

BRIDGING
EUROPE

a joint project of

WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM
MONDAY MORNING THINKTANK OF NEWS

FIRST GENERATION EUROPE

REPORT FROM THE BRIDGING
EUROPE YOUTH COMMUNITY



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Foreword

Bridging Europe is a joint initiative of the World Economic Forum and Monday Morning designed to promote democratic sustainability in Europe through a qualified dialogue with its citizens. The key group to engage in the debate on the future of Europe is youth – the new generation of Europeans. That is why Bridging Europe launched an unparalleled series of dialogue activities in the spring and summer of 2002.

For nine weeks, up to 1,000 young people aged between 18 and 25 from 33 European countries participated in a unique online community discussing different issues of great importance to Europe and the EU. The youths used the Web dialogue as a platform to make their voice heard by European leaders, not least the weekly discussion partners from political institutions, businesses, NGOs and academia.

Following the Web dialogue, all 1,000 young Europeans travelled to Denmark for Youth 2002, a two-week meeting at 13 Danish Folk High Schools. In Denmark, the youths were given the task of producing a very tangible outcome of engagement: a draft proposal for a European Constitution. The result of their combined efforts was warmly welcomed by the Danish EU presidency and the President of the Convention on the Future of Europe, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing.

The Bridging Europe activities in 2002 developed into a unique reflection of the values that will characterize Europe in the future. The following is our final analysis of the young Europeans' contributions, based on their own words in the dialogue and a major survey closely monitoring the entire process. It is a profile of what can be seen as the first real Europeans.

It is our hope that the voice of the young Europeans will be heard – and that the future of Europe currently taking shape will correspond to their dreams and visions.

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Summary

For the first time in Europe's history, a significant part of a generation wants to feel European, share European political values and trust public European institutions. This new European generation were kids when the Berlin Wall fell. They easily travel all over Europe. When they meet, they speak the same English language. The Internet and its massive democratization of information is second nature to them. For these young Europeans, the European Union is not just boring technical debates. The European Union is a possible embodiment of their shared political values.

The European Union has been one of the main driving forces in changing Europe's history and creating this new significant group of true Europeans. Now the EU has to change itself in order to live up to their expectations.

Their vision for Europe is a short and deceptively simple list of principles about getting the basics of Europe and European institutions right, before building an elaborate political architecture. When these principles are put into real practice, young Europeans are strong supporters of a much larger, broader and ambitious EU.

This is the key message from the Bridging Europe Youth Community of 1,000 young Europeans from 33 countries. The community has been part of a major, innovative democratic experiment. During nine weeks of Web dialogue, in a two-week stay at Danish Folk High Schools, and by answering three extensive questionnaires during the process, the youths have developed a common vision for the future of Europe and shaped it into a very concrete result: the draft of a European constitution.

It is the first time such an extensive dialogue based on such a unique combination of democratic tools has taken place. It has paved the way for a new understanding of the young generation of Europeans.

And it has added new perspective to the debate on the future of the European Union.

The Bridging Europe Youth Community reveals a new generation less interested in the finer details of Europe's legal architecture or in reforming the Common Agricultural Policy. Their aim is to specify a principled and solid foundation for a future Europe, where the citizens feel a sense of community and have real trust in common institutions. To them, the defining principles for the future Europe should be:

- **A sense of community.** These young Europeans feel they have a lot in common. More than nine in ten feel European to some extent. They strongly support EU enlargement, as their sense of community involves not only the present EU member states but the whole of Europe. However, they are at the same time truly modern humans who consciously choose their political identity. Feeling European and supporting European institutions will always be a reflection more than an instinct. If the European Union does not live up to their expectations, they will look somewhere else to place their sense of community.

- **Shared political values.** Europe is not a cultural, religious or even geographical community. Europe should only be defined by shared political values. Respect for human rights is a key criterion for EU membership according to 95% of the Youth Community. Only 10% emphasize geography as a criterion. A broad concept of citizen rights, similar to the Charter of Fundamental Rights for the European Union, forms the core of the European political values. Basic human rights protect the individual and guarantee democracy. A broader set of social rights provides day-to-day guidelines for public

policy, whose aim should be to provide as many opportunities as possible for the citizens.

- **Trustworthy public institutions.** Values alone are not enough. Strong, but trustworthy, institutions are needed to ensure that these values are respected and not forgotten when the day-to-day policies are devised. 81% of the Youth Community want the European Union to act as a force for the basic political values of peace, democracy and development for citizens from all parts of Europe. At the same time, 90% of the youths demand total transparency in all EU activities. And 69% want the European Union to provide a platform for the direct involvement of citizens in the decision making. These principles form the very safeguards against the misuse of institutions.

Despite its simplicity, this is a very demanding list of principles. It will require true leadership to fulfil them. The principles are very close to the heart of the real demands that the European Union places on any applicant country. To a large extent it is the EU, despite its many faults, that has moved these principles to the top of the young Europeans' agenda. Today the EU is its own greatest challenge. Now the time has come for the European Union itself to change and to live up to these demands.

Right now, the young Europeans are very favourable towards EU institutions. But their relatively high trust in the European Union is to a large extent a mirror of the dissatisfaction with their national political institutions, especially among participants from the southern and eastern parts of Europe.

Enlarging the EU with these countries can therefore give a dangerous breathing space for the discussion of the democratic deficit. But if the EU does not adapt to a Europe, where the member states

generally improve their governance, it will lose most of its legitimacy in the next decades.

The warning signs from the participants in the Bridging Europe initiative are very much worth listening to. It is not a collection of predictable career-governed young politicians. Instead the Community represents the interested and active parts of European youth. If the European Union cannot convince them, it cannot convince anyone.

Notably, the interested, English-speaking Bridging Europe Youth Community still constitutes a minority among young Europeans. But its participants also represent a democratic beginning that ought to be expanded.

This requires new democratic tools. Again the Bridging Europe initiative is a good place to start. In a nutshell, the combination of online Web dialogue and in-person Folk High School meetings has proved both successful and productive. During the process of Bridging Europe activities, the participants actually became slightly more critical towards the European Union. But far more importantly, their engagement in Europe's future was enhanced and their knowledge increased. They became more like citizens of Europe.

The Bridging Europe initiative has thus been testament to the real value of a thorough democratic dialogue based on the strong involvement of major stakeholder groups with the young Europeans at the very centre.

1. Bridging Europe: New Dialogue Across Europe

Europe is in danger of disconnecting its young citizens. Young people feel politically marginalized and have responded with apathy and a lack of interest in European politics. But if the future Europe currently taking shape is to be sustainable and build on strong support from its citizens, it must correspond to the Europe wanted by its future citizens. Therefore, Europe must make a strong effort to reach the next generation of Europeans. The Bridging Europe activities in 2002 have started this much-needed dialogue with a core group of young Europeans. Through a major series of dialogue initiatives, Bridging Europe has attempted to foster a basic understanding of their Europe as a basis for further outreach.

1.1. Europe Disconnected from Its Next Generation

The future of Europe is currently taking shape: EU enlargement will create a Union bigger than ever, and the European Convention is intended to propose new structures for the challenges ahead. The next generation of Europeans should be key in this process, both to add spice and fresh ideas to the process, and to make sure that the future Europe is supported and entrusted by its future citizens.

Calls for ensuring such civic engagement have been raised by renowned academics like the German Sociologist Ulrich Beck for years, and are only now being heard by politicians and business leaders all over Europe. Since the Nice Treaty and the Laeken declaration in 2001, the European Union has expressed a stronger need to listen more closely to its citizens, particularly the young generation of Europeans.

Critics, however, argue that existing dialogue initiatives stemming from the Nice Treaty, rotating EU



presidencies and lately the Convention on the Future of Europe only reach an extremely limited group of young “insiders” already active in national or European politics. The Youth Convention is one of these examples (see insert).

This criticism is supported by recent Eurobarometer polls showing that:¹

- Only a very small proportion of the young Europeans – less than 11% – feel they really participate in the political debate on one of the key issues related to the future of Europe: EU enlargement.

The European Youth Convention

The participants in the European Youth Convention were selected directly by the members of the European Convention, the appointed representatives of national governments and national parliaments of EU member states and candidate countries, the European Parliament and the European Commission. The Youth Convention consisted of 210 young people from 18 to 25 years of age who, from 9 to 12 July 2002, discussed issues relating to the future of Europe in Brussels in the European Parliament. The work was organized along the same lines as the European Convention and the results were presented to the European Convention on 13 July.

Source: www.european-convention.eu.int

1 Eurobarometer 56.3, May 2002; Eurobarometer 55, October 2001

- Less than one-third of 15-24 year old Europeans are interested in engaging in dialogue and discussions about the future of Europe – mainly because they experience a lack of knowledge, feel their views are not taken into account anyway, or lack a basic interest in politics.

The result is a young generation of Europeans tending towards political apathy and real disconnection from the important processes shaping the framework for their own future as European citizens. This is indeed a dangerous perspective for the future of Europe. It reveals a tremendous gap between European leaders and youths and should cause considerable worry. Apparently, European decision-makers lack the basic understanding of the young generation necessary to engage them in dialogue.

If the youth is disconnected from the European project, and the next Europe does not correspond to their understandings and visions of Europe, a new generation of Euro-sceptics with strong distrust in pan-European institutions threatens to develop. Therefore, new initiatives – and new forms of dialogue – are strongly needed. The initiatives should foster a thorough understanding of the Europe of the young generation. They should narrow the gap between European leaders and the European youth. And they should make sure that future citizens are involved in the formation of the future Europe.

1.2 The Bridging Europe Dialogue

Through its activities in 2002, the Bridging Europe initiative has aimed to facilitate the much-needed dialogue with young Europeans. The purpose has been to find new ways of engaging the youth in dialogue on the future of Europe, to explore their view of Europe and European integration, and to help close the gap between the European Union and its younger citizens.

The basic approach of the activities has been to address the challenges of European youth dialogue

effectively by greater inclusion and integration of all stakeholder groups in the debate on the future of Europe and by putting youth at the core and not the periphery of the discussion.

The Bridging Europe initiative has taken a pan-European approach, involving young people from 33 European countries – all current EU member states, all applicant states as well as a number of non-applicant European countries. The activities have focused on a particular group of young Europeans – those who have an interest in participating in the debate on the future of Europe, but who are not already “insiders” of the EU system.

As demonstrated above, interested youths constitute a minority among European youths at large. But they represent an obvious starting point for exploring new forms of dialogue and increasing our understanding of the youths’ perception of the European Union and their vision of the future Europe as a basis for further outreach.

Therefore, this particular group was recruited for the 1,000-large **Bridging Europe Youth Community**. The participants in the Youth Community were found through an open and transparent recruitment process that has separated Bridging Europe from, for example, the Youth Convention (see insert below).

Bridging Europe

Introduced in mid-2001, Bridging Europe is a major all-European initiative designed to overcome political indifference among European citizens. The initiative puts special emphasis on communication with young Europeans through a dialogue on the future of Europe in its activities for 2002 and 2003.

Bridging Europe is a joint initiative of the World Economic Forum and the Nordic think tank Monday Morning, with PricewaterhouseCoopers, Danfoss and Novo Nordisk as co-founders and partners of the project. The initiative enjoys the support of the European Commission, the European Parliament, UNICEF and various NGOs, as well as the support of several World Economic Forum partners and members.

Visit www.weforum.org/bridgingeurope for more information on the initiative.

The Recruitment Process for the Bridging Europe Youth Community

- **Participation** in Bridging Europe activities was open to all interested 18-25 year old Europeans from 33 countries. Travel expenses were reimbursed for all participants to ensure equal opportunities for participation, keeping the total cost for each participant at 100 euros, covering the two-week Youth 2002 meeting in Denmark.
- **Invitations** were spread throughout Europe via various sources – most notably local media, the Internet, schools, local networks, etc. Application forms were available online only, as applicants had to have access to the Internet to participate.
- **Selection criteria** to ensure the diversity of the Community included an even distribution of gender, country/region of origin, organizational activities and memberships. Participants needed a basic proficiency in English and had to submit a motivational statement.

Participants in the Bridging Europe Youth Community went through a major, unparalleled series of dialogue activities from May to July 2002, demonstrating that it is indeed possible to engage the youth in the future of Europe:

For nine weeks, the young Europeans discussed various issues related to Europe and the EU in an online Web debate – a net-based version of a European town hall.

The online community submitted more than 240 questions and comments each week. The participation rate was significantly above the odds for a successful online discussion (more than 20% participation on average) and participants spent an average of 50 minutes in the discussion.

The Web dialogue featured the most salient issues pertaining to the future of Europe, including European identity (the most popular theme with 775 visits), EU enlargement and EU institutions and democracy. Key European leaders from business, politics, civil society and academia joined the discussion online, including among others:

- Klaus Schwab, President of the World Economic Forum, and Finish Minister Eva Biaudet on

European Identity;

- Business leader and philanthropist George Soros and NGO leader Giampiero Alhadeff on Europe and Globalization;
- EU Commissioner Vitorino and think tank director Charles Grant on Institutional Reform;
- EU Commissioner Verheugen on European Enlargement;
- CEO Hubert Burda and media leader Giles Merritt on European Media and Public Opinion.

For two weeks following the Web dialogue, the 1,000 youths travelled to Denmark to stay at 13 Danish Folk High Schools and work on a concrete proposal for a European constitution. Their stay was organized by the Youth 2002 association (see insert below). Danish Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen seized the occasion of the Youth 2002 meeting to launch the Danish Presidency of the European Union. The meeting with the Prime Minister proved an important launch pad for the two-week meeting and linked the event to the political agenda from its very beginning.

After the two weeks of debate and intense negotiations, on 12 July the Youth Community submitted their proposal for a European constitution. The constitution was presented live by satellite to Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, President of the Convention on the Future of Europe.

During this intensive process, participants completed three consecutive 60-question surveys uncovering their attitudes and opinions towards the European project: one questionnaire online during the Web dialogue, one at the beginning of their stay in Denmark, and one at the end.

1.3 Methodology and Key Outcomes

The comprehensive range of Bridging Europe activities represents a first-of-its-kind pan-European experiment of democratic dialogue. It has been based

Youth 2002

Youth 2002 is a European youth project organized in cooperation with a number of Folk High Schools, youth associations and international organizations, with the intention to involve European youth in the debate on the future of the EU and to contribute to the establishment of a common European public. The initiative for Youth 2002 was taken by ACC - Association for Community Colleges, IUC-Europe, Folkehøjskolernes Forening in Denmark, Dansk Ungdoms Fællesråd and 12 Danish Folk High Schools. Youth 2002 is supported by the European Commission, EAC, the European Parliament, Undervisningsministeriet, Danske Bank, Landbrugsraadet, Metal, Folkehøjskolernes Forening i Danmark, Nævnet vedrørende EU-oplysning, NGO-Centret and Gouda Forsikring, among others.

Visit www.youth2002.org for more information.

on a unique combination of tools for dialogue with and understanding of the European youth:

The Web dialogue allowed participants to take part in high quality dialogue for a longer period where distance and scheduling made face-to-face dialogue impossible, and enabled them to form a virtual community.

The Folk High Schools transformed the virtual community into a physical one and provided participants with a unique inter-cultural and highly qualitative personal meeting between people across cultures and generations.

The three consecutive surveys provided an extensive quantitative characteristic of the participants while systematically mapping and measuring developments in their opinions.

The experiment was developed with inspiration from the method of the deliberative poll: a democratic method based on the idea of selecting a microcosm of the public and inviting its members to engage in a dialogue with opportunities to interact with experts and decision-makers and, over time, to come to a considered and informed judgement on a particular issue. The process is closely monitored by a consecutive series of surveys before, during and after the process.

In a nutshell, the key insight resulting from the Bridging Europe activities is that investing more in multi-stakeholder projects and leveraging outcomes could be the true innovation needed to bridge the gap between the old and the new Europe. The results of the surveys monitoring the dialogue process demonstrate that the democratic experiment was highly successful and delivered intangible and tangible results in many different areas, including:

- **Increased knowledge.** At the end of the Bridging Europe activities, after the two-week stay at the Folk High Schools in Denmark, 92% of participants reported an increased knowledge, while 96% reported a better understanding of different views of Europe.
- **Democratic empowerment.** At the beginning of the process, approximately one-fifth of participants found it unlikely to join forces with people in other European countries to pursue common causes on a European level. By the end of the process, this share had decreased to less than one in ten.
- **Changed opinions.** Many participants did in fact change their opinions on EU issues. Changes generally went both ways but, for instance, trust in the EU decreased a little: -0.4 on a scale of zero to ten.

Furthermore, the Bridging Europe activities developed into a unique reflection of the values that will characterize Europe in the future. They provided the basis for a more thorough understanding of the young generation.

After a more detailed portrait of the 1,000-large Bridging Europe Youth Community, the following chapters will present this understanding. It is based on an extensive and in-depth analysis of the survey results and Web dialogue supplemented by the young Europeans' common draft of a European constitution.

The Bridging Europe Survey

The survey consisted of three partly different questionnaires conducted at the beginning of the Web dialogue and at the start and finish of the stay in Denmark. A set of core questions identical in all three questionnaires made it possible to track changes during the process. The survey was prepared in cooperation with leading expert Professor Jørgen Goul Andersen from Aalborg University. Pre-testing was done on a number of young Danes.

The survey included a total of 505 variables and focused on views of Europe and the EU: general views and expectations, institutional trust and specific points of view on EU enlargement. There were also questions on basic values or morality, democratic values, political participation, self-assessed political competence plus demographic variables, and questions relating to the process of the project.

483 participants completed the first questionnaire. 803 answered the second questionnaire. Unless otherwise stated this group was used in the analysis. 610 answered the third questionnaire. 429 participants answered all three questionnaires and this group was used to track changes.

The survey produced a vast set of data that has been subjected to thorough statistical processing. These analyses – together with an analysis of the Web dialogue and the constitution – form the backbone of this report. Please note, however, that not all the statistical data and analyses are included in the report due to its limited volume.

The complete questionnaires are available online at www.mm.dk

2. The First Generation – Who Are They?

When the Berlin Wall fell, the participants in the Bridging Europe Youth Community were still children. Now they have grown up to become a significant group among the young European generation. They are not only the most interested youths, they are also the ones making the most of the opportunities of the new undivided Europe. As such, they are the front-runners of a generation with the potential to become the first truly European one. This in turn makes them a critical group to explore from an EU perspective.

2.1 The Post-Wall Generation

The Bridging Europe Youth Community does not constitute a “mini-Europe” – its participants are not a representative sample of European youth. Instead, they were selected for their heightened interest; they are young Europeans who, as described in chapter 1, only constitute a minority.

Nonetheless, they are part of the first post-Wall generation of Europeans: The participants in the Bridging Europe Youth Community are 18-25 years old. When the Berlin Wall was torn down, the youngest of them were in kindergarten and most of them were still learning how to read. They share several of the characteristics that provide their generation with the opportunity to become the first really European generation:

- **They have grown up in an open and undivided Europe.** They have not been raised in an era marked by the same cold ideological climate as their parents. During their youth, democracy has spread to cover all of Europe.
- **The European Union has been a point of reference.** This has occurred through their own coun-



tries' membership; because of discussions of EU accession; or because of the role of the EU towards their country.

- **They can communicate across borders.** Only 31% speak no foreign language and English is becoming the *lingua franca* of young Europeans. Four in ten use the Internet weekly and this share is steadily increasing.²
- **They can move freely across borders.** They can travel, study, work and live all over Europe to an extent unheard of a generation ago – especially because of the EU.

The possibilities for the young generation of Europeans have generally been a world apart from those of most of their parents, not to mention their grandparents, who were survivors of World War II. For young Europeans, Europe is an area of opportunities. And what makes the participants in the Bridging Europe Youth Community so special is that they take full advantage of these opportunities. They are the front-runners of the first generation of post-Wall Europe. They are the key beneficiaries of the opening of Europe and among the first to men-

2 Eurobarometer Special Report 151, 2001

tally transcend the old borders. As such, they can be seen as the first true Europeans.

Where the majority of European youth distance themselves from the European project and some even use their freedom to enclose themselves into tight subcultures, the participants in the Bridging Europe Youth Community react exactly in the opposite manner by opening their minds:

They engage in numerous activities. For example the youths are involved in the Slovenian association for disabled students, “The Woodcraft Folk”, the Albanian Student Network, Animal Rights in Sweden, AIESEC in Estonia, 4H in Denmark, the Spanish Red Cross and Friends of Science, Arts and Culture of Istanbul, and they come from a vast number of universities throughout Europe.

They travel and study abroad. On average they have visited three other countries in the last two years. They usually speak no less than 3 to 4 languages: their mother tongue, English, plus one or two other languages.

They are interested and active. 45% of the Community participants debate politics often, only 9% do so rarely, and 72% listen to news everyday. On average they are active in two organizations, mainly civic and student organizations of various kinds, and have tried three different forms of political participation within the last year, spanning from approaching the media and collecting signatures, to taking part in demonstrations. However they are not “EU insiders” or traditional youth politicians who aim to get an additional item on their CV: only 14% of the Youth Community are members of a political party (see insert next page).

2.2 A Litmus Paper for Europe

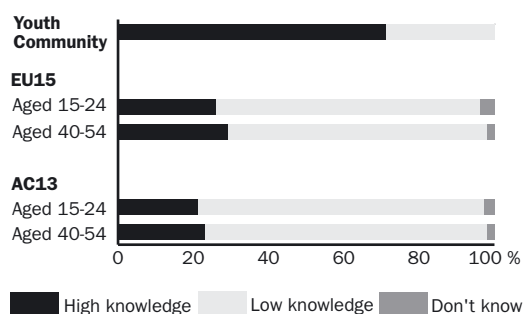
The Bridging Europe Youth Community is not only interesting because of its new perspective on Europe. Its participants are also in many ways likely to

be – or become – opinion leaders in favour of pan-European cooperation in their communities.

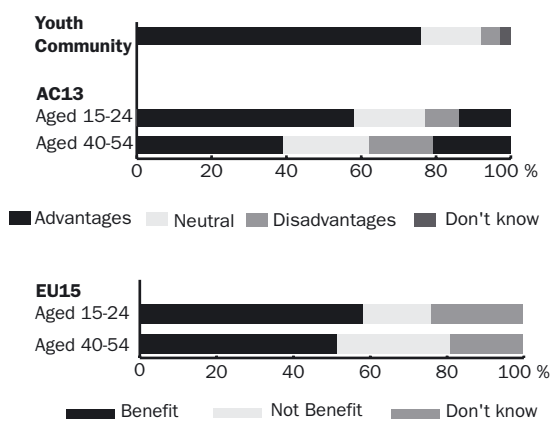
The Youth Community is a relatively more knowledgeable and reflective group than the general youth (see Figure 2.1). And they are also more positive towards the benefits of EU membership than the youth at large – reflecting that they belong to the group of core “benefactors” and supporters of EU membership: the young, the urban and the well-educated.

Future Opinion-leaders

Perceived knowledge about the EU



Perceived national benefits of EU membership



Please note different scales for EU members and applicant countries plus Bridging Europe Youth Community.

Source: Monday Morning and World Economic Forum, Eurobarometer 56; Applicant Countries Eurobarometer 2001

Figure 2.1: The Bridging Europe Youth Community participants perceive themselves to be more knowledgeable and their countries to be more beneficiary of EU membership than both younger and older Europeans in general.

Facts on the Bridging Europe Youth Community

The Bridging Europe Youth Community consists of 1,000 young people between 18 and 25 years of age from 33 European countries. 56% are women and 44% are men. 92% of its participants are students. Furthermore Youth Community participants are:

All-European. For analytical purposes the Youth Community is divided into five regions: southern EU member states (Portugal, Spain, Italy and Greece), northern EU member states (the rest), the ten first-tier applicants, the three second-tier applicants (Romania, Bulgaria and Turkey) and the South Eastern European countries (Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, F.R. Yugoslavia and F.Y.R. Macedonia). 46% of the Youth Community come from the 15 EU member states, 44% of the Youth Community come from the 13 applicant countries, 10% come from the South Eastern European countries.

Representing all major religions in Europe. The largest religious group is Roman Catholics with 34% of the Youth Community, 18% are Eastern Orthodox, 16% are Protestants, 5% are Muslims, 3% are other religions including Jews, Buddhists and Hindus. A large part, 24%, do not belong to any religious denomination.

Highly ambitious. Nine in ten expect to achieve a graduate or postgraduate degree before finishing their studies. They aim at all sectors of society. 24% expect to work in business; 26% in politics and public administration; 14% in media and arts; and 29% expect to work as “professionals” including doctors, lawyers, teachers, nurses, etc.

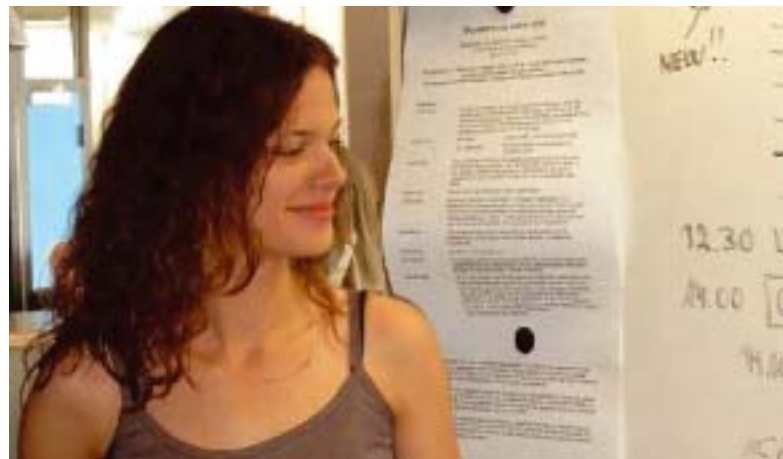
Politically mainstream. Illegal or extreme forms of political participation do not get much support among Youth Community participants. In their opinion, the most effective way to influence political decisions is voting at elections, while signing petitions is among the least effective. On a Left to Right political scale from zero to ten, no less than 46% place themselves in the Centre (4 to 6), 30% to the Left (0 to 3) and 16% to the Right (7 to 10) while 8% don't know. Overall, the Youth Community leans slightly to the Left with an average of 4.5, where 5 is the political Centre.

As such, the Youth Community can be seen as a “litmus paper” for the European Union. If present EU policies or practices are at odds with this Community, something is or will go seriously wrong.

This makes them an interesting starting point for dialogue. In the following chapters, their understanding of Europe and the European Union will be explored.

3. Their View of Europe

The young Europeans participating in the Bridging Europe initiative feel part of a greater European community. Neither a “quasi-national” cultural community, nor a community based on religion, economic interests or even geography – but a European political community based on values. Therefore, the role of the European Union is important to them: the European political community needs strong and trustworthy public institutions to embody, guard and promote their shared values. This is what they expect the EU to do as its prime purpose.



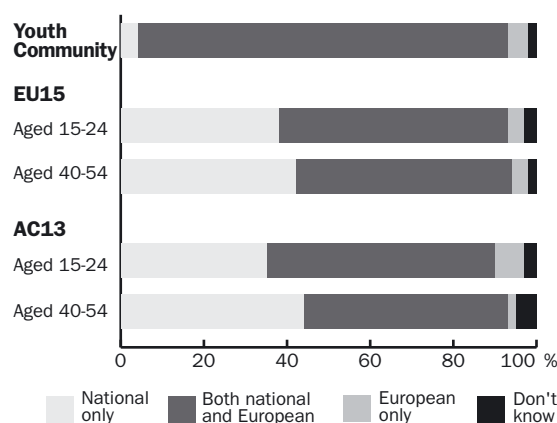
3.1 A Chosen European Identity

“I’m a European Dane or a Danish European! (...) This meaning that we all have our own personal and national identities but added to that, one can choose the European identity” (Anders Blok, Denmark).

The opening and democratization of Europe has produced an increasing appreciation of common values, a growing sense of community, but also the specialities of one’s own history among young Europeans.

Feeling European

National or European in the Future?



The young people of the post-Wall generation can choose between “belonging” to a variety of communities, including various youth cultures and groups, local, national or global societies – and a European community as well. Feeling European is only one identity among others.

Note: Question: "In the near future, do you see yourself as a [citizen of your country]; as a [citizen of your country] and as a European; as a European and a [citizen of your country]; or as a European only?"
Source: Monday Morning and World Economic Forum;

However, the 1,000 participants in the Bridging Europe initiative have chosen to be European (see Figure 3.1). 89% of the participants in the Youth Community feel both national and European. Only 4% do not feel European to any extent. In this sense they represent the front-runners of the post-Wall generation: they depict the first pan-European group where an overwhelming majority actually chooses to be European. This sense of community on a pan-European level is not quite as widespread among all youths. 55% of young Europeans from both present EU member states and applicant countries feel both national and European. Less than four in ten feel a national identity only. But the youths are still slightly less nationalistic than the older generations.

Figure 3.1: Most young Europeans feel both national and European at the same time. Feeling European to some extent is more prevalent among younger than older Europeans.

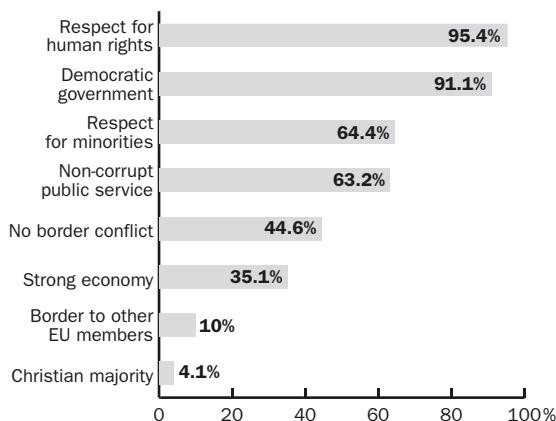
However, very few young people – both among the Bridging Europe Youth Community and European youths at large – feel European only. They hold on to their national identities while being European at the same time. This does not have to involve any conflicts. To young Europeans, national and European identities are not mutually exclusive – they are complementary and exist side by side.

In fact, it is the diversity of different nations, peoples and cultures, each with their histories, customs and traditions within the shared pan-European community, that make Europe so special, according to the Bridging Europe participants. Their sense of European identity makes them favour a united Europe, but not a unified one. On the contrary, Europe should guard and protect its diversity, which perhaps more than anything unites the peoples of the continent.

“Europe is, and has always been, a kaleidoscope of identities and the beauty of the kaleidoscope is neither found in the yellow nor in the pink but in the

Shared Values: The Key Criteria

Very important criteria for EU membership



Note: Question: "Below is a list of criteria to become a member of the EU. Please state whether they are very important, rather important, less important or not important." (Percent indicates very important only.)

Figure 3.2: Values and principles for society such as human rights and democracy are what matters as criteria for EU membership to the Bridging Europe Youth Community.

whole composition of colours altogether” (Helena Soares Silva, Portugal).

This form of European identity is a cornerstone of the next Europe, according to the Bridging Europe youths, not the creation of one single, supranational European identity based on a “quasi-national” cultural community.

The young Europeans do not necessarily fear this “unification”: according to Eurobarometer, among the 15 to 24 year-old Europeans in the 15 EU member states, only 11% generally think the EU will lead to a loss of national identities.³ As for the participants in the Bridging Europe Youth Community, 70% tend to agree that a united Europe can actually *protect* their states’ historical and cultural identities as a barrier against the pressure of “McDonaldization”.

However, it does mean that the European Union should take care not to be misunderstood by trying to create too many EU-quasi-nationalistic symbols, such as the EU flag, EU hymn, etc. For the vast majority of youths, the very thought of creating a new “Euro man” is similar to ill-fated attempts to create the “Soviet man”. Selling the European community in a similar fashion has been tried without success in the past. Instead, young Europeans favour “unity in diversity”.

As long as the European Union understands this, the Bridging Europe Youth Community signals great potential for the EU to build on a young generation strongly in favour of – and with strong feelings for – European unity.

3 Eurobarometer Special Report 151, 2001

3.2 A Europe of Values

According to the 1,000 participants in the Bridging Europe initiative, Europe is first and foremost defined by its values. It is a *political* community based on a broad concept of citizen rights and shared principles for society. To the participants, economic interests, religion or even geography do not matter to any comparable extent.

The Bridging Europe Youth Community’s definition of Europe is highlighted in their selection of key criteria for becoming a member of the European Union (see Figure 3.2).

Human rights and democracy are the key criteria for membership of the main institution of the European community. They are emphasized by more than nine out of ten Youth Community participants. And minority rights and principles of good governance are deemed very important by more than 60%. On the contrary, only 35% of participants in the Bridging Europe Youth Community emphasize a strong economy and geography and religion are only very important to 10% or less. Their border for Europe is not drawn at the Urals, but in the values of society.

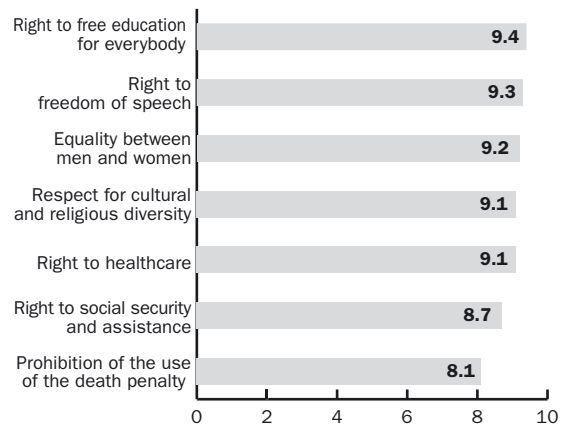
A somewhat similar tendency is actually seen among the general populations of the EU member states. To them, human rights are also the most important criterion for EU membership emphasized by 95%. But no less than 77% put emphasis on economic development.⁴ Money matters far more to the older generations.

The European Union is very much in line with the general populations when it comes to the criteria for accession of new member states. Based on the so-called Copenhagen criteria, established at the European Council meeting in Copenhagen in June 1993, preconditions for commencing negotiations with candidates are stable institutions guarantee-

European Values and Ethics

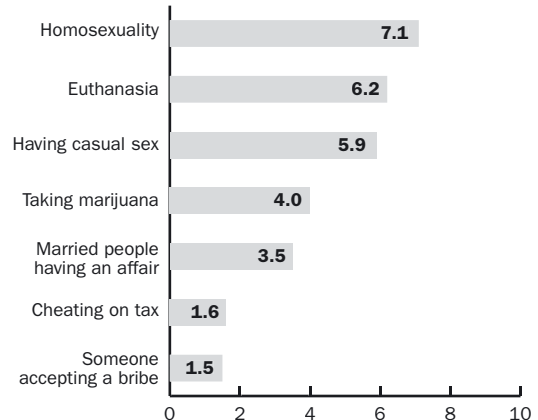
Important Values ¹

How important are the following values as a basis for society?



Important Ethics ²

Can the following acts be justified or not?



Note 1: On a scale from 0-10, where 0 is not important at all and 10 is vitally important

Note 2: On a scale from 0-10, where 0 is never justified and 10 is always justified

Source: Monday Morning and World Economic Forum

Figure 3.3: To the 1,000 youths, the most important values for society include not only human but also basic social rights. Also, they are characterized by very strict public ethics.

ing democracy, rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities.

To young Europeans, the specific values defining Europe include a broad concept of citizen rights on the one hand, and a set of basic ethics or principles for society on the other (see Figure 3.3).

4 Eurobarometer 56, April 2002

The European citizen rights include both basic human rights and a broader set of social rights. Human rights such as equality between men and women and respect for cultural, religious and linguistic diversity shall protect the individual and guarantee democracy. And a broader set of social rights, including the rights to free education, healthcare and social security provide day-to-day guidelines for public policy. Their point is that public institutions are for the people – not the other way around.

Notably, social and human rights basically matter equally as much. They go hand in hand and are all about providing and securing as many opportunities as possible for the citizens.

The European ethics or principles for society are reflected in the Youth Community participants’ emphasis on good governance – effective and non-corrupt public service – as a criterion for EU membership. These principles are strongly embedded in their view on basic ethics for society: Most youths are very permissive when it comes to private morals, but the Youth Community participants also share a very strict view on public ethics. For example, acts within the “private sphere” not necessarily harming others, such as having casual sex, are much more justifiable according to the youths than accepting bribes – a matter of the “public sphere”.⁵

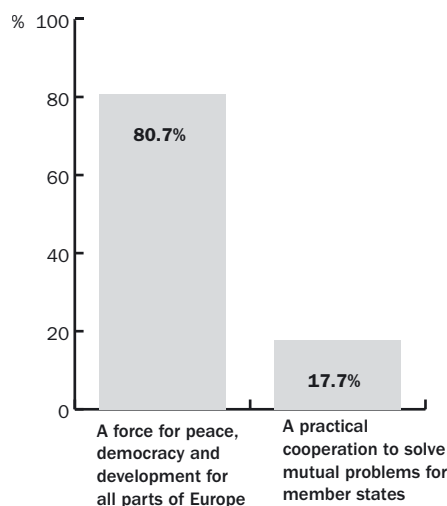
In this matter, the EU is basically very much in line with the Youth Community. The bulk of their values and principles for society is embodied in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, endorsed by the EU Summit in Nice. In fact, the EU has had a significant role in strengthening these rights and principles and making them common ground for all of Europe, not least vis-à-vis the applicant states.

What matters for the Bridging Europe Youth Community, however, is that the broad set of rights be more than just a compendium. They have included the Charter of Fundamental Rights in their proposal for a European Constitution (see Appendix). To them, this is the common core – the cornerstone – of the European political community that should be brought to the fore. Thus, while values presently do feature high on the EU agenda, they do not feature nearly high enough according to the Youth Community:

“I would like that the European Court of Justice approve the “Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union”, giving it a legal binding power. That could be an important step towards a Union that will go further than a simple economical Union” (Francesca Pardella, United Kingdom).

A Force for Democracy and Development

The basic purpose of the EU today



Note: Question: "There are different opinions of what the basic purpose of the EU is. If you had to choose between the following two statements, which one do you tend to agree the most with?"
Source: Monday Morning and World Economic Forum

Figure 3.4: The principal purpose of the EU is to serve as a force for peace, democracy and development for all parts of Europe, according to the vast majority of the Bridging Europe Youth Community.

⁵ The entire Bridging Europe Youth Community generally shares this set of values and principles. Actually, "eros", not "demos", seems to be the only major dividing line in the youths’ view of basic values. The acceptability of homosexuality is by far the most dividing issue, where Muslims and Eastern orthodox Christians, but also men in general, are significantly less permissive than the rest of the Youth Community participants.

3.3 Europe Needs Institutions

To the young people in the Bridging Europe Youth Community the European Union is much more than a fragile institution depending on a delicate balance of power. Europe is a political community, and therefore it needs real public institutions as viable and trustworthy means to guard and endorse its values.

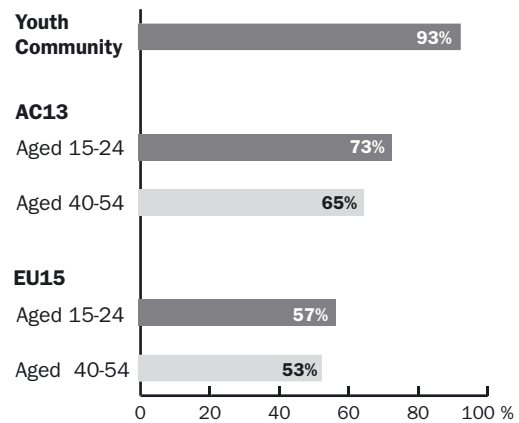
This great importance of pan-European institutions is reflected in the Youth Community’s perception of the principal purpose of the European Union. To them, the EU should not just function as a tool for coordinating interests or solving mutual problems for the nation states. Instead, it should embody the values of the European political community and act as a force for peace, democracy and development for all parts of Europe (see Figure 3.4).

Therefore, the Bridging Europe Youth Community also finds it necessary for the European Union to cover all of the European community: 93% support the enlargement of the EU. Notably, the support is strong among both present EU member and applicant states.

“My opinion about the enlargement of the EU is that it is one of the most important issues for the future of the EU (...) because one of the biggest successes of the EU has been that it has created stability among the members, and that it has secured democracy in also former non-democratic countries (e.g., Portugal, Spain and Greece), to develop into what we now consider strong and well-founded democracies” (Michael Vindfeldt, Denmark).

Far from all the young generation of Europeans support EU enlargement as strongly as the active and interested Bridging Europe Youth Community participants. But support for the accession of new member states is stronger among young Europeans in comparison to older citizens (see Figure 3.5).

Strong Support for EU Enlargement



Note: Percentage of Bridging Europe Youth Community and age groups in the EU member states and the applicant countries, respectively, that are for enlargement.
Sources: Monday Morning and World Economic Forum; Eurobarometer 56, Applicant Countries Eurobarometer 2001

Figure 3.5: Almost all participants in the Bridging Europe Youth Community are in favour of EU enlargement. Also more younger than older Europeans in general support enlargement, though not as strongly.

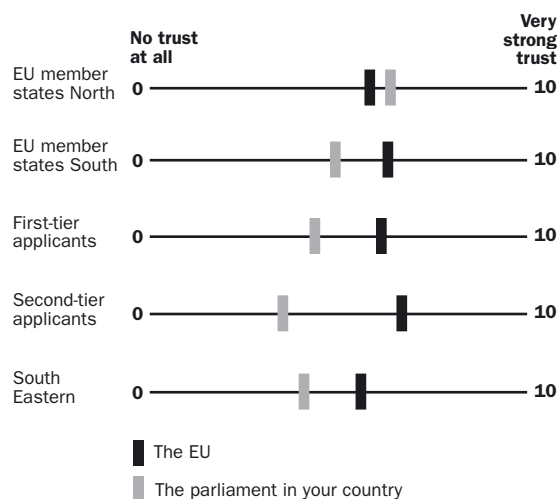
To the participants in the Bridging Europe Youth Community, the European Union is already an accepted, legitimate institution. It is indeed needed, but it is also something subject to critical scrutiny and constant measurement against other public institutions.

At present, the Bridging Europe Youth Community generally trusts the European Union to take on its role for Europe, and guard and promote the values of the political community:

- Trust in the European Union is relatively high among Youth Community participants. The EU earns a 6.1 on a scale from zero to ten, where zero is no trust and ten is very high trust. In comparison, their trust in their national parliaments is just below middle – 4.9 on a scale of zero to ten – meaning that they tend towards distrusting them.
- Also, among the general population, 58% of 15 to 24 year-olds in the EU member states and 63% in the applicant countries tend to trust the EU. Youths are more favourable towards the

Relative Trust in the EU

Trust in EU and National Institutions



Note: Question: "How strongly do you personally trust the following institutions on a scale from 0-10, where 0 is no trust at all and 10 is very strong trust?"

Note: EU Southern member states: Italy, Greece, Portugal, Spain. Northern member states: All EU member states except for the aforementioned; Second-tier applicants: Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey; First-tier applicants: All EU applicant countries except for the aforementioned; South Eastern European countries: Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, F.R. Yugoslavia, F.Y.R. Macedonia

Sources: Monday Morning and World Economic Forum

Figure 3.6: In general, the Bridging Europe Youth Community has higher trust in the EU than in national parliaments. In fact, participants from most regions tend to distrust their national institutions. The notable exception is the Northern EU member states. There, participants think national parliaments are trustworthier.

European Union than older Europeans. Among 40 to 54 year-old Europeans, 5%-6% fewer trust the EU.⁶

However, the Bridging Europe Youth Community participants' trust in the EU is very relative, determined by their confidence in national institutions to protect and promote the basic values and principles of society (see Figure 3.6 and Chapter 5):

In southern EU member states and applicant countries, trust in the national parliaments is markedly

low. Youth Community participants have relatively more confidence in the European Union.

In northern EU member states, generally characterized by strong state institutions and relatively high satisfaction with national democracies, young people are more critical. There, parliaments are more trusted than the EU.

This comparison reflects the present benign competition for trust for the European Union. It also shows that young people in the new democracies see the EU as an institution that can help enhance democracy in their own country. However, the trust for the EU can – and will – change, when and if the applicant countries' public institutions develop. To ensure trust, the EU is thus aiming at a moving target.

However, these results also indicate that the European Union is over its infancy. Criticism is not thinly veiled nationalism. It is normal political discourse. The participants in the Bridging Europe Youth Community certainly do not want to scrap the EU, merely because they are dissatisfied with particular aspects of its actions and policies.

This leaves the European Union with an unparalleled opportunity: to build on the new generation of Europeans, accepting it as a legitimate public institution and having stronger trust and confidence in it than older generations. But to keep its younger citizens' trust and confidence, the EU must ensure that it serves its purpose, stays relevant and follows the principles for good public institutions. These principles and guidelines are the focal point for Chapter 4.

6 Eurobarometer 56, April 2002; Applicant Countries Eurobarometer 2001, December 2001

4. Their Guiding Principles for Europe

Creating greater opportunities for citizens is what the European Union should focus on in its day-to-day policies. To do so, according to the participants in the Bridging Europe Youth Community the young generation of Europeans is in principle willing to provide the EU with a much larger role and stronger powers. However, the key condition for them is that the EU strictly adhere to principles of good governance, including not only complete transparency but also a strong element of direct democracy. These are their inviolable principles for the European Union. The specific institutional design of the EU, including whether it should turn into a federation or not, is a secondary – and uncertain – issue for most of them.

4.1 Citizens First

According to the 1,000 young Europeans participating in the Bridging Europe initiative, the European Union serves as a direct tool for European citizens. More precisely, the participants want the broad set of rights defining the European political community to be the main focus of the EU. For them, the basic European values are far more than symbolic. They are guidelines for action in the public policy of the European Union. The era when Jean Monnet had to create a community dealing with coal and steel in order to reach the political goal of a peaceful Europe is long gone to the first Europeans. They see and accept Europe as a political community and want the European Union to act accordingly:

- Participants in the Bridging Europe Youth Community place the basic safety of all European citizens first. Even though war is a very distant memory in most of Europe, it is not in the Balkans. The foremost purpose of the EU is to promote peace in Europe (see Figure 4.1). When asked about more concrete policy options, additional top priorities for the EU are the protection



of the environment and the guarantee of individual rights (see Figure 4.2 next page).

- On this basis, the clear focus of the European Union should be improving citizens' living conditions and opportunities in life. For the young Europeans, this means improving the possibilities for young people. But the youths take a

Peace and Possibilities Wanted

What the EU should be used for



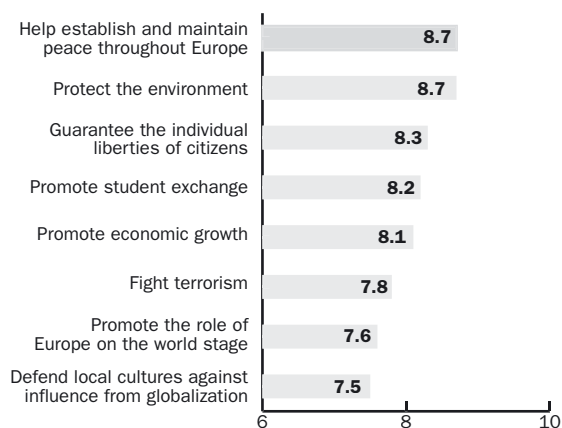
Note: Question: "In your opinion, what are the most important uses of the EU today?" (On a scale from 0-10, where 0 is not important at all and 10 is very important).

Source: Monday Morning and World Economic Forum

Figure 4.1: Ensuring peace and providing better opportunities for European citizens are the most important uses of the EU, according to the Bridging Europe Youth Community.

Prosperity a Key Priority

Priority aims over the next ten years



Note: Question: "Below is a list of possible aims which could - as some would argue - be given priority in the EU over the next ten years. Please indicate to what degree you view the respective aims as the highest priority." (On a scale from 0-10, where 0 is lowest priority and 10 is highest priority)

Source: Monday Morning and World Economic Forum

Figure 4.2: When it comes to more concrete aims and actions of the EU over the next ten years, actions for peace and prosperity take first priority.

broader perspective and want the EU to improve the democracies and the economies of its member states, not necessarily to act as a social guarantee for citizens, but to ensure a level playing field with equal basic opportunities for all.

- Finally, the youths put relatively less emphasis on the role of the European Union on the global scene. This does not mean that fighting the global threat of terrorism or promoting the role of Europe on the world stage are unimportant for the young Europeans. Many hope to see Europe mark itself as a force for peace and democracy in a global perspective as well. But what matters for the young Europeans is the role of the EU in the everyday life of its citizens. The EU must stay close to its citizens.

There are slight but significant differences between, for example, the priorities of Left-leaning and Right-leaning youths and between the various

regions of Europe in the Bridging Europe Youth Community. But most remarkable is how small these differences actually are. In general, the members of the Youth Community tend to agree across borders, gender and political observance on the set of basic purposes and priorities for the policies of the EU. And they are very much in line with the general populations in the present EU member states: in general, nine out of ten Europeans want the European Union to focus on peace and security and issues such as unemployment. In comparison, only 55% emphasize the role of the EU on the world stage.⁷

For the young Europeans in the Bridging Europe Youth Community from EU applicant states, this approach to the purpose and priorities of the European Union vis-à-vis the member states is perfectly logical. They have more trust in the European Union than in their own states to pursue and secure citizens' interests, and they simply believe to a greater extent that the EU will "deliver" on the big issues. That is why they want the European Union to take on a large role aimed directly towards the citizens.

However, the participants of the Bridging Europe Youth Community from the northern EU member states also strongly support the enlarged role of the EU in citizens' daily lives. They are slightly more hesitant towards making the improvement of member states' economies a dominant purpose of the EU. Simply because they tend to have more confidence in their own states' abilities to do so.⁸ But as demonstrated earlier, overall they are also in favour of a broader, stronger and enlarged EU. And 57% of the participating youths from the present member states are willing to provide financial aid to EU applicant states from now on. In comparison, Eurobarometer states that only 33% of the general population – old and young – of the present 15 EU member states support such a step.⁹

7 Eurobarometer 56, April 2002

8 The average for Bridging Europe Youth Community participants is 7.8939 on a scale of 0 to 10 where 10 is a very important purpose. For northern EU member states alone the average score is 7.45 (multivariate test).

9 Eurobarometer 55, October 2001

The front-runners of the young European generation thus share a certain sense of solidarity and responsibility towards the pan-European community. And they all welcome the role of the European Union as a force for development.

“Solidarity is, along with subsidiarity, fundamental for our common European project, paving the way for an harmonious development which will benefit us all. Economic subventions for less rich regions are, thus, a reflection of that solidarity. (...) It is now our duty to extend and improve such solidarity to equally less developed regions in the countries which are shortly to join the Union” (Antonio Manuel Vitorino, Portugal).

4.2 A Chance to Participate

To remain trustworthy, the institutions of the European Union should be fully transparent and democratic, and free of corruption and other sorts of bad governance. But on top of this, the Bridging Europe Youth Community requires strong elements of citizens’ direct participation. EU institutions should not appear to be a closed court for negotiations between diplomats, but stand out as open, transparent forums with plenty of opportunities for citizens to take part in the major decisions. Young Europeans want to participate if they are listened to and taken serious as participants and contributors to the democratic processes of the EU. The way to actively involve young citizens is to provide them with a serious chance.

The core elements of the Bridging Europe Youth Community’s demands from European Union institutions are as follows:

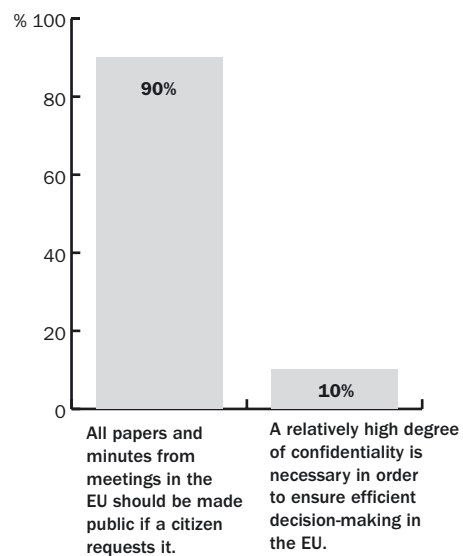
Transparency. 90% agree that all papers and minutes from meetings at European Union institutions should be made public if a citizen requests it (see Figure 4.3). An open and transparent EU where citizens can have full insight into all activities is a key to higher public trust and confidence.

“Does there have to be more transparency? Do the procedures have to be simplified? Should the European Parliament be given a bigger role to enhance the democratic legitimacy of EU decisions? We all know the answer is triple times yes and we all know that this is especially towards the enlargement” (Alexander Hoefmans, Belgium).

Participation. Overall, participants in the Bridging Europe Youth Community have very high ideals of participatory democracy. For 57%, democracy is first and foremost the active involvement of citizens in large parts of the major political decisions. Less than one-third see democracy mainly as a way to protect citizens against too pervasive decision-making. And only 14% favour a strictly representative democracy, where elected politicians alone make the political decisions.

Total Transparency Required

How transparent should the EU be?



Note: Question: "There are different opinions on how open and transparent the EU should be. Which of the following points of view you tend to agree with?"

Source: Monday Morning and World Economic Forum

Figure 4.3: Total transparency is a key demand for EU institutions from 9 out of 10 participants.

These high ideals of participatory democracy are not limited to the local or national levels (see Figure 4.4):

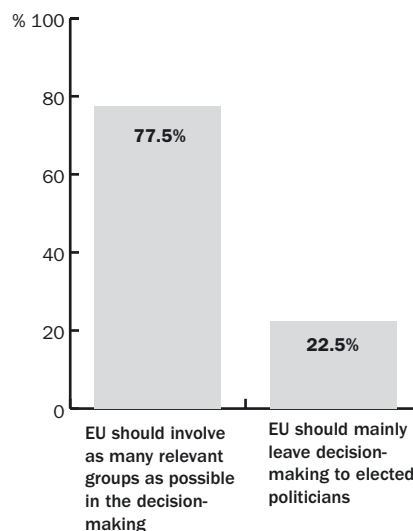
- More than three-quarters of participants in the Youth Community want the European Union to include as many different groups (trade unions, NGOs, consumer groups, etc.) as possible before decisions are made in order to ensure democratic decision-making. This is in fact already taking place in many EU institutions, as illustrated with, for example, the EU support for umbrella organizations in areas like the environment and consumer protection to make sure they play a role in preparing EU legislation.
- But seven out of ten participants also expect the European Union to involve not only interest groups but also citizens directly in large parts of the major political decisions. Thus, the youths want the EU to become much more oriented towards citizens' direct participation in democratic decision-making than today.

Demands for increased democracy in the European Union are not new. What makes this bid from the front-runners of the post-Wall generation so remarkable is the “radicalism” of their demand: the complete transparency of all processes and the direct involvement of citizens in large parts of the decision-making processes. It means moving EU decisions away from being a principal matter for national governments, to becoming more for – and involving – citizens directly. Not only through elections, but also via public hearings, peoples’ panels, referendums, etc.

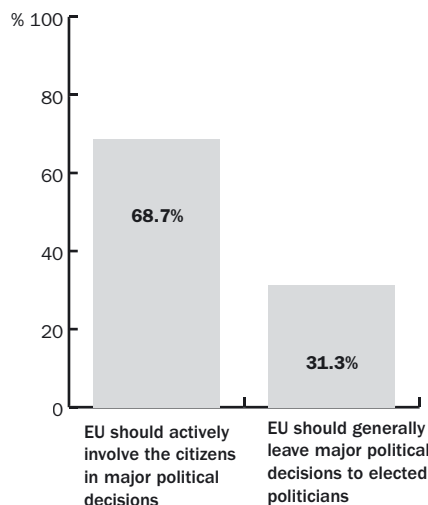
This is far from how the European Union works today and some might call it an unrealistic goal for the institution. For the members of the Bridging Europe Youth Community, however, it is not. More than anything this is a logical following of their general approach to public institutions: these principles form the very safeguards against the misuse of institutions. And the Youth Community partici-

A Chance to Participate

How much should interest groups be involved?¹



How much should citizens be involved?²



Note 1: Question: Here are two points of view. Which one do you tend to agree with?

A. The EU should try to involve as many relevant groups as possible in decision-making. Member states, regions, trade unions, industrial federations, NGO's, consumer groups, etc. must be heard before decisions are made in order to ensure democratic decision-making.

B. Mainly elected politicians should make the decisions of the EU. They are elected to ensure efficient decision-making on behalf of all groups.

Note 2: Here are two points of view. Which one do you tend to agree with?

A. I generally expect the EU to actively involve the citizens of the member states in large parts of the major political decisions. The EU is not truly democratic if the politicians make the major political decisions by themselves.

B. I generally expect the elected politicians to make the major political decisions in the EU. The EU consists of too many member states and people to actively involve the citizens in large parts of the major political decisions.

Source: Monday Morning and World Economic Forum

Figure 4.4: More than two-thirds of all participants in the Bridging Europe Youth Community want citizens to have the chance to be directly involved in large parts of the major political decisions in the EU.

pants loathe bad governance such as corruption and abuse of powers more than anything else.

4.3 EU Competencies: A Secondary Issue

If the institutions of the European Union strictly adhere to the principles of transparency and citizens' participation, the participants in the Bridging Europe Youth Community are willing to grant the institutions more powers and a very ambitious agenda. But while the exact design of the EU power structure seems to be a dominant issue on the political scene in Brussels, it is in fact a secondary issue for the youths. They agree on a bigger picture for the European Union. Their views on the specifics are more uncertain and to some extent more divided.

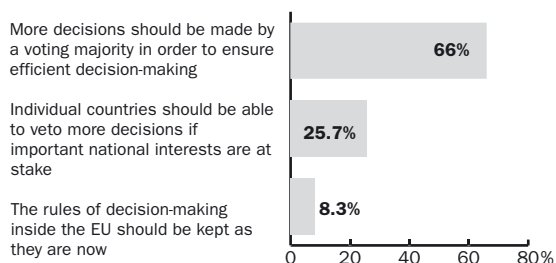
According to 66% of Bridging Europe Youth Community members, more decisions in the European Union should be made by a qualified voting majority to ensure the effectiveness of the EU in living up to its purpose and priority aims. Only around one-quarter wish to grant individual member states more veto rights (see figure 4.5).

On this point, they distance themselves from European populations at large – including the young ones – where only 46% favour more EU decision-making by a qualified voting majority after the enlargement.¹⁰

But the active and interested young people in the Bridging Europe Youth Community are not as concerned with ensuring individual member states full control with the European Union. They are more concerned with the direct control from citizens. Thus, if the guiding principles for citizens' involvement are followed, they are willing to grant the European Union more powers.

More Qualified Majority Voting

Which do you tend to agree with the most



Note: Percent tending to agree.

Sources: Monday Morning and World Economic Forum

Figure 4.5: 66% of the Bridging Europe Youth Community favour more qualified majority voting in the EU. And the vast majority of the participants are for reform of the EU: only c. 8% want the EU to keep its present decision-making structure.

In a large number of areas they expect the European Union to do better or be more effective than their national government. But deciding in which specific areas the EU should have more powers, and what the overall structure of power between EU institutions and member states should be, is an issue that causes much more uncertainty and controversy among the Bridging Europe Youth Community. Whether or not the EU should ultimately turn into a federation is an issue that divides participants in the Youth Community into two almost equally-sized groups. Federation support seems generally to be an uncertain question decided individually from person to person, depending a lot on what one attributes to the word “federation” itself¹¹ (see Figure 4.6).

In this uncertainty, the Bridging Europe Youth Community can be said to mirror the general European population.

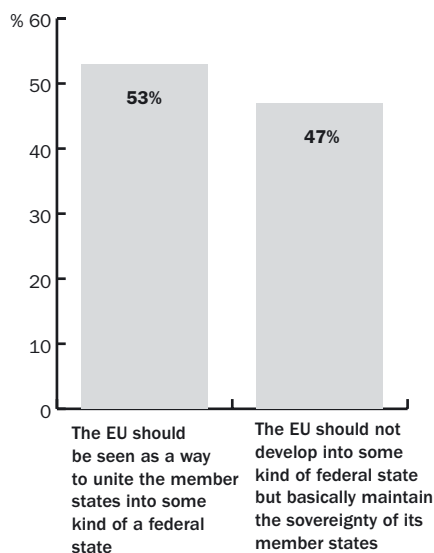
All of the members of the Bridging Europe Youth Community favour extensive cooperation on the EU level. But they have a different understanding of what serves the purpose best – decisions guarded

¹⁰ Eurobarometer 56, April 2002

¹¹ A detailed so-called multiple classification test of the survey results shows that federalism is somewhat more strongly supported by males, by Left-wingers and by youths who expect to work in business.

EU Federation or Not?

Who do you tend to agree with:



Note: Percent tending to agree.
Source: Monday Morning and World Economic Forum

Figure 4.6: Federalism is very much an issue of uncertainty dividing the participants into two almost equally large groups.

by veto powers or made by majority voting – depending on policy area.

Common foreign and security policy, including the role of Europe on the world stage and maintaining peace in Europe, is an issue where granting EU institutions full competencies seems obvious for a majority of 82% of the young Europeans. Also, 60-70% of the participants see economic growth and equality among member states as EU competencies.

Other traditional state competencies should not be a focus for the EU at all, according to most of the participants. For instance, guaranteeing the individual liberties of citizens is an area that might be important to the citizens of the European Union as such, but is much better taken care of on a national or local level. Only 17% of participants in the Bridging Europe Youth Community want this to be an EU competence.

But the “heated” issues in the European debate also cause controversies among members of the Bridging Europe Youth Community. With regard to the promotion of social welfare, 37% of Youth Community participants favour European cooperation without giving up national sovereignty. But 46% – mainly federalist – reach a different conclusion: they want this area to be an EU competence as well. They share the strong European idea of the welfare state, but are divided on the ways and means of securing it.

This is one of the few inconsistencies of an otherwise strict and coherent set of guidelines for the EU from the Bridging Europe Youth Community: in so many aspects, they favour a greater role for the European Union. But when it comes to specific areas, they tend to be more divided.

These controversies reflect the general European debate on the EU’s competencies. According to Eurobarometer, the majority of Europeans seem in favour of making, for example, European foreign policy an EU competency in some form or another – but opinions are split when it comes to issues such as health and social welfare.¹²

However, for the Bridging Europe Youth Community, the point is that although federalism is an uncertain issue, it is very much a secondary one. What matters most are the core principles for the future political architecture of Europe, which the vast majority of the Bridging Europe Youth Community agree upon: putting citizens first, ensuring the trustworthiness of EU institutions and granting decision-making powers on specific purposes to the most effective level of institutions.

These are their guiding principles for Europe. Deciding on the federation question and the specific powers is secondary. With the common principles in place, several variants of the institutional “architecture” are possible. This is reflected in the Euro-

12 Eurobarometer 56, April 2002

pean constitution resulting from the work of the Bridging Europe Youth Community during their stay in Denmark.

The European constitution proposal is subject to analysis in Chapter 6. Before that, however, Chapter 5 takes a closer look at the challenges for the EU posed by the active and interested youths in the new generation of Europeans.



Danish Prime Minister Rasmussen received 100 youth participants at his summer residence for the launch of the Danish EU Presidency



Intense workshops were followed by more informal exchanges during coffee breaks



After two weeks of discussion, the 1,000 elected their delegates to draft the final constitution - it was no easy task to agree on a final document



Anders Blok from Denmark and Bart Wood from the Netherlands had heated debates during the Web dialogue and became good friends when meeting in Denmark



The youth delegates voted on the final European constitution after a whole night of negotiations



Danish Prime Minister Rasmussen, Youth 2002 Chairman Lyby, Danish Minister for European Affairs Haarder and President of the World Economic Forum Klaus Schwab with youth participants at the Prime Minister's residence





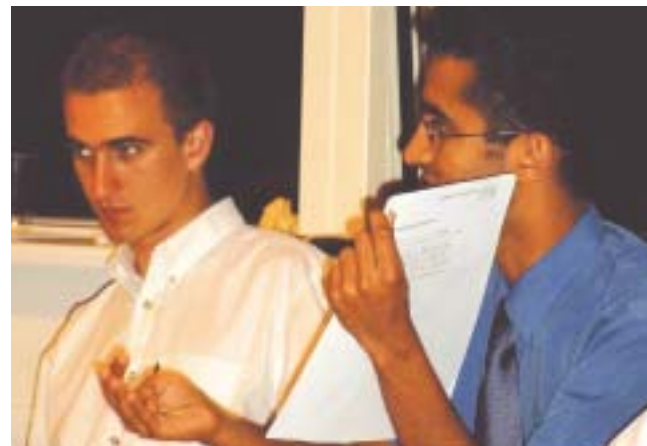
Bridging Europe and Youth 2002 organizers Lars Jannick Johansen, Katja Wittwer and Asbjørn Lyby at Brandbjerg Folk High School



What's on today? The 1,000 youths participated in a two-week working programme at Danish Folk High Schools



The final constitution was presented live via satellite from southern Denmark to the president of the European Convention, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, in Brussels



At 3 AM different working groups tried to come up with a compromise for the constitutional proposal



PricewaterhouseCoopers Global Managing Partner Willem Bröcker and other members of the Bridging Europe Advisory Council attended the welcoming ceremony for the 1,000 youths at Copenhagen City Hall



Danish Minister for European Affairs Haarder received the constitution on behalf of the Danish EU Presidency

5. Their Challenges for Europe

The active and interested young Europeans present a strong challenge to the European Union: it has to “deliver”, i.e. fulfil, a much broader agenda and provide more opportunities for its citizens. And it has to undertake extensive institutional reform at the same time to remain trustworthy. However, there are lurking concerns among the participants in the Bridging Europe Youth Community that the present European Union – and the present debate on the future of EU – cannot deliver this. Their recipe for change is to keep a tight focus on a short list of fundamental principles for reform: ensuring principles of good governance – most notably transparency and participation – and assuring that the basic fundamentals of the EU and not special or national interests are given priority.

5.1 The EU Faces High Expectations

Decision-makers might very well be frightened by the level of expectation that the front-runners of the new generation of Europeans have for the European Union:

In terms of promoting citizens’ interests, the members of the Bridging Europe Youth Community expect the European Union to provide significant improvements in all major priority areas within the next ten years – including better conditions for student and labour mobility, more job opportunities, greater gender equality and generally a better quality of life for most citizens (see Figure 5.1).

This of course reflects the fact that the Bridging Europe Youth Community constitutes a rather resourceful group of people with high confidence in their own ability to benefit from EU initiatives. Hence, their optimism is well above average in comparison to the expectations of young Europeans from the present member states in general.

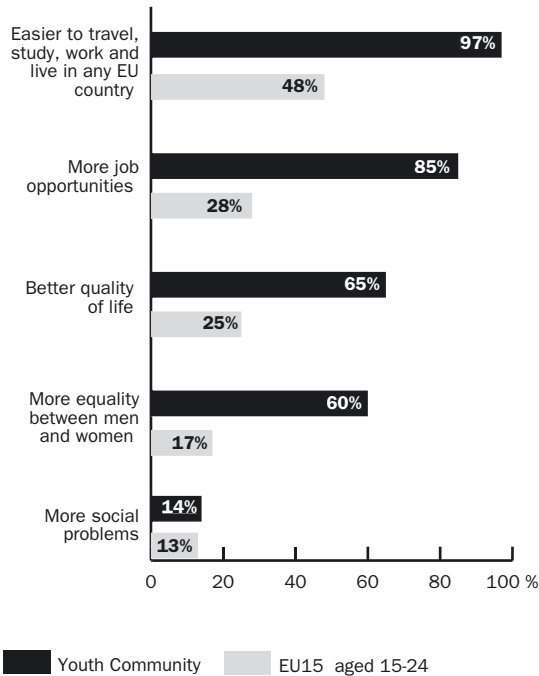


Expectations for the future political architecture of the EU are also very high among participants in the Bridging Europe Youth Community. They basically believe the European Union will implement their recommendations for good governance within the next ten years. This includes taking action in more areas while at the same time providing more transparency and citizens’ influence on EU decision-making, and making decisions that are easier to understand and closer to the citizens.

While these expectations might seem extraordinary, they come from a well-informed and reflective group. The participants in the Bridging Europe Youth Community know that politics can be difficult, slow and require compromise. But at the same time they are the very result of historical processes, including the breakdown of communism, that only 30 years ago seemed less realistic than manned bases on Mars. What is required is leadership and principles. They strongly believe that transparency and dialogue best ensure such qualities. Secrecy and complexity are a breeding ground for special interests and even worse things like corruption.

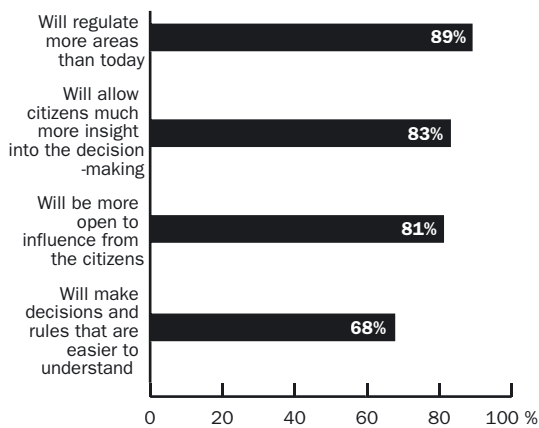
High Expectations for the EU

Expectations for EU Citizens



Note: Question: "What will the EU have brought in ten years' time for the citizens of your country?" (Youth Community: percent strongly agree plus agree; EU15 aged 15-24: percent agree).

Expectations for EU Institutions



Note: Question: "What will the EU look like in ten years' time? How likely are the following statements" (Youth Community only, percent very likely plus likely).

Source: Monday Morning and World Economic Forum; Eurobarometer Special Report 151, 2001

Figure 5.1: The Bridging Europe Youth Community has very high expectations for the EU - both to "deliver" and to reform

5.2 Strong Concerns for EU Democracy

Even though the expectations run high among the front-runners of the post-Wall generation, they are concerned with the present course of the EU. They express serious worries in particular with regard to the principles of democracy and "good governance":

Strong concerns with the general state of democracy in the EU: Overall, members of the Bridging Europe Youth Community are more satisfied than dissatisfied with the way democracy presently works in the EU. And they are generally more satisfied with the European Union than with the individual states. However, this "net" satisfaction involves substantial differences of view on EU democracy. Satisfaction with EU democracy is only high in *relative terms*, i.e. among states with poor trust and confidence in their national democracies. When members feel "better used", such as in the northern member states, they tend to have a negative view of EU democracy (see Figure 5.2 next page).¹³

Hence when national democracies in the new member states develop, dissatisfaction with EU democracy is likely to grow.

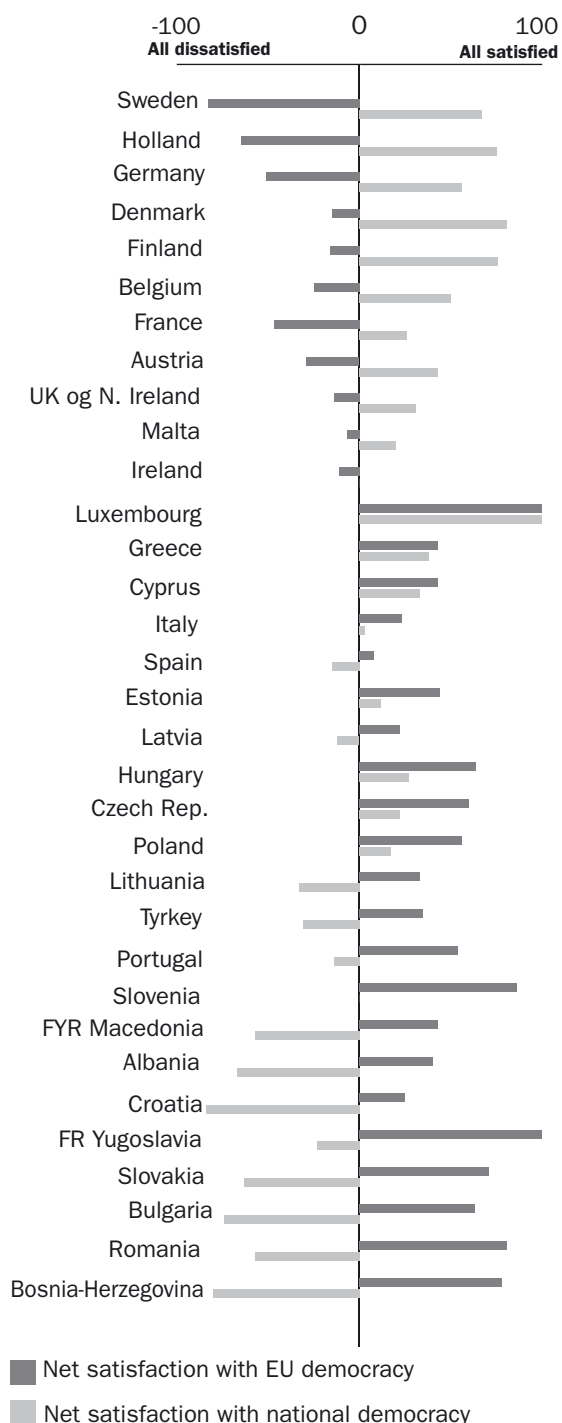
Here it is worth noting that the European Union is a prime driver for democracy and good governance outside its own institutions. To mention two examples: rules for public procurement have cleaned up an area, previously dominated by cosy or outright corrupt practices; the European Court protects individual citizens against their nation-states.

This is therefore an area in which the EU has to move, or it will lose relevance – especially for the citizens from the best functioning member states.

13

An analysis of the corresponding data from Eurobarometer 54, April 2001, shows a similar result for the general populations of the EU member states.

A Relative Democratic Deficit



Note: Net satisfaction is share of satisfied respondents minus share of dissatisfied respondents from the Youth Community. All numbers are percentages.
Sources: Monday Morning and World Economic Forum

Figure 5.2: Only the Bridging Europe Youth Community participants from states where democracies are poorly trusted have high regard for EU democracy.

Young Europeans feel politically marginalized.

One especially important aspect of the concern for democracy is the question of access to decision-making. Even the active, interested members of the Bridging Europe Youth Community feel shut out. Less than one-fifth think they have any influence on EU decisions (see Figure 5.3). In their view, this is not a problem for the youth only. In their judgement, ordinary citizens in general have only minimal influence on EU decisions. Notably, youths from EU member states find they have as little influence as young Europeans from applicant states.

“Each state does not want to loosen its grip on Europe (...) If anything, the EU to the average citizen is a playpark for overly ambitious politicians who work it all out amongst themselves. People do not feel connected with something over which they have no grip, no influence, no involvement” (Alexander Hoefmans, Belgium).

A lack of transparency in EU institutions. Finally, Bridging Europe Youth Community members experience a severe lack of both information and insight into EU institutions. According to them, only insiders basically understand and are able to follow and influence the processes taking place within the EU system. This was a main concern throughout the Web dialogue, generally shared by almost all participants. As one participant expressed it:

“I completely agree that the current situation should be changed and made more accessible, understandable and influenceable by common EU citizens. There is no point in having institutions nobody understands and therefore doesn’t really trust” (Jaan Aps, Estonia).

This democratic deficit is highly problematic for the youths’ view of EU institutions in the future. And their demands for democracy seem only likely to increase when the EU gains more power and influence on the daily lives of its citizens.

Very Little Influence

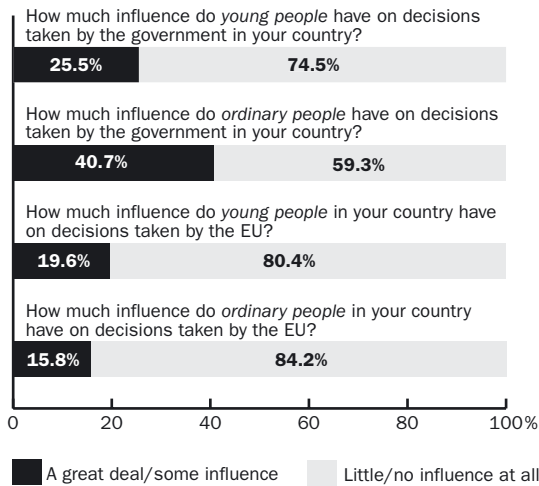


Figure 5.3: According to the Bridging Europe Youth Community, young people have very little influence on EU decisions.

The democratic deficits of the European Union, its lack of transparency and citizens’ participation are generally seen as main causes of Euroscepticism.¹⁴ But what is noticeable is that the criticism comes from the young members of the Bridging Europe Youth Community. They are generally very favourable and supportive of EU institutions – and they represent a very empowered group when it comes to seeking influence and exploiting opportunities presented by the EU. If even this group feels alienated from the decisions and democratic processes of the EU, it certainly does not stand to pass its “litmus test”.

5.3 The EU Should Get the Basics Right

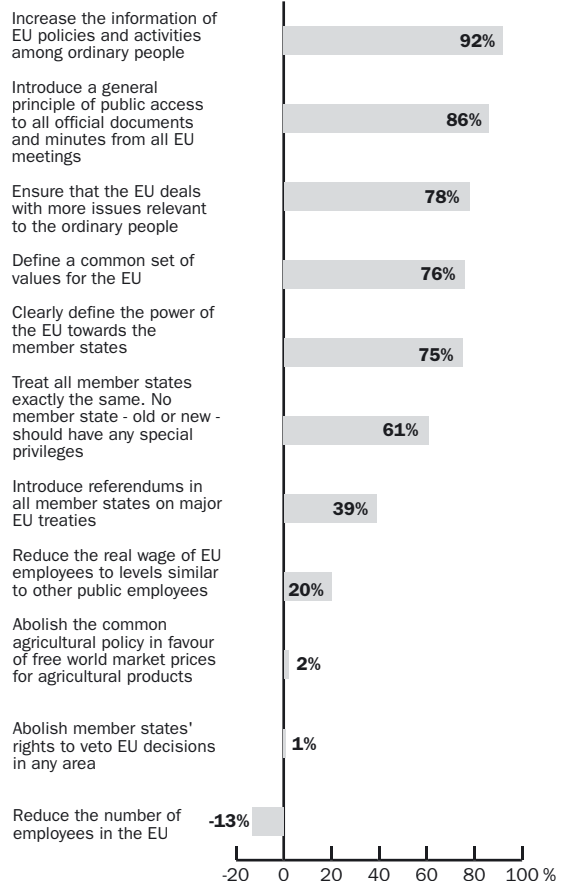
The European Union must make sure it keeps a tight focus on the fundamentals, according to Bridging Europe Youth Community members. Improving the present shape of the European Union is not a matter of changing the “image” of the EU by PR stunts or populist policies such as slashing the EU bureaucracy. Nor is it a matter of focusing on specific policies, for example reforming the Common Agricultural Policy, or a matter of finding the

right formula for the political architecture, for example federation or not, veto powers or not.

For the participants in the Bridging Europe Youth Community, improving the present state of the EU is all about getting the basics right. They have very strong and value-based opinions on how political institutions and political processes should work.

EU: Back to Basics

How to improve the EU's image?



Note: Question: "Which actions would you recommend for the EU to improve its public image?" (Summarized net results of the participants' recommendations - percent recommend minus percent not recommend).
Sources: Monday Morning and World Economic Forum.

Figure 5.4: The Bridging Europe Youth Community strongly recommends the EU to focus on the fundamentals - improve the ways of the EU institutions, get closer to the citizens and define a common set of values for the EU.

Asked about how to improve the EU's popular image the participants follow up on these values. They recommend transparency, relevance, values including equal status of member states and more clearly defined powers towards member states. A closer analysis of these recommendations shows that there are only slight and mostly insignificant differences in the participants if nationality, political orientation and future job expectations are taken into consideration. The answers reflect common values (see Figure 5.4 previous page).

The Bridging Europe Youth Community's recommendations can be summarized in three principles:

1. **Define and use basic values and mission.** The European Union should promote its set of common values – such as stipulated in the Charter of Fundamental Rights – as the real basis for the European community. And it should promote a strong mission statement, focused on citizens' interests and opportunities, to guide its day-to-day priorities and activities (see also insert). Rights mean more than protection to the youths. They are real guides for action.
2. **Ensure relevance.** The European Union should regularly check to ensure that many of its activities are relevant and in line with the interests of ordinary people – and generally follow the guidelines and purposes for a citizen's Europe set out in the mission statement. It should focus on what is close to citizens' everyday lives, for example citizens' opportunities: welfare, education and good governance. This is an issue where the present EU agenda actually reflects the opinions of the first Europeans but where EU deliberations have not been communicated and/or are not convincing.
3. **Promote democracy by increasing transparency.** The European Union should ensure public access and insight to EU activities – and increase the information of EU policies and activities among ordinary people. It should **increase dem-**

ocratic participation; the EU should make a strong effort to promote citizens' participation in decision-making processes. The key is not only to provide possibilities and platforms for participation but also to make sure they are recognized and open to a broad public – not only “insiders” of the EU system.

These are the first, basic steps for the European Union according to Bridging Europe Youth Community members – consisting of some of the EU's

The EU Needs a Mission Statement

- By Jaan Aps, Bridging Europe Youth Community Participant from Estonia

What would be your priorities, if you were a top decision-maker from the EU? This was the topic of an online competition during the Bridging Europe Web Dialogue. Below is an extract of the winning contribution by 21-year old Jaan Aps from Estonia:

*Imagining myself as an EU top decision-maker means imagining a **huge challenge**.*

...tons of information...

...arguing advisers...

...every day new problems...

*In that situation, **it would be extremely easy to lose track** and just concentrate on the day-to-day issues – one day a new law about immigration, then complaints of farmers, etc.*

But how is it possible to stay focused, if you do not know what you should focus on?

Taking action, before setting a steady base to move on from, is very dangerous. It would be like hiking in a dangerous area without a map. The same applies to the EU. Every big organization has its mission statement, which expresses its reason for existing AND the common vision to strive for. Too bad the EU doesn't really have one so far. So my first focus point would be to initiate a process for creating an EU mission and vision statement that every EU citizen could feel ownership of.

An idea flying too high? A process too difficult to organize? I don't think so. For example, citizens from every member country could choose three respected individuals as representatives in a mission brainstorming team.

*If I was a leader and my decisions were not based on a common vision, sooner or later my actions would lead to harmful contradictions. So the first thing to focus on: **CREATING A MISSION AND VISION STATEMENT FOR THE EU!***

young, reflective supporters. This, to them, is the way towards the future Europe entrusted and supported by its citizens.

“I think that the EU is at a crossroads now – during these couple of years till 2004. It can go up or down... I believe that this reform should be done starting from the main questions: is the EU for European citizens or for European politicians? What does the EU want to do? What are its goal and objectives? Who sets these goals and objectives? The people or the ruling politicians?” (Alexandru Balas, Romania).

Bridging Europe Youth Community participants have themselves come up with a concrete proposal on what such a European Union would look like in practice. This will be the subject of analysis in Chapter 6.

6. Their Constitution for Europe

- by Heather Grabbe, Research Director, Centre for European Reform

The Youth Community's Constitution for Europe

If a European Constitution comes into being, what then do we want it to contain? This was the key question for the Youth Community's two-week meeting in Denmark at 13 Danish Folk High Schools – Youth 2002.

Their answer represents a significant input to the discussions currently taking place in the Convention on the Future of Europe. But is the Convention on the Future of Europe on the right track and in line with the proposals from the young Europeans? This is the subject of analysis in this chapter, presenting an essay from **Heather Grabbe**, Research Director, Centre for European Reform.

The full text of the constitution is attached as an Appendix. The main points are summarized below:

- **The purpose of the EU:** To foster peace, guarantee democracy and sustainable development and to develop equality and general welfare in all parts of the Union.
- **The principles of EU institutions:** Accountability, transparency and subsidiarity – and the respect and promotion of cultural diversity.
- **European values:** The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union is inscribed in the constitution with a range of amendments, including for example the right to free public education until the first higher education qualification.
- **The legislative power of the EU:** It should rest with the European Parliament, consisting of a *Chamber of Citizens* representing the interests of European citizens and directly elected; and a *Chamber of States*, representing the interests of the member states with representatives appointed by the national governments.
- **The executive power:** It should lie with a “Head of the Executive”, who appoints a government. The Head is elected by the Chamber of Citizens and approved by the Chamber of States. Notably, in the Youth Community's constitution, the European Commission is scrapped.
- **Participation:** All EU institutions are obliged to try to involve citizens in their work. Also, 1% of citizens can petition for a legislative proposal or put forward proposals to change the constitution. Young Europeans have a permanent advisory role to the European parliament via the European Youth Forum.
- **Competence and legislation:** Decisions should be made according to the principle of the subsidiarity: *EU institutions* should make decisions concerning foreign trade, aid and policy; environmental policy; asylum and immigration policy; agricultural and fisheries policy; structural and regional policy; corporate tax and community VAT; single market policy; labour market policy. *The EU and member states should cooperate* on educational and cultural policy; social policy; information and media policy; healthcare and insurance policy; scientific research; common security policy.



The young Europeans who took part in the Bridging Europe project fearlessly addressed some of the fundamental questions that have preoccupied European policy-makers in the past, and which will shape Europe over the next decades. They looked at community, the sense of belonging to a common European space and sharing a common destiny, which has become more rather than less important in the era of globalization. They also considered shared political values, a term which is often used by European politicians but rarely defined. And they discussed institutions, which are at the heart of the current debate going on between their elders in the Convention on the Future of Europe that is running from 2002-03.

6.1 The Convention: Engaging Young People's Concerns?

Over the past decade, the EU has been preoccupied with its internal governance. It has made three attempts to settle the balance of powers within the Union and bring more accountability and efficiency to its decision-making, with treaty changes at Maastricht in 1992, Amsterdam in 1997 and Nice in 2000. The Union has decided to have another Inter-Governmental Conference (IGC) in 2004, and will spend the next few years trying again to find an equilibrium between competing interests in the

Union (levels of government, between large and small members, and between richer and poorer regions) that can be sustained after enlargement.

To prepare for the 2004 IGC, the Laeken European Council established a Convention to debate the future of the Union, which started work in March 2002. The Laeken declaration listed a long series of questions for the Convention to answer, with a very broad agenda. The four main areas are set out in the box below, but the Convention has more than 100 members, and it has added many new tasks to its deliberations. The Convention's members are drawn from current member states and the 13 candidate countries. It is democratic in that most of them are directly elected: nearly two-thirds of them are national parliamentarians, while most of the others are representatives of member-state governments, plus the European Parliament and the Commission. The Convention members thus represent a broad spectrum of opinion. The Bridging Europe project provides a valuable opportunity to compare the current concerns and proposals of the official representatives of the peoples of Europe with those of a sample group of the next generation. Does the current generation of political leaders have the same priorities as their successors?

The first two issues on the Convention's remit are complex and technical, as well as politically charged, and they are difficult for non-specialists to understand. The first, on defining competencies, seeks to address a range of concerns. For countries like the UK, the definition of competencies is mainly about subsidiarity, that is, deciding on policies at the lowest appropriate level, and

The Convention's remit:

- "A better division and definition of competence in the European Union"
- Simplification of the Union's instruments
- More democracy, transparency and efficiency in the European Union
- Towards a Constitution for European citizens"

probably doing less at the EU level. In the German debate, however, the division of powers means something slightly different, because the *Länder* have powerful regional governments that would like to use an EU catalogue of competencies to reinforce their sovereignty *vis-à-vis* the federal government. The Bridging Europe Youth Community did not get bogged down in all the complexities of this debate, but drew up a simple list of areas where decisions should be made by the EU's institutions, and another list of areas where the EU and its member-states should "cooperate in decision-making" (see Chapter 5 of the draft constitution).

The second area – simplification of the EU's instruments – is about making the treaty structure easier to understand. Successive treaty changes have produced an unwieldy set of documents that are comprehensible only to trained lawyers. The treaties are unreadable, even for the politicians who sign them. Several groups of academics have been working on this issue: the Bertelsmann Foundation produced a draft Basic Treaty, while the European University Institute in Florence has drawn up a single integrated text of all the EU's treaties. Others have proposed dividing the EU's legislation into something like a Constitution and a set of more detailed implementing legislation. The Bridging Europe Youth Community approached this question in a business-like way, by dividing their constitution into the following headings: preamble, founding principles, general provisions, rights, institutions, competence and legislation, and changing the constitutions. This structure is simpler than many of the ones produced by the experts, and it has the advantage of being more obviously relevant to citizens.

The third area covers democracy, transparency and efficiency, issues that have preoccupied many previous IGCs, and ones that are certainly of concern to the young Europeans. Their constitution makes many demands on the EU's institutions and its constituent states to engage citizens more directly with the Union's activities. There is no doubt that

better communication is needed, and that this requires greater transparency. However, Bridging Europe Youth Community members may be rather disappointed by the results of the Convention and the 2004 IGC, because it will be difficult to tackle democracy and efficiency at the same time.

The EU's system is often described as "multi-level governance" because power is distributed so widely up and down the political system. This system is hard for citizens to understand, and it tends to produce messy compromises rather than neat solutions – a tendency which young Europeans (like older ones) find frustrating. Yet this muddle is the result of the EU's need to balance competing interests in order to maintain internal cohesion – democracy can conflict with efficiency. If the EU were a hegemonic organization run by bureaucrats in the interests of a small elite – as its more extreme critics claim – it would be easy to govern and much more efficient at decision-making. In fact, its priority is usually finding a compromise between a wide range of parties – producers and consumers, big and small states, regional and national governments. No one group is ever wholly satisfied by the result, although it is true that some get their way more often than others: producers more often than consumers, for example. But this lack of efficiency is largely because of the accountability built into the system at many levels. It is the result of having so many actors on the stage rather than the dominance of a single puppet-master who is running the show.

Fourthly, the Convention is supposed to consider how to move towards a constitution for European citizens. This question also captured the imagination of the Bridging Europe participants in writing their own constitution.

6.2 The Constitution: Will Expectations Be Met?

The young Europeans in the Bridging Europe Youth Community have a very integrationist, and even

federalist, vision of European institutions in some respects, but not in others. Their constitution sees the European Parliament as the real centre of power in Europe, and gives the representatives of the nation states a lesser role. The youths propose that the Parliament have a two-chamber structure that would make the Council of Ministers – which inter-governmentalists would like to remain the locus of decision-making – into just a Senate, with more legislative than executive powers. They want to give the European Parliament the power to appoint a European government too – which many federalists would like. But the youths also want to get rid of the European Commission, which most federalists hold dear, and replace it with some other form of EU "government".

On the whole, Bridging Europe Youth Community participants are more focused on the rights of individuals rather than states, and the accountability of European institutions to individual voters, rather than to member-state governments. This indicates that youths identify more with the EU as individuals than as citizens of a particular country. They are more concerned with tackling corruption and good governance than their elders seem to be in the Convention. And they are prepared to be much more radical than their elders in areas such as proposing a common European army, a move to English as the administrative language of the Union, and setting up a European constitutional court.

The Convention's draft constitution is likely to include a number of the same key elements as the Youth 2002 Constitution. It will probably give more guarantees for individual rights through the incorporation of the Charter of Fundamental Rights into the EU's treaties, as well as an enhanced role for the European Ombudsmen – both of which are proposed by the young Europeans. It is also likely to give a clear division of powers between the EU's institutions. However, transparency is unlikely to increase greatly in the short term because of the need to maintain the delicate balance of powers between institutions and member states. In addition, the

complex system of accountability that runs through the EU's decision-making structures will make it very hard to come up with a neat division of competencies proposed by the young Europeans.

6.3 Will the EU Stay on the Right Track after Enlargement?

By the time they reach the 2004 IGC, the EU's leaders will be facing a whole new range of challenges owing to the accession of probably another ten members. It is thus laudable that Bridging Europe brought together young people who will soon become citizens of the EU, as well as those who were born in existing EU member states. The rich contributions that the youths from the candidate countries made to the project are indicative of the creative thinking emerging from central and eastern Europe on good governance and how to achieve it.

However, the EU will become more difficult to govern after enlargement, because it will be larger and more diverse. There is a risk that it will start to fragment, vertically if its institutions remain remote from ordinary voters, and horizontally if its peoples lose a sense of commonality and solidarity with one another.

The Union's internal debates now have a much wider geographical reach, to the dozen and more European countries that would like to join it. They also reach more widely into society, because the Union's political leaders have finally begun to realize the need to engage much more actively with the public about the future course of the Union. The ideal of European integration is no longer so popular, even in countries that are traditionally strong supporters of it. As people have become more critical of their national governments, they have started criticizing the EU more as well. The EU can only earn their trust and their support if it shows that it is engaging directly with their everyday concerns, in a two-way process of dialogue. The Bridging Europe project has shown that the Union can only meet the expectations of the next generation by fo-

cusings its activities on community, solidarity and trust, and by moving away from the power games, complexity and obscurity that have dominated its political deliberations for too long.

7. Closing Remarks

A new generation of Europeans is emerging. It is the first generation of the new, open and undivided Europe. A generation for whom the European Union is an inseparable part of Europe and an expression of a deep and fundamental integration process among people across borders.

The Bridging Europe Youth Community illustrates the tremendous potential of this new generation of Europeans. This group of young people represent the first true “Europeans”, individuals for whom national and European identity go hand in hand, multi-lingualism is a norm, and living, studying and working in multiple countries is a common occurrence. They are front-runners of a generation with the potential to change Europe as we know it, to mentally and physically tear down borders and to take full advantage of the possibilities offered by the integration process.

Their approach to Europe is guided by three principles. First, the principle of **community**: these young Europeans feel they have a lot in common and they share a sense of community beyond the current borders of the European Union. Second, they stress the importance of **shared values**: they demand respect for human rights and a broader set of social rights to guide public policy. The third principle is **trust**: common values are not enough for this generation. Strong and trustworthy institutions are needed to ensure that values are respected and enacted.

The Bridging Europe initiative has demonstrated how to build on the great potential of this young generation. The initiative has provided a neutral platform where their views and principles for Europe could be developed and formulated. Based on the World Economic Forum’s multi-stakeholder approach, and the Monday Morning method of developing understanding through involvement and

dialogue, the initiative has pointed to some of the key elements for “bridging” Europe in the future:

Bonding – By initiating a virtual community of 1,000 young Europeans and by then transforming it into a physical community, a major platform for pan-European bonding and exchange was created.

Binding – The young Europeans developed a more thorough understanding of their peers’ values and ideas – and drafting a proposal for a European Constitution helped the community to define joint objectives. The overall process resulted in unique insights and a more thorough understanding of *First Generation Europe*.

Building – Bridging Europe has also developed new tools for democratic dialogue by combining virtual and physical debate with a comprehensive and one-of-its-kind survey. These tools have and will continue to be used to strengthen the community and define joint actions.

The Bridging Europe initiative has paid tribute to the importance of Europe’s youth by moving them from the periphery to the core of the discussion. It has proved that despite the alienation of young Europeans from the political process, it is indeed possible to engage young Europeans in a democratic dialogue that can produce high quality – and much needed – input in the debate on the future of Europe.

Committed to European Values

"There is much talk of a democratic deficit separating the European Union from its citizens. The unsurprising thing about the 1,000 young people involved in this project is how committed they are to a Europe that is dedicated to human rights, tolerance and social inclusiveness. For them there is no contradiction between an economically strong Europe and one that stands up for social justice at home and abroad."

- Giampiero Alhadef, Secretary-General, Solidar, Belgium

A spirit of International Collaboration

"In the Bridging Europe participants, I observed a spirit of international collaboration that bodes well for the future. When these young people debated topics like education, they shared their thinking across more than 30 countries and, like a true international business, were exposed to best practices and new ideas. We must continue to promote that collaborative spirit, for such awareness and understanding – beyond one's own country – are essential qualities not only for future businessmen and women but for all citizens of Europe."

- Willem Bröcker, Global Managing Partner, Markets, PricewaterhouseCoopers, Netherlands

One Large Europe

"It is important for young people to get mentally prepared to see Europe as one country, because in business this is already a fact. Although we have many countries with many languages, we share the same problems and challenges. By taking advantage of one large Europe we can achieve much more."

- Jørgen Mads Clausen, President and Chief Executive Officer, Danfoss, Denmark

Bridging Europe Promotes Understanding

"Americans like their federal system of government, Europeans on the contrary frequently complain about the European Union. This is understandable; it took over 100 years and a civil war for the United States of America to find the right balance of power between local and national politics. The European Union is still in its infancy. But as the European Union evolves, it is initiatives like Bridging Europe that promote the understanding among young people that this continent needs to create in the near future a political system that all Europeans can feel their own and be reasonably happy with."

- Martin Varsavsky, Founder and President of the Board, Jazztel, Spain

A Strong Network

"The Bridging Europe Web dialogue was not even so much about getting knowledge (although this aspect was also very important), but first and foremost about discovering European diversity, the existing variety of different opinions and getting international human touch, as all digital comments had strong and sympathetic personal flavour. The meeting in Denmark offered an opportunity to see faces behind written opinions and real people behind country names. That is the greatest value for Europe – strong network of young people, who are ready to share a common future and work for it together."

- Jaan Aps, Bridging Europe Youth Community Participant, Estonia

Eye Opener

"The two weeks in Denmark were a huge learning experience for all involved, as well as a lot of fun, and the foundation of many firm friendships. For me the most eye opening aspect of the event was the participation of those from applicant countries. They made me realize how "western" my views are and forced me to re-evaluate them."

- Zoë Waterman, Bridging Europe Youth Community Participant, United Kingdom

Europe Is Being Bridged

"We the youth are said to be the future because they will bring it about; however, more accurately we are also the present. The Folk High School experience has further reinforced the Web dialogue... it is after the Youth 2002 that everyone, that all the 1,000 are communicating in smaller groups according to Folk High Schools but... Europe is being bridged."

- Hanan El Khat Zarifa, Bridging Europe Youth Community Participant, Malta

Appendix: The Constitution

Preamble

We, the peoples of the European Union, remembering and learning from the difficult past of the challenges of a divided Europe and the successful beginning of our peaceful cooperation, united through our common heritage and values, enact this Constitution.

The peoples of Europe recognize this Constitution as a cornerstone of the process of creating an ever-closer Union and defining the global position and responsibility of the Union. Based upon the recognition of cultural diversity and the principles of unity, cooperation and democracy, this Constitution shall pursue the peace, security, economic, social, cultural and environmental well-being of current and future generations.

This Constitution aims to ensure peace and stability within the European Union, protect the rights and freedoms of its citizens and peoples, define the structure and tasks of European Union institutions and the relations between National and European Union institutions and law, ensure accountability to the peoples of Europe and preserve European democracy.

Chapter 1 - The Founding Principles

Article 1

The European Union shall foster peace and stability as well as security within the Union.

Article 2

The European Union shall guarantee democracy, freedom, human rights and fundamental freedoms, tolerance, sustainable development and the rule of law and justice.

Article 3

The institutions of the European Union shall obey the principles of accountability, equity, efficiency, transparency, subsidiarity and proportionality

Article 4

The European Union shall commit itself to the development of equality, wealth and general welfare in all parts of the Union.

Article 5

The European Union shall respect and protect the environment. Equally it shall ensure the principles of environmental sustainability and that the polluter pays.

Article 6

The European Union shall preserve equality and separation of powers.

Article 7

The European Union shall protect the civil and political rights of its citizens.

Article 8

The European Union is not linked to any religious beliefs or institutions.

Article 9

The European Union respects and promotes solidarity, linguistic and cultural diversity.

Article 10

The European Union shall preserve all beliefs and principles of the Constitution in its dealings with other nation states and international organizations and institutions.

Chapter 2 - General Provisions

Article 11

In order to become a member of the European Union a state must:

- Comply with the European Constitution;
- Fulfil political and economic criteria set forth by the European Union in a separate Act;
- Be a part of Europe;
- Achieve the acceptance of the European Parliament.

Article 12

A country may leave the Union at any time; its government should initiate such procedures. Procedures have to be set out in a European Union Act.

Article 13

All citizens of the Member States are citizens of the European Union. Citizenship of the European Union shall complement and not replace national citizenship.

Article 14

A Member State may be expelled from the European Union if it gravely and repeatedly contravenes the principles set forth in this Constitution and it is so decided by all other members of the European Union.

Chapter 3 - Rights

Article 15

The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union signed on 18 December 2000 will be upheld by the Union with the following amendments and addenda.

1. Article 4: Everyone has the right to fair treatment during imprisonment.
2. Article 9: Replace "the right to marry and the right to found a family shall be guaranteed in accordance with the national laws governing the exercise of these rights" by "every adult has the right to marry and the right to found a family (12 for, 8 against, 2 abstained).
3. Article 14: This right includes the possibility to receive free public compulsory education at primary and secondary levels and the first higher education qualification.
4. Article 14: Everyone has the right to non-formal education.
5. Article 19: In point 2, remove the word "serious".
6. Article 21: ...property, birth, disability, sexual orientation, or any other unfair discrimination shall be prohibited.
7. Article 22: The Union shall respect and encourage cultural ...
8. Article 26: Physical environment cannot set any limits on the function in society of those with disabilities.
9. Article 34: Everyone has the right to a decent standard of living.
10. Article 35: Everyone has the right to free and accessible basic health services.
11. Article 37: Everyone has the right to a sustainable and healthy environment.
12. Article 38: Everyone has the right to non-genetically modified food.
13. Article 40: Every citizen of the Union and person domiciled in the Union has the right to ...
14. Article 41: Transparency of businesses and public institutions shall be ensured.
15. Article 42: ...Member State, has a right of free and timely access to public documents from all institutions of the European Union.
16. Article 43: ...cases of maladministration and disrespect of the rights stated in this Constitution in the activities...
17. Article 43: The Ombudsman must be a transparent institution closely connected to the citizens of the European Union.
18. New article:
 1. Everyone has the right to free access to an interpreter in a court of law.
 2. Every citizen of the European Union (and person resident - 7 for, 7 against) has the right of free access to an interpreter in their dealings with national and European Union institutions.
 3. Minorities have the right to set up private schools that teach both the national and minority language.

Chapter 4 - Institutions

Article 16 - Legislative Power

1. The legislative power of the European Union lies within the Parliament, which consists of two Chambers, namely the Chamber of Citizens and the Chamber of States.
2. The Chamber of Citizens represents the interests of the European citizens. Members of the Chamber of Citizens are directly elected by direct universal suffrage in accordance with a uniform procedure in all Member States.
3. The Chamber of States represents the interests of the Member States of the European Union. It consists of two representatives of each Member State. Every Member shall have equal voting rights. In accordance with the issue being addressed the governments of the Member States will appoint their two representatives.

Article 17 - Executive Power

1. After being elected the Chamber of Citizens will elect a Head of the Executive. The Head of the Executive must gain the approval of the Chamber of States by a 2/3 majority and will thereafter appoint a government, which must be accepted by each chamber by a 2/3 majority. Legislative and executive powers are incompatible in one individual.

2. Ten percent of any of the chambers can initiate a vote of no-confidence, which will dismiss the executive or an individual member of the executive if it obtains a 2/3 majority in each chamber.

Article 18 - Judicial Power

1. The European Constitutional Court is the independent guardian of the Constitution and rules on conflicts between European Union institutions and on conflicts between the European Union and its Member States according to the principle of subsidiarity.

2. The European Court of Justice is the highest judicial authority in all other matters.

3. The European Courts recognize all decisions that are taken by the European Court of Human Rights.

Article 19 - Legislation Process

1. Legislation can be initiated by the executive or by the individual members of either Chambers.

2. In order to become a law, the proposal has to be agreed upon by both chambers.

3. The executive or an individual member of either Chambers shall make their proposal first to the Chamber of Citizens. With a simple majority it shall be passed on to the Chamber of States, including possible amendments. If the Chamber of States accepts this proposal in its entirety by a simple majority, the proposal is passed. If the Chamber of States has further amendments, the proposal is passed back to the Chamber of Citizens, who can either accept the proposal by simple majority, or amend and send the proposal back to the Chamber of States for a second voting. If the proposal does not achieve a simple majority at this second voting, the Conciliation Procedure applies.

Article 20 - Conciliation Procedure

If, after the normal legislation procedure, no agreement has been reached, a Conciliation Committee is created, consisting of an equal number of members from the two chambers. If an agreement is reached, the proposal passes back to the two chambers in order to receive a 2/3-majority support by each chamber. If no agreement is reached, the Chamber of Citizens holds sovereignty as a last resort, if supported by a ¾ majority.

Article 21 - People's Legislative Initiative

If one percent of citizens of the European Union with the right to vote, out of which no more than twenty percent can be of one Member State, petition for a legislative proposal, the proposal shall be guaranteed a place on the agenda of the Chamber of Citizens.

Article 22

If a Member State can convince 2/3 of the Chamber of States that a certain policy is affecting its national interests, it has the right to temporarily opt-out from this policy.

Article 23 - Advisory bodies

1. The European Youth Forum is an advisory body of the European Parliament. When it desires to be heard, its declaration on a specific topic is read in the European Parliament.

2. A European Union Act takes care of the establishment of the Committee of the Regions, which is an advisory body for both the European Parliament and the Executive in regional matters.

3. A European Union Act takes care of the establishment of a European Ombudsman, who is entitled to help uncover maladministration in the European Union's institutions and bodies.

4. A European Union Act takes care of the establishment of the Social-Economic Committee, which is an advisory body of both the Parliament and the European Commission in socio-economic matters.

5. The European Investment Bank acts under the responsibility of the Member States. It has the right to advise the European Parliament and the Executive.

6. The European Court of Auditors shall examine the revenue and expenditure accounts of the Union and its institutions.

Article 24 - The European Central Bank

The European Central Bank is an independent body in charge of the united monetary policy within the single currency zone.

Article 25 - Army

The Member States should cooperate to create a common European force from their armies.

A Member State has the right to opt-out from the Common Defence Policy without needing the approval of other Member States.

Article 26 - The Institutions and the Citizen

All European Union institutions shall be obliged to put an effort into getting citizens involved in the work of the institutions.

Article 27 - Language

1. The European Union shall recognize all national languages within its territory.

2. The administrative language of the European Union will be English; however, additional languages may be accepted upon the decision of the two Chambers.

Chapter 5 - Competence and Legislation**Article 28**

Decisions should be made on the lowest possible level according to the principle of the subsidiarity.

Thus decisions regarding the following areas are to be made by European Union institutions:

- a.** Foreign Trade, Aid and Policy
- b.** Environmental Policy
- c.** Asylum and Immigration Policy
- d.** Agricultural and Fisheries Policy
- e.** Structural and Regional Policy
- f.** Corporate Tax and Community VATg. Single Market Policy
- h.** Labour Market Policy

Article 29

In the following areas, the European Union and the Member States should cooperate in decision-making:

- a.** Educational and Cultural Policy
- b.** Social Policy
- c.** Information and Media Policy
- d.** Healthcare and Insurance Policy
- e.** Scientific Research
- f.** Common Security Policy

Chapter 6 - Changing the Constitution**Article 30**

Proposals to change this Constitution can be put forward in three ways:

- By either of the Chambers with a 2/3 majority;
- By a petition signed by one percent of the citizens of the European Union with the right to vote, out of which no more than twenty percent can be of one Member State;
- By the national parliaments of the Member States by a 2/3 majority upon acceptance of the proposal by the Chamber of States of the European Parliament with a simple majority.

Article 31

Proposals to change this Constitution must be accepted by both Chambers of Parliament with a 2/3 majority.

Article 32

All national parliaments must ratify any changes in the Constitution, according to their own procedures, in order for the changes to become operative.

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