: national representatives participate in Commission working groups before it proposes a draft legislation; they are involved in the implementation of primary legislation through the comitology procedure; and they are central to executive decision-making in Justice and Home Affairs and Foreign and Defence policies.

The Parliament in Strasbourg would mean a higher media profile to its work: today, “Brussels correspondents” have too much to do with the other institutions and do not bother to travel to the Alsatian capital every now and then. In Strasbourg, EU media would be forced to have permanent dedicated journalists to cover the EP’s work (and, by the way, ensure a better coverage of the Council of Europe and of the European Court of Human Rights).

And they would do it, because what motivates the media is not where the Parliament is, but whether it is powerful or not. Power is a matter of competence, not of geographical location. If its competences were stronger, having the EP away from Brussels would not prevent MEPs from summoning Commission or Council officials or travelling to Brussels from time to time.

The entailed costs would be much lower than the current monthly transhumance, especially since the EP would save the costly rental fees of Brussels’ Caprice des Dieux (which, by the way, might easily be used by the Council, the premises of which were fit for intergovernmental bargaining in the EU15, not for an EU25 modern and transparent parliamentary Assembly).

Strasbourg, the very symbol of European Reconciliation after having changed five times its nationality between 1870 and 1945, has many assets: already home of many European institutions, MEPs would enjoy the network of more than 50 embassies and consulates, international schools, a Franco-German cultural and linguistic environment, a lively cultural life...

Much remains to be done, though, from train and air connections to more housing and hotel facilities. But such investments can only be carried out once the Parliament and EU leaders have made the only choice that is true to what Europe stands for by seating only in Strasbourg.

The opinions expressed in this article do not necessarily represent those of JEF France. ■

**EMMANUEL
VALLENS**

European
Relations Officer
JEF France

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT VADIS?

for one seat: brussels

sessions. For democrats such as the European Federalists, this should be a fight worth taking up in order to have efficient and accountable lawmaking on a European level. Most people recognise the efficiency loss (and the waste of money) of not having the important institutions in the same place. While identifying the symbolic value of Strasbourg as a location for some of the EP's sessions, most agree that the EU should pick one city as the location of its parliament. A cross-European poll at the beginning of May showed 68% of respondents believe the European Parliament should have just one seat - and 76% of those believe that the seat should be in Brussels. There are a number of proposals as to what the buildings in Strasbourg could be used for whilst not forgetting the historic value of Strasbourg as symbol of European integration. For example, establishing a Strasbourg Institute of Technology is one of them. Some think the seat of the EP should solely be based in Strasbourg. The problem would remain, however, of not having the institutions in the same place. The EP has fought its way to spend most of its time in Brussels, and that's for good reason. Sending the EP to Strasbourg is more than a money issue: it's about keeping the EP weak and unimportant.

Take for example the foreign policymaking of the Council. Formally there is no need for them to consult the EP, but in Brussels the EP can demand their presence and they can come over because they are just around the block. The EP's job is also to scrutinise the Commission and the Council and being in the same place is therefore very important. The travelling circus symbolises all that is worst about how decisions are made in the EU, and it shows absolute contempt for the citizens', their elected representatives and any pretence at democracy at the European level. That is why this campaign is of the utmost importance.

Sign up you too at www.oneseat.eu! ■

The issue of the seat of the European Parliament (EP) has over the years proven to be a delicate one with many emotions involved. Isn't it fair that the Members of the EP themselves decide on where they want to hold their meetings? The Citizens' Initiative www.oneseat.eu, designed to put an end to the ridiculous commuting for the EP, launched by a number of European Parliamentarians, has by now gathered more than 400,000 signatures. That shows how important this issue is for so many European citizens. Every week, I meet in the EP groups from all over Europe, and the only thing that people know about, if any, is the travelling circus the EP is forced to endure every month when they move to the second seat in Strasbourg for 4 days. This discredits the EP entirely in the public eye because it's the EP that is held responsible even though the blame lies squarely with the heads of state. We can talk all we like about White Papers and Communication Strategies, but when this issue is the only thing people know about the EU, it's a waste of time.

The EP is the only democratically-elected parliament in the world that is not allowed to take a vote on where they actually want to have their plenary

**ANDERS
EKBERG**

Head of Office
Swedish Liberals
in the EP



The European Parliament should be located in Brussels. Join other European citizens in signing the petition - www.oneseat.eu

THINKING FEDERALIST

the services directive: take it or leave it!

With the purpose of eliminating remaining trade barriers in the European Union, the European Commission presented in 2004 a proposal for a directive on services in the Internal Market. Though highly controversial, the economic benefits of barrier reduction, less administrative burdens, and better access to information cannot be underestimated. In the framework of the revised Lisbon strategy, the services directive offers an indispensable step to boost competitiveness of European industries.

Introduction

In 2000, the European Heads of State and Government identified the improved functioning of the Internal Market as one of the top priorities for the next decade. The so-called four freedoms form the legal cornerstone of the EU's policy towards a well-functioning Single Market where people and businesses are free to move and invest. Whereas the progress made in the goods market is undeniable, many barriers still impede the realisation of a truly integrated market for services. Yet services account for almost two thirds of jobs and total production in the European Union.

On the other hand, services represent only 20 percent of trade flows in Europe and in most services sectors export is less than 5 percent of total production. Recently, the OECD indicated that, in comparison with non-European countries, the services sector in the euro zone is much more regulated and therefore too restrictive. According to the organisation, with unchanged policy the employment potential in Europe is forecast to decline with 0.7 percent annually by 2020-2030.

To turn the tides, the European Commission proposed in 2004 a draft directive on services, with the aim to free up the movement of services in Europe and to create a legal framework for European trade in services. The directive foresees far-reaching measures to abolish all barriers for the free movement of services and the freedom of establishment.

Welfare Effects

The two main channels through which the economic effects of the services directive are expected to materialise are trade and competition. Econometric studies have estimated the effects of both channels on productivity, investment, and em-

ployment. For example, barrier reductions, less administrative burdens, and better access to vital information are forecast to have a positive impact on trade. Besides, there are statistically significant effects of trade on competition and of competition on productivity, employment, and investment.

In particular, the proposed measures are expected to lead to an increase in employment by 600.000 new jobs across Europe. Besides, total consumption and welfare are forecast to increase by approximately 0.3 to 0.7 percent. Depending on the assumptions made, the trade flow of services in Europe will increase by 19 to 38 percent and economic growth will go up by 0.2 to 0.4 percent.

The next steps

In February this year, the European Parliament approved an amended version of the initial draft, which restricted the field of application and no longer contained the controversial country-of-origin principle. This principle was replaced by the so-called country-of-destination principle, stipulating that service providers would exercise their activities in line with the laws of the host country and no longer the country where they have their headquarters.

The European Commission took up the proposal of the European Parliament and presented a new text that was accepted at the Competition Council on May 29, despite the abstention of Lithuania and Belgium. The EU ministers slightly modified the Commission's amended proposal in order to clarify the scope of application and the services excluded, and to include an evaluation of national requirements concerning the freedom of establishment. The Council will now finalize the text and adopt a common position that will be forwarded to the European Parliament for a second reading. The crucial deal is of great symbolic value, exactly one year after the Dutch and French "no" sparked a crisis over the European Constitution. ■



**LIEVEN
TACK**

Advisor on
European Affairs
to the Flemish
Minister of
Foreign Policy

ACTIVE JEF

the jef europe foundation



**THOMAS
HEISSMEYER**

Former
Vice-President
JEF Germany

The European Union and its Member States are not the only ones facing the challenges of financial straits. JEF-Europe will also have to deal with this problem. With regard to declining public funds, we have to focus on new ways allowing us to finance our successful work. There are not many international youth organisations which have an impact on the political culture of Europe, promote a genuine idea of Europe, and are politically independent. If we want to keep this political independence, if we want to ensure the realisation of our projects, and if we want to stay tuned to our ideals, we need to have an additional, independent financial pillar. With the establishment of a JEF-Europe Foundation we could build up such an additional, financially independent pillar. In order to be successful, we need a strong, experienced, and trustworthy partner – the “Friends of JEF” association. Our alumni and political friends will therefore help us in establishing our Foundation.

A Foundation can be defined as an entity that is established as a non-profit corporation or a charitable trust, following a principal purpose of making grants to organisations or institutions. This very broad definition leads the way towards the main goals of the JEF-Europe Foundation: Fundraising and Financing. A Foundation would enable us not only to involve our alumni and political friends, but also to access new networks such as grant-makers coalitions, a gateway to new financial opportunities. The mechanism of how a Foundation functions is rather simple. Donations collected through fundraising are safely invested and allocated by the Foundation. In contrast to earmarked funds of the European Commission, the funds of the Foundation are uncommitted. In other words, the Board of the Foundation decides on which of our projects the money will be spent.

The special legal structure of the Foundation allows us to fully control the collection, administration, and allocation of the stock and donations. Apart from the Board of the Foundation which includes Members of the Executive Bureau of JEF-Europe, and “Friends of JEF”, the statute of the Foundation states that all donations are to be invested in JEF-Europe projects. This double-check mechanism prevents the Foundation from going astray and ensures its role as an additional tool to be exclusively used by the organisation.

In order to establish the JEF-Europe Foundation, we need a capital stock of at least 5,000 EUR. Within the upcoming months, we are planning to collect this sum through donations from our alumni and political friends. The calculation is based on the following model: 50 donors each donate at least 100 EUR - adding up to 5,000 EUR. This very important initial phase would then allow us not only to establish the Foundation, but also to collect the first revenues at the end of this year through interest payout, and to start the building process of the Foundation.

The special legal structure of the Foundation combined with its main goals guarantees that there will not be a new bureaucracy established, that JEF-Europe will not have to pay extra fees and that this Foundation will not be a new political institution. On the contrary, a JEF-Europe Foundation is an additional, independent financial pillar, which allows us to accumulate extra funds and access new networks, thus strengthening our successful, independent political work together with our strong partner “Friends of JEF”. Your successful work made JEF-Europe possible. We count on your support to ensure its future success!

For further information and donations, please check out the JEF-Europe Foundation online at <http://foundation.jef-europe.net>. ■

visit the webzine of jef france: www.taurillon.org



ACTIVE JEF

two stars make a supernova

ECATERINA MATCOV

Member of the Editorial Board

The most energetic and distinct Brussels based Secretariat known in the JEF-Europe Universe, witnesses every two years one outgoing and another incoming star, and through this generating a supernova effect. When shining, they reflect intelligence, compassion, commitment, diligence, competence and verve that are hardly found all together in the JEF-Europe Galaxy. Sounds surreal? Read below and convince yourself of the contrary...

JOAN MARC SIMON

What was your first thought upon entering the JEF Office as the new SG?

I saw the work rhythm and the degree of professionalism I have to confess that I got a bit scared. At the same time I was full of energy and wanted to prove that I could do it. So the feeling was: "This is going to be tough but an interesting challenge at the same time".

What do you consider being most attractive about this position? What seemed less attractive?

The most attractive is the variety of things you have to deal with; there is no time to get bored! The amount of things to learn as SG, are almost endless.

The less attractive is probably the stress and lack of personal life together with the fact that the secretariat is often used as scapegoat for many things that have nothing to do with us.

How would you define the JEF-Europe Secretary General position?

The SG is the person who knows better the organisation at international level. The SG is the only person working full-time for JEF-Europe and he/she is therefore aware of who is/ who, the JEF policies, the contacts in all national sections and international organizations plus he/she has experience in running campaigns, writing applications, reports...

All in all I would define him/her as the power in the shade.

There are three types of people in the world: those who make things happen, those who watch things happen and those who wonder what happened. Which is the type you most feel identified with? Why?

In my "normal" life I'm a bit of each of them, for me action is as important as perception and reflection. However, in JEF we have to make things happen, take the lead, come up with crazy ideas! The role of a Secretary General is to make things happen and I'm proud to see how many things happened during last 2 years.

The best Secretariat memory?

That has to be the wonderful people I found in this organisation. What I did will be swept away by the time but what I hope will last in memory are the friends I made all over Europe. People that were influenced by me and, above all, influenced me.

Joan Marc, what would you like to say to Vassilis?

Vassilis, I give you my condolences and my congratulations. These are probably going to be the most intense, challenging, demanding, stressful, surreal, sweet, alcoholic and mad years of your life. You will have to give more than you think you can ever give but at the same time you will receive and learn more than you can imagine. May the force be with you!

What would be your message to all the JEFers?

After 5 years of commitment, my time in JEF has come to an end. However, I'm happy to see that this organization keeps on generating new ideas and new enthusiastic people are joining. During the last two years I spent travelling around Europe, I've seen incredible potential in lots of young people which makes me think that the future is in good hands. Europe needs a soul and you are not going to find it neither behind the walls of the institutions nor among the bureaucrats that make our lives complicated. That's precisely why JEF is needed - it embodies the original feeling that took Europe out of the ashes of 2nd World War and still provides valid solutions for the world of these days.

Now it's your turn to make the best out of this organization!

VASSILIS STAMOGIANNIS

What was your first thought upon entering the JEF Office in quality of being the new SG?

Hey! My home for the next two years!

What do you find the most attractive about this position? What seems less attractive?

The most attractive element for me is that I will get to work with young highly motivated Europeans on a daily basis. Less attractive seems to be the work load...It is more than a full time job but I am really hoping that the many new experiences and interesting people will worth the effort!

How would you define the Secretary General's position?

Secretary general for me is the person who takes care that everything works as smoothly as possible. He/She is the one to contact whenever you have a problem in JEF and when you need something, is your all time friend and in the end is the one to complain to if something is wrong.

There are three types of people in the world: those who make things happen, those who watch things happen and those who wonder what happened. Which is the type you most feel identified with? Why?

Hehe! I think that as a JEFer I can only be a person who wants to make things happen. We are an activist organization after all.

What are your expectations for the next two years?

I am really looking forward to the hard work, hoping that I can bring in fruitful results; most of all I am looking forward to working with all of you for our common vision for Europe.

Vassilis, what would you like to say to Joan Marc?

Joan Marc, you've surely put the Secretary General standard high. I wish you all the best for your future. Don't forget us!

What would be your message to all the JEFers?

Keep up the good job, we have a lot more to achieve, the way towards a federal Europe is challenging!

We would like to take this opportunity and wish Joan Marc a life-path full of happiness with soaring accomplishments and to Vassilis in his two years term of office: bliss, vigor and colossal dynamism!

ACTIVE JEF

life in jef sections

EUROPEAN WEEK RULES

Club “The House”/JEF Latvia organised a number of events for Europe’s week 2006 with the slogan – “Take part!”. On the 1st of May the activities were launched with an opening event wherein every interested person could listen to the popular music bands of Latvia, take part in a drawing competition, answer a quiz about the EU and win prizes, receive information about the organizations and institutions involved in the activities with the aim of “binding the string into the symbolized ball of European possibilities”. The event followed by the Erudition competition „Next stop - Europe” final on the 3rd of May.

For the European week **JEF Croatia** organised three lectures and a “Eurotram” trip around Zagreb, which attracted media attention. On the 9th of May a street action was organized by **JEF Serbia and Montenegro** in Belgrade: this included the distribution of promotional material about JEF, federalism, the European Union, and the European integration process of Serbia. A flip-chart was used in the street in order to discover the society’s opinion about European integration of Serbia (pros and cons) and the actual situation in Serbia. On the 10th May JEF Serbia and Montenegro organized debates about Serbia and European Union.

JEF Malta along with the National Youth Council and with the support of the European Commission DG Education & Culture, European Movement International & the Commission Representation to Malta, and in collaboration with 12 other organizations, organised a mega Europe Day Event. JEF Malta made Press Appearances to promote the event, on TV programs Teen Trouble, 22PM & Xarabank, as well as published articles on INSITE, @KSU, Maltastar.com, Di-ve.com, MaltaRightNow.com, & Go Global Magazine, and had slots on Campus FM, Bay Radio, Xfm & Super 1 Radio.



AND EVEN MORE ACTIVITIES...

JEF France was busy visiting schools for the “Europe at School” programme, or organising conferences and debates about Europe in universities and cafés. Linked to this, from the 11th till the 25th March **JEF Croatia** organised interventions in Croatia for two French JEFers Michel Pirepaoli and Yves Mouillet and in this contributed in their project “Europe at school”. The events took place in high schools and the biggest event took place in the Europe house in Zagreb for 60 people for a few high schools.

Moreover, during the first semester of 2006, JEF-France, organised two seminars - Training Days in Tours from the 24th to 26th February which were aimed at new members, and which presented European and federalist movements, JEF ideas and activities, and tools for activist actions. The other seminar was the international seminar organized by **JEF France, JEF Italy, and JEF Germany** where this year, the truly multinational and multilingual audience had the opportunity to discuss about the European Constitution and the future of Europe after the French and the Dutch referenda.

Following the tradition of every year, **JEF Germany**, this time in close cooperation with JEB-Berlin Brandenburg and UEF Germany, has once again organised one of its famous events – the Berlin seminar, under the name of the Berlin Youth Conference “Our Generation in Europe – today and tomorrow”.

The event gathered around 100 young enthusiastic people from all over Europe that were eager to take the challenge on a weekend to delve into dynamic discussions and to share their views on what should be the role of youth in the future of Europe. During these three days the participants were able to take part in various panel discussions and to discuss their views on the dead or still alive EU Constitution with representatives from different political parties, the European Commission and other youth organisations, having supporters from both, the YES and the NO side.

These are just some of the events that happened across the Europe and even more are planned for the summer. **JEF Switzerland** are currently planning “Challenge Europe” issue 2006 (www.challenge-europe.ch), a large-scaled project with 30 selected young participants, aimed at providing an attractive insight into the European idea and into the functioning of the EU-institutions.

Brave New Europe international summer university “Breaking a habit” organized by **JEF Slovenia** will take place in Ljubljana from 2nd to 15th July already for the fifth time. The team promises to do their best to achieve their mission: empower youth, spread knowledge, sparkle youth activity, create youth networks, promote cultural diversity, tolerance and European identity.

CONTACT

JEF is an organisation of young people from all over Europe who share the vision of a united, federal and democratic Europe.

We organise seminars, conferences, campaigns, street activities and lobbying activities to work for the goal of a European federation.

If you want to shape a positive future for Europe, join us!

For more information, get in touch with a section near you.

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