



IP 02 – Lessons from the YES Campaign

5 Starting with October 2004, JEF-Europe has been the leading organisation
running the European level YES Campaign in favour of the European Constitution.
Working closely with the European Movement International (EMI) and the Union
of European Federalists (UEF), a campaigning platform of civil society
organisations was formed at the European level. Its main aim was to assist
10 national campaign and promote the European dimension of the ratification
process.

With very limited financial resources, the YES Campaign managed to mobilize a
significant number of campaigners in different countries around Europe, mostly in
15 those facing ratification by referendum. However, several lessons have to be
drawn in order to make better use of the human resources in the pro-European
organisations in the future.

1. Format of the campaign

20 One of the leading elements of the campaign was linking the European-level
organisations into a campaigning structure where every partner would be able to
contribute according to its capacities. However several problems have been noted
and the following recommendations could be suggested for the future
campaigns:

- 25 - More importance should be paid to groups with specific working areas
(development NGOs, Trade Unions...), widening the classical pro-
European cooperation.
- 30 - For a large-scale campaigning effort a separate legal entity should be
considered, making swift policy-reaction possible.
- 35 - Genuine cooperation should be made a priority during the time of the
campaign - involving more consultations among the principle
partners.
- 40 - A wider effort at drafting different scenario options should precede
any campaign, thus considering more policy options. Timing may
however make this complex.

2. Cooperation with political parties

JEF has had a successful history of cooperation with political parties on single-issue campaigns. However, on wider-scale campaigns problems of such cooperation become evident:

- The campaign loses its civil-society nature and encounters the danger of becoming tied into party-political struggles.
- Many possible partners lose interest working along political parties due to reasons of principle.

3. Subsidiarity principle during a European campaign

The adoption of the European Constitution was of a purely European interest in the view of JEF. However during the sequence of national referendums, the national interests tend to prevail and the principle of subsidiarity comes into question. In order to assure the maximum success of the campaign, but also respect of ideological beliefs, JEF should clarify the following questions:

- How much should be the campaign adapted to the national environment and how much should it follow European interest?
- How should inaction on the national level be countered?
- How can we better mobilize national human resources where a lack of national campaigning structures exists?

4. Issues on which to campaign

The adoption of the European Constitution was widely regarded as of being in the interest of a vast number of civil society organisations and political parties. However, too often the support existed on paper and did not translate into consistent action and political commitment. Therefore the following points should be seriously considered in the future to guarantee that JEF's human resources are used in an effective way:

- the campaigning objective has to be shared by all the partners and only if this is clear should JEF commit to a large-scale campaign leading role,
- only issues of major importance to JEF should be translated into a financially consuming campaign, that also puts pressure on the human resources JEF operates with,
- JEF should seriously consider campaigning alone on the ground, where only limited impact can be made.

5. Financial aspect

5 Before any future campaign, JEF and its partners should seriously consider the financial situation of the organisations and possibilities to increase these as the campaign progresses. Therefore:

- an objective fundraising plan should be drafted before the campaign starts,
- 10 - the campaign should in no way financially prevent the organisation from functioning normally, but should on the opposite open new ways of financing its functioning.

6. Human Resources

15 An objective assessment of human resources available should precede any serious campaign effort. The level of mobilization of the activists in JEF should be at its maximum during the campaign and this requires considerable stress for the organisation.

20 The ratification of the European Constitution was a case of extremely complicated planning, since the format of ratification was not known until the very last moment, some of its elements even after the YES Campaign already started (dates of referendums in certain countries).

25 Any campaign in the future should therefore be preceded by a period of mobilization that should contain a strong effort of recruitment and educational build-up.