



How to Better Involve Citizens in the European Integration Process

How to Better Involve Citizens in the European Integration Process: Evaluations and Proposals in View of the Upcoming European Parliament Elections

On September 2008, five Institutes, the Istituto Affari Internazionali (coordinator, Rome), Centro Studi sul Federalismo (Turin), Federal Trust (London), Institut für Europäische Politik (Berlin), Notre Europe (Paris), in cooperation with Tepsa and EU-CONSENT, both networks of research centres in Europe, and with the support of the Institute of European Democrats - IED of Brussels, have joined to carry out a study on a crucial topic: how to make the process of European integration more legitimate.

In other words, how to fill the political/institutional void left by the protracted ratification process of the Treaty of Lisbon and how to recreate a strong political linkage between voters and European institutions.

The main aim of the initiative was not only to launch (once more) the proposal that European political parties nominate candidates for the post of President of the European Commission, but also to advocate that the European Parliament play a more crucial and central role, in terms of both the exercise of power and inter-institutional dialogue.

Starting out from the fundamental need for the EP to revive its political relations with the European Commission, the project set out to analyse the linkages with the Council system. From a more political perspective, aim of the project is also to consider the EPs connections with European political parties and internal political groups, their political priorities and platforms.

In the view of the 2009 EP elections, particular attention has been devoted to the European Parliament and its transnational political parties. Four papers have been elaborated on the following critical issues:

- how to use the powers of the European Parliament best to widen its role as a guarantor of democratic values in European decision-making processes: **Towards a Better Use of European Parliamentes Powers**, *Franco Mosconi, Antonio Padoa-Schioppa*.

- what role European political parties must play to support democratic processes: **European Political Parties and Democracy in the EU**, *Brendan Donnelly, Mathias Jopp*.
- what programme priorities should be fixed for the next legislative period, with the aim of mobilising the electorate on actual EU policies: **The Role of European Electoral Programmes**, *Francisco Roa Bastos*;
- how to present the names of the candidates for the Presidency of the Commission during the electoral campaign, partially anticipating what is provided for in the Treaty of Lisbon: **Should European Parties Propose a Candidate for the Presidency of the European Commission?**, *Gianni Bonvicini, Gian Luigi Tosato, Raffaello Matarazzo*.

The four background studies provided the necessary evaluations and input for drafting a call directed at all political forces, both national and European, to make the role of the European Parliament and other European institutions more comprehensible and palatable for an increasingly sceptical public opinion.

The task of drafting such a call fell to Tommaso Padoa Schioppa, President of Notre Europe. The call has been undersigned by the five Institutes, as well as the authors of the papers and other prominent European figures.

Democracy in the EU and the role of the European Parliament (PDF Format)