



Summary
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All propositions can be found at:
www.etatsgeneraux-europe.eu

What is the Europe Forum?

Two years after the French and Dutch “no” to the Constitutional Treaty, the Europe Forum was launched in 2007. It aims to:

- * Inject new dynamism into civil society, inspired by the spirit and the optimism of Europe's founding fathers
- * Become the essential event in the European civil-society calendar
- * Provide a place for exchange, dialogue and propositions between citizens of all generations and political leaders from the national and European level

This great get-together takes place over one day and features about 15 debates, as well as cultural, sporting and entertainment activities.



3 French editions of the Europe Forum already!

Europe Forum 1: 17 March 2007, Lille

« Proud to be European! »

Celebrating 50 years of the Treaty of Rome.

Europe Forum 2: 21 June 2008, Lyon

« Europe is us! »

Honorary guest country: Italy
Celebrating the French presidency of the EU and 50 years of the European Parliament.

Europe Forum 3: 17 April 2010, Strasbourg

« Europe: a legacy, what responsibilities? »

Honorary guest country: Germany
Celebrating 60 years of the Schuman Declaration and new terms of the European Commission and European Parliament.

A participatory event organised by civil society

The Europe Forum is an independent civil-society initiative with an emphasis on pluralism and participation. Since 2007 it has been organised by three associations: **Europanova, the European Movement France, and Notre Europe.**

More than 100 organisations (associations, NGOs, think tanks, trade unions, businesses and media) have already taken part in the Europa Forum, with cooperation from public bodies at the European, national and local level.

José-Manuel Barroso, honorary guest among 110 participants

The 3rd Europe Forum took place in Strasbourg on 17 April 2010. Guest of honour was José Manuel Barroso, president of the European Commission.



During a day of rich debate, 2000 citizens engaged with political and business leaders, trade unionists, and representatives of associations and the world of culture. They were able to have their say on EU issues and to propose future paths for European cooperation.

This document presents a summary of these propositions.

What the press said...

« France's first gathering of civil society »

Le journal du dimanche

« The 'Erasmus generation' wants to take its responsibilities » **Le Monde**

Proposition 1

A larger budget for more common policies

Sixty years after the Schuman Declaration, with the challenge of lasting peace met, the European Union must today turn to face new trials, on multiple and global fronts. Above all Europeans need to tackle the threat of economic imbalances, by means of better financial regulation but also by strengthening common policies – the only efficient way to respond to shared challenges. The Europe Forum's debates showed that a desire exists for increasing the EU's own resources after 2013.

An ambitious common agricultural policy

The CAP is at the heart of European integration. A crucial choice needs to be made over the reform of this policy and its budget. This is an opportunity for Europeans to clarify their expectations and wishes for agriculture, food and the countryside. The CAP has allowed Europe to meet quantitative objectives: food production is sufficient, and the EU is now a modern exporting zone. But on the objective of reasonable prices for consumers and producers, there has been less success. Falling disposable income for farmers threatens the future existence of the profession.

The Europe Forum proposes to give the post-2013 CAP the resources to:

- Guarantee the recruitment of new generations of farmers, and an agriculture which creates jobs;
- Provide high-quality food to European citizens by guaranteeing the stability of agricultural markets;
- Conserve natural resources and contribute to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

A European energy community

Energy is a special public good, which is becoming rare. The EU has a responsibility to its member states to develop a common energy policy based on the principle of solidarity. Article 194 of the Treaty of Lisbon now provides a legal basis to develop such a policy.

An effective European energy policy must comprise various principles: consumer protection and social fairness; competitiveness, effectiveness and energy security; public and private R&D investments; taxation via a clean-energy incentive; a control of needs and prices; and an external dimension to allow the EU to speak with one voice to major suppliers.

The Europe Forum supports Jacques Delors's proposition to create a European Energy Community along the lines sketched out by the founding fathers in 1951.

A top-class industrial policy

The United States is the leader in high-tech industry because of its investment in R&D. China, "workshop of the world", has become this industry's "laboratory" and with other emerging countries accounts for 52% of world production. With the exception of Germany, Europe's industry is not in good shape: the EU's 20% share of world production in 2000 has fallen to 15% today.

And yet industry is a fundamental component of the modern economy (energy, sustainable transport, green chemicals, biotechnology and nanotechnology). It is a powerful motor for research, innovation, training, exports and services. It is a synonym for production, jobs and major European infrastructure projects.

The EU is the world's largest unified market. It cannot go without a strong and integrated industrial policy, developed with the aims of competitiveness and productivity – its member states have become too small to run their own. A common industrial policy would be a lever both to deal with internal problems and to count at the global level.

To meet tomorrow's industrial challenges, the Europe Forum proposes:

That industrial policy not be simply a question of quantified targets in the Europe 2020 strategy, but that it also work to develop major technology projects;

To create an industry clause for all action taken by the EU, that is, to examine future repercussions for industry and its competitive position.

For a larger budget, funding by own resources

Strategic common policies need to be financed if they are to meet common challenges (agriculture, energy, industry). The current EU budget is insufficient to fund the necessary investment. In spite of current economic constraints, the Europe Forum is convinced that it is urgent to push for greater EU budget resources. It proposes to take a full part in the debate over the 2013-20 budget.

Proposition 2

Strengthening EU social policy to prevent an “ever-closer union of peoples” becoming a competition between peoples.

The Europe Forum was an opportunity for some citizens to express profound worries about their future economic prospects and about social policy. Beyond the crisis, they see European integration as the unravelling of the European social model, and as a threat to European values, in terms of solidarity, social justice, social protection and workplace relations.

Such fears are clearly a source of disaffection for the European project. But by the same token economic and social issues are an area for action which might re-legitimise European cooperation, and give hope to citizens worried about economic globalisation.

Perceived threats to the social model

Between member states there is much diversity in terms of social protection, workplace dialogue (issues covered, relative weight of actors and the law), labour costs and employee representation. The Europe Forum expressed a desire that competition between businesses within the internal market should not mean that a premium goes to jurisdictions with the weakest social and fiscal regimes.

Similar fears were expressed over the future of public services, which are perceived as a part of the social model. There was concern about prioritising the economic utility of public services to the detriment of their “general interest” role.

Care for the most vulnerable Europeans

The European Union is one of the richest regions in the world, yet nearly 1 European in 5 lives below the poverty line (60% of national median income) – 80 million people. Poverty particularly concerns young people and the working poor, whose numbers are increasing across Europe. The issue of the working poor is a special worry. Poverty traps within member states are caused by regulations and provisions which do not allow working people to earn a dignified level of income. Problems include part-time contracts, repeated short-term contracts, and minimum social standards situated beneath the poverty line.

Principles to restate

The EU needs to defend itself in the international arena, by arguing for regulation of world trade which includes social and environmental standards, and financial regulation which works against speculation.

Social policy remains essentially a competence of member states and local authorities, but the EU must do what it can to enforce respect for personal dignity and the social model to which citizens are legitimately attached. In this regard the European Commission's Europe 2020 strategy proposes a framework for intelligent, sustainable and inclusive growth. **But the Commission will need more power if it is to force member states to apply these objectives.**

Propositions to strengthen EU action in social policy

- **Define flagship measures to work towards a real European labour market, including basic common rights, in order to guarantee European convergence of these rights** and facilitate the application of rules for SMEs.
- Do not reduce the Europe 2020 strategy's poverty and exclusion objectives to the employment rate alone, and instead take into account the most vulnerable, the “working poor” and the quality of jobs. Improve the integration of social factors within EU policies.
- **Attach a social progress protocol to the treaties.** It would guarantee equal legitimacy for European social law alongside the market freedoms defined in the treaties (free movement of goods, services, capital and people), and it would be a foundation for negotiated settlements on minimum wages, tax, services of general interest, directives on working time and seconded workers, etc. It could be instituted by means of an enhanced cooperation measure in social policy, or by a general social progress protocol.

Proposition 3

Strengthen citizen participation in EU decision-making by supporting initiatives encouraging meeting and reflection, such as the Europe Forum

The European project has created new institutions which aim to provide citizens with a tier of decision-making at the level of the problems that exist. "We are not bringing together states, we are uniting people", said Jean Monnet, inspirer of the Schuman Declaration. And yet sixty years later citizens participate little if at all in the European project which brings them together. After the glorious years of enthusiasm, Europeans have been losing interest – and all the while the EU's influence has not stopped growing. The low turnout at European elections, especially among young voters, shows that Europe is not interesting enough and above all not well enough understood. It also creates a serious problem of legitimacy for the European Parliament.

Not only member-state governments but also citizens must take an active part in the European project. The EU has created new democratic responsibilities. The involvement of citizens is necessary since without them (the demos) the immense work-in-progress of European cooperation (the kratos) cannot advance.

The Lisbon Treaty represents a major step forward for European integration. In particular the new treaty stipulates that the EU's functioning be based on representative democracy. The treaty also provides for elements of participatory democracy in its article 11 – horizontal civil dialogue (article 11.1), vertical civil dialogue (11.2), consultations by the Commission (11.3) and the European citizens' initiative (11.4).

But much remains to be done if a citizens' Europe is to be achieved. The provisions of article 11 are a legal framework which must be put into practice and better supported by local, national and European institutions.

To create a genuine European public space, the Europe Forum recommends:

- The establishment of a working group with the aim of promoting the teaching of European history, perhaps on the model of the Franco-German history textbook;
- The creation of a « common foundation of knowledge and skills for a European citizenship » ;
- Strengthening of mobility programmes, including those for apprentices.

To improve citizens' participation in the European project, the Europe Forum asks for

The extension of the Europe Forum by the creation of a study group comprising civil-society actors, political leaders and the media, to support the work of the European Parliament and to consider ways of interesting the public in European elections;

The creation of a status of European association, to facilitate dialogue involving civil society at the European level;

Financial support for debates organised by civil-society groups within the framework of European Commission consultations;

The maintenance or increase of budget resources for citizenship programmes such as "Europe for citizens", "Youth in action";

A facilitated implementation of the European citizens' initiative, in particular by the creation of a website, managed by the European Commission, to accept the citizens' initiatives.

Cross-border regions, veritable laboratories of European integration, must become models for citizen involvement, by:

- Increased capacities and status for such regions, with particular regard to their political, economic, social and educational dimensions;
- Encouraging the participation of citizens in cross-border cooperation by means of citizen consultations.

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