

The New Federalist

Magazine of the Young European Federalists
Full Interview Special 2004

Which faces for Europe?

Arielle Rouby

The next few weeks are going to be exceptionally important for the future:

Ten new member states are entering the EU;

The European Parliament elections are taking place; and most likely

The first European Constitution will be adopted before the end of June.

We, JEF, want to "Give Europe A Face";

Constitution, give it a human face! But what faces do the Young European parties want to give to Europe?

Representatives of ECOSY, FYEG, LYMEC, and YEPP kindly accepted to be interviewed and the full versions are provided below.

Shortened versions can be found in the Summer 2004 edition of The New Federalist.



www.giveeuropeaface.net



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Federation of Young European Greens

Interview with: **Simo Salmeda**, simo@fyeg.org



Position: Spokesperson
If not travelling: Finland

"I would like to see the face of Europe diverse and with a positive look into future. A smiling face of Europe!"

Question 1

How do you see the role of the European Parliament vis à vis other EU institutions - now and in the future?

In general, I think probably MEPs are getting better and the EP is getting stronger and we think it is a good process and good direction. In the future we hope that the EP will have more legislative power and also the power of initiatives.

Question 2

This is the first EP election after the enlargement, in this perspective, are you helping the new Member States in their election campaigns? What are your hopes for a true pan European EP campaign in the EU -25?

Already for these elections, we have pan European campaign. So we have already started this kind of pan European election process. In this campaign there are almost all countries included, except the ones where we don't have a member organization. For this campaign we have common website (www.commonfuture.org), as well as common leaflets. On the website you can see some kind of a cookbook, where our candidates are sharing their favourite recipes. We are cooperation with adult Greens and they are supporting us.

Question 3

What are your opinions about the draft Constitution? What are its strengths and weaknesses?

In general, we think it is very good that the legislation of the EU will be clearer and will make things easier for citizens to understand. But on the other hand, I think the text is so long now and for every citizen it is too long to read and for the Constitution it is better to have a paper, which everyone can read. About the policy section, we think that it is concentrating on trade and common internal markets and that is something we are worried a bit and at the same time the environmental issues are not taken into consideration so much. Also causing the borders of the East.

Question 4

JEF's main campaign objective at the moment is to push the Head of States and Government to the adoption of the European Constitution before the 13 June 2004.

Is your party campaigning for the adoption of the draft Constitution?

We would like to have a look on the final version of the draft of Constitution, but for now, we are not campaigning for the adoption of the Constitution before the European Parliament election.

Question 5

JEF supports very much the article 26 of the draft Constitution, which gives the European Parliament the power to elect the president of the European Commission. Do you agree with this principle and if yes, will you already use this EP campaign to push forward a candidate of your party?

We agree with this principle and also ... from ... have already put forward our candidate

Question 6: As our EP campaign is based on the idea to "Give Europe a Face", I would like to ask you, which face you would like to give to the EU?

Iwould like to see the face of Europe future. A smiling face to Europe! diverse and with a positive look into



“We are a little bit afraid that this Constitution is not properly reflecting the federal spirit that we would like to see in the Constitution.”

Question 1

How do you see the role of the European Parliament vis à vis other EU institutions - now and in the future?

The role of the European Parliament nowadays is more or less the talking shop of the European Union. It's a place, where the so called representatives of the citizens gather and they are supposed to take important decisions, but instead they issue these wonderful reports on very important issues and matters, which can be taken into consideration afterwards by those who are taking the decision in the EU.

Of course, we as LYMEC, would like to see the European Parliament in the first and the main legislative chamber, being directly elected board of the European Union, we would like to see the European Parliament to becoming the main institution in the EU. Also, because we believe in true and representative democracy and we believe that the European Parliament is the only institution that can assure that the EU will have a better role in the future or the European citizens will be closer to the institutions. Nowadays, the Council is the

institution that exercise mostly the legislative and executive power in the Union and we would like to see the Council becoming the second legislative chamber in the EU, being the representative of the member states in the Union and therefore acting as a subsidiary chamber on respect to the European Parliament. When it comes to the European Commission, I know that there is other question on this method, but we would like to see European Commission becoming the main executive institution in the EU and therefore executing the decisions of the EU. When it comes to the Parliament, something that I forgot is that, the European Parliament should have, with no exceptions to the co-decision procedure should exist in the European Parliament, which means that the European Parliament as a main legislation chamber should be able to decide on all the matters that affect the EU and that the EU has the competence to decide.

Question 2

This is the first EP election after the enlargement, in this perspective, are you helping the new Member States in their election campaigns? What are your hopes for a true pan European EP campaign in the EU -25?

We, as LYMEC apart of being as pan European organization of course, we are quite subsidiary from that perspective, which means that nowadays still the European Parliament campaign is brought in to national level rather than on the European level. Unfortunately that is due to many reasons, but basically of the electoral system of how the MEPs are elected, but also because the European political parties are

not strong enough and that is something we are working on, making the European political parties much stronger of what they are right now, but when it comes to our member organizations in the Eastern Europe, we are trying on one way to bring debate, which takes here in Brussels, debate on the European institutions into their own organizations. We have offered them couple of training courses, in the direction on how

Question 2 Continued...

to implement and how to make stronger the political message for their national European campaigns and also, specifically for the young candidates to the European Parliament elections, we have tried to give them some instruments, some arguments to bring to their own local campaigns, in order to strengthen their political message, in order to give to the message something else than the typical arguments which are brought in to the national level, something else which means something that goes beyond national interest, something that

goes into the European specific issues, and finally, we have also organizing rally of young candidates, which will take place of the 29th of April. During the whole day, we will have a gathering of young candidates, among which we have some young candidates from Central and Eastern European countries that will be a part of the EU. In a way we are giving them an opportunity to get to know the candidates from the Western or the current European Union, which is something that can help them to have better campaigns.

Question 3

What are your opinions about the draft Constitution? What are its strengths and weaknesses?

This discussion or the Convention that has drafted this Constitution is definitely in the good way and in the best way to the future when it comes to create an internal debate within the EU, when it comes to draft and the creation of the strong document as it has to be Constitution. From that perspective, from the perspective, of how the Convention has been working, of the outcome of the Convention, we are quite satisfied, as LYMEC. As you can imagine on the IGC, we are not satisfied at all not only on the outcome, but also on how the Italian Presidency conducted the IGC and we really hope that the Irish Presidency and if not Dutch Presidency will really manage after the changes that took place in Spain and in Poland.

When it comes to the text, we are a little bit afraid, that the text, even when it is a Constitution, it gives a broad and a general framework, even if it's strengthen some good points, such as the fact that the president of the Commission, for instance, or gives the European Parliament a bigger role, when it comes to the elections of president of the Commission, for instance, just to give

an example, it's simplify the current structure, the legislative acts, it makes them more symbol. We are quite afraid, that intergovernmental trend and threat, at the same time, is still there and that's something we, as LYMEC, are concerned that there is a proposal to empower the Council and to make the Council to become the main institution by the creation of this president, that would give political imprudence to the EU. We do not believe that the Council, must be such an institution and from that perspective, we are a little bit afraid that this Constitution is not properly reflecting the federal spirit that we would like to see in the Constitution. However, as I said, that the strengths of the Constitution is that it was created and approved by the Convention itself, even if the Convention itself had some important weaknesses, especially inside the Presidium and so on. I think that the fact that there was certain agreement, consensus between different people with different views, is also a good sign for the future of the EU and for the future of the European Constitution.

Question 4

JEF's main campaign objective at the moment is to push the Head of States and Government to the adoption of the European Constitution before the 13 June 2004.

Is your party campaigning for the adoption of the draft Constitution?

Absolutely, the liberals have been the only main political option in Europe that have clearly from the beginning strived for a European Constitution and clearly not created any problems. We can remember that in the summit in Brussels in December 2003, both the socialists and the conservatives had split inside their own political framework. We can remember that at that time the president of the Spanish government was one of the two, so to say, revelio states that created problems and the other one, was the president of the Polish government from the social democratic family. So, we liberals, with our three prime ministers in the EU of 15 and the other two prime ministers in the EU of 25m we clearly

said "yes, we want the Constitution" and yes, we want the Constitution already in December. So, yes we want next European summit in Brussels in June to adopt European Constitution and we would like to see all the countries ratifying the Constitution in the autumn. I know that there are different discussions on how this should be ratified and of course this is up to the member states, but I would like to stress that for us it is very important that no single country has the power to veto the Constitution once the European Council approves it. That means, that the Constitution should go on, regardless one or two countries can have some problems to ratification.

Question 5

JEF supports very much the article 26 of the draft Constitution, which gives the European Parliament the power to elect the president of the European Commission. Do you agree with this principle and if yes, will you already use this EP campaign to push forward a candidate of your party?

Yes, LYMEC, do supports and clearly favours a president of the Commission that is elected by the European Parliament, not upon a proposal of the proposal of the European Council, but upon the proposal made by different European political movements in the European Parliament and the possible coalitions that may arise after the European Parliament elections. So, yes, we believe, that in order to strengthen and to introduce deep European democracy, we want to build up, it is necessary to create a political system, which is legitimated by the fact that in the end and we do believe on the representative democracy or the fact that

the president of the European Commission is elected by the European Parliament, means that directly elected representative of the people or citizens are the ones who decide who is going to be the president of the European Commission. In order to give legitimation to the system we want to build up it is necessary that the president of the Commission is elected by the European Parliament, as I said, not on the basis of the proposal made by the Council, but on the basis of the proposal made by the political groups in the Parliament, which will at the same time be representative in the European Parliament of the European political parties.

Question 5 continued...

And then, of course, the Council can ratify this decision.

When it comes to the second question, yes, we do believe that the European political parties should nominate their candidates. But if you ask me specifically for the next European Parliament elections, I would say that even if we would like to see much stronger political system, when it comes to the parties, we do not face this

reality right now and it will be difficult for us, not only for LYMEC, but also for the ELDR, to nominate one person for the European Commission. Nevertheless, I think that there are two potential candidates, Pat Cox as a President of the European Parliament nowadays and Guy Verhofstadt, prime minister of Belgium, I would like to see one or the other one, becoming a President of the European Commission.

Question 6: As our EP campaign is based on the idea to "Give Europe a Face", I would like to ask you, which face you would like to give to the EU?

That's quite tricky question! Is it a kind of question, if the European Union was a person or if the European Union would be an animal? I think, that I wouldn't be able to give a face, but we, as LYMEC, we have adopted our manifesto, our political program for the next legislative term, 2004-2009, in the European Parliament with our ideas on how the EU should move on and this political manifesto is called "Power to the People". So in a way, what we would like to see and the way how we would like Europe to become

and the face Europe to get, is the face of the people. Not the face of one person and absolutely not the face of the president of the European Council if this president might be in the future a permanent person, not even the president of the European Commission, but the face of the people, of the 440 mlj. people that are going to participate in this new project. European Union belongs to its people, the European Union belongs of its citizens.

"Give Europe a Face"

"Give Europe a Face – Give it a President!" is one of JEF's demands. We ask for a President of the European Union which is democratically legitimized to gain the respect of the European citizens.

"Give Europe a Face - Give it a Democracy!" seeks to increase awareness of the European Parliament elections and encourage young people to vote. The role of the EP becomes more and more important in the institutional framework of the EU - it is necessary that people's awareness of it's power is raised.

"Give Europe a Face – Give it a Constitution!" explains why a European Constitution is a positive step towards the creation of a democratic and effective European Union. The European people needs a coherent and understandable text to identify who is responsible for what in Europe.

"Give Europe a Face" includes a range of different activities, building together a coherent paneuropean project framework; the "Give Europe a Face" action, local events, organised directly by our local partners, a multi-lingual and disabled-compatible website (www.yes-to-europe.net) and e-mail information bulletin and the international youth gathering "Give Europe a Face".

www.giveeuropeaface.net

Position: Secretary General

If not travelling: Greece



“This is very difficult question for me... Nevertheless, it is sure that I want to see Europe with a more social and more federal face.”

Question 1

How do you see the role of the European Parliament vis à vis other EU institutions - now and in the future?

The European Parliament is the institution, that represents the population of the European citizens, which means that we have to strengthen the role of the Parliament, have to give them more possibilities to decide about the policies that we have to transfer the decision making from the Council and other institutions to the European Parliament or we have to combine

the Council decision with the European Parliament. We believe that the role of the European Parliament is to transfer the knowledge to the national Parliaments, which is very important for the cooperation between the European Parliament and national Parliaments, which will increase the power of the European Parliament.

Question 2

This is the first EP election after the enlargement, in this perspective, are you helping the new Member States in their election campaigns? What are your hopes for a true pan European EP campaign in the EU -25?

Yes, indeed, the first European elections after the enlargement. I can make some points. First of all, you can see the clear difference between 15 member states and new member states. The interest about the European elections in the new member states is much bigger than old member states.

ECOSY as the youth organization of Socialist party in Europe, apart from the symbol one, just transfer the good practices from the 15 countries to the new member states. We also try to focus in policies, which are more effective and more interesting for new member states, We hope and strongly believe that the young people in new member states will play critical role for these European elections, because also this was obvious after the referendums, where the youth participation in favour of the EU was much higher than in any other target group

of the population. So, for us, the role that we have to play as an umbrella organization of the European Socialist Youth is to strengthen the present of our national organizations in every country and for that reason we have common campaigns for every country, we will have common posters and some leaflets, but we also try to save to campaigns who will translate in different languages in order to be effective and more understandable by people. Also in our common campaign, we have a manifesto, which is the basic political guideline for each organization. We adopted the manifesto in February, after a lot of work of last six month, we had a lot of debates, different activities and we are very happy to have common political base, which is accepted by all our organizations and of course we work with this document to every country.

Question 3

What are your opinions about the draft Constitution? What are its strengths and weaknesses?

I prefer to start from the weaknesses in order to go to the strengths. First of all, I can say a general comment about the Constitution. We believe that the new Constitution, this experiment, which took place in the European Union for last two years was a big change of the common way that the European Union usually make the decisions. It was the first time that different groups of people were involved in such a process, because of old habit was to have of the governments to deal with summit, where the decisions were made. Now, we have the European Parliament, the national parliaments, we also have lobbying groups, which are all those NGOs or the young people who had youth Conventions and who did the youth Convention and who participated in this process. So, I believe as an experiment this was a very good effort and we hope that like this it will go on in the future in any other the same process we have to follow.

The weakness of the Constitution for the Young Socialists are that we didn't clearly state it on the Constitution that we have, as Europeans, to preserve the social model of Europe, that is something special that doesn't exist in any other place on the planet and we have to assure, that we will preserve the social model of Europe. Unfortunately, there are some paragraphs about the social policy of the European Union, but they don't clearly say that we have to fulfil or to follow policies, which will strengthen the social model and will preserve the social model, because the growth of Europe was because of this social model.

The other weak point for us about the Constitution is, that we didn't have a statement in the Constitution, which will refer to the public services. We didn't have a

statement, which would clearly state that the public services have to be accessible to everybody or with a small tariff. And of course we believe that the public services are very important for social cohesion.

These are the two major weaknesses that exist in the Constitution. There are some other points, because Young Socialists believe that we had to eliminate total veto right, we have to change the way of how we make the decisions and to increase the role of the Parliament. So, we are very happy, because in some cases we overcame the problem of veto, that we still believe that in some cases we have to go on and eliminate it. We feel and think that the results of the discussion for the Constitution can be divided in to two periods. The first period was before the war in Iraq and the second - after the war. We believe, that after the war in Iraq, the Europeans are more ready to accept Common Security and Defence Policy, which was not the case before the war in Iraq. So, I think the next step in order to have the European Union as a global player, Europe needs real Common Foreign policy. This will need a lot of steps to be taken place in the European Union. The Constitution didn't manage to arrive in such a situation, but we hope that in the future it will.

The strength or the good point of the Constitution, is that for the first time we get rid of the documents, which were hard to be understand for citizens and even difficult for the people who were directly involved to understand what they really mean. But now we have a document, which has cohesion, that can be understand by the majority of the people. Nevertheless, only because of the discussion that started on the Constitution, means that in the sake of the development of the European Union.

Question 4

JEF's main campaign objective at the moment is to push the Head of States and Government to the adoption of the European Constitution before the 13 June 2004.

Is your party campaigning for the adoption of the draft Constitution?

Yes. It is not only JEF that campaign for the adoption of the Constitution. Also the Young European Socialists campaign for this. I am really happy of the election results in Spain, we have easier situation to order to arrive for the adoption of the Constitution. I really want and we really need the adoption of the Constitution before the European Parliament elections, because nevertheless these elections are different, because people

also have to vote for the Constitution. The deepest methods of these European elections must be the future development of the EU, which is directly connected to the new Constitution of the European Union. We strongly campaign for this and we fully support the adoption of the Constitution and we hope that the Irish Presidency will manage to do this in the next IGC meeting.

Question 5

JEF supports very much the article 26 of the draft Constitution, which gives the European Parliament the power to elect the president of the European Commission. Do you agree with this principle and if yes, will you already use this EP campaign to push forward a candidate of your party?

This is a delicate question. 50 years of European Community and European Union manage to create a lot of things in common policies, but still we have to do many things. Unfortunately, in this point we have a lot of national interests from some parties, which create and raise difficulties in order to arrive for a common candidate. The

Young European Socialists, ECOSY, really want to go on with one name, but realistically speaking I don't think it will happen. This will be really difficult to take place, because I am afraid we won't be able to overcome of some national interest to have name, but this is not only the case of Socialists, but also of other parties as well.

Question 6: As our EP campaign is based on the idea to "Give Europe a Face", I would like to ask you, which face you would like to give to the EU?

This is very difficult question for me, because I am not good in names, because I have a problem of remembering

them. I want to see Europe more social and more federal face and the name of this is the European Union.



Position: Secretary General
If not travelling: Finland

“My Europe gives an emphasis for its young Europeans to work together for even better and unified future of the European Union.”

Question 1

How do you see the role of the European Parliament vis à vis other EU institutions - now and in the future?

In my opinion it is clear that the decision-making process in the EU needs to more transparent and more democratic. The European Parliament is the only EU-institution which is legitimized by direct elections. Therefore EP elections are great opportunity to inspire the discussion of the EU in general during the campaign and remind the EU-citizens about the important

function of the European Parliament. In my opinion EP should gain more power in decision-making process, it should become the truly organ of the Union - together with reformed Council as a second chamber. The EP should be given the right of initiative for legislation to be exercised by one parliamentary groups or 10 % of the MEP's

Question 2

This is the first EP election after the enlargement, in this perspective, are you helping the new Member States in their election campaigns? What are your hopes for a true pan European EP campaign in the EU -25?

YEPP wants to give a platform for young candidates from new EU-countries providing new website where the parties, candidates, campaign managers can share the information, exchange ideas of their national EP campaigns. We want to give a tool to promote their political message and help reach their voters back home.

For true pan European campaign it is important that each and every organization promotes the idea what is really to be European, what are the concrete advantages and goals of the wider European Union. Reminding that the future of the Europe is ours, the future is young people - and that we are here present today making the best out of it.

Question 3

What are your opinions about the draft Constitution? What are its strengths and weaknesses?

The Constitution includes the clearer division of the competencies between the EU institutions and members states and the principle of subsidiarity has therefore much greater clarity. Positive is also that the Charter of Fundamental Rights will be made legally binding and the election of the

president of the Commission will rest with the EP which gives stronger power to individual citizens. The extension of the qualified majority voting for some important policy areas are also essential to keep the EU efficient.

Question 4

JEF's main campaign objective at the moment is to push the Head of States and Government to the adoption of the European Constitution before the 13 June 2004.

Is your party campaigning for the adoption of the draft Constitution?

In order to keep the EU efficient after enlargement it is essential that the Constitution would be adopted as soon as possible. YEPP has reacted immediately submitting resolution to express the

importance of the needed, rapidly completed reforms which could be completed in the framework of the Constitution. We will work on that in the future as well.

Question 5

JEF supports very much the article 26 of the draft Constitution, which gives the European Parliament the power to elect the president of the European Commission. Do you agree with this principle and if yes, will you already use this EP campaign to push forward a candidate of your party?

Ido agree with the fact that the EP would elect the president of the Commission and confirm the Commissioners individually. The Parliament should also have the power to remove individual Commissioners. There is many good names inside EPP family to

become the president of the Commission, and I'm also convinced that EPP will stay the biggest political party in the EP and therefore will have a strong say when nominating the president.

Question 6: As our EP campaign is based on the idea to "Give Europe a Face", I would like to ask you, which face you would like to give to the EU?

Iwould like to give the European Union a face, which continues to promote the idea of being a European with common goals and values. My Europe is dedicated to promote peace, economical prosperity and equality of every man and women .My Europe respects

the plurality of the political and cultural factors in its Member states. My Europe gives an emphasis for its young Europeans to work together for even better and unified future of the European Union.

The full version of JEF-Europe's Magazine,
The New Federalist
can be found at:

www.jef-europe.net
www.giveeuropeaface.net

Along with more information about JEF!