



Comité européen des associations d'intérêt général
European Council for non-profit organisations

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CEDAG's proposals for the European elections June 2009:

“Manifesto for the Organized Civil Society” (final)

Lisbon treaty represents a significant progress for European citizens regarding both democracy and fundamental rights and this:

- by the integration of fundamental rights in appendix of the treaty, conferring legal force to them;
- by the integration in the treaty of the article 8B on participatory democracy;
- by the reinforcement of the national parliaments' role;
- by the extension of the prerogatives of the European Parliament;
- by the improvement of the institutional functioning of the EU;
- by the definition of new priorities.

Therefore CEDAG calls on all citizens of the European Union to participate massively in the European elections of June 2009 in order to make the European Parliament as representative as possible and to consolidate its institutional role.

After the ratification of the treaty by all member states and after its entry into force, we will face a real change of paradigm making it necessary to redefine all the European policies.

CEDAG, as a main actor of the organized European civil society, wants to be an interlocutor of the European authorities in this process, during which the priorities of European policies have to be redefined by emphasizing on the social and environmental dimensions, on sustainable development and on the participatory democracy dimension with the organized civil society. In this context:

- CEDAG calls its member associations to elaborate platforms of national claims to be addressed to the candidates on the basis of the following European positions.
- CEDAG will undertake a campaign targeting political groups and political parties in order to encourage them to take position on the following statements and to bring them to integrate if possible some of these in their programs for the European elections.
- CEDAG will launch an awareness campaign with European networks of NGOs so that they support these positions.
- Moreover, CEDAG invites its national members or partners to ask political parties and candidates to the European elections to take position on CEDAG's statements and claims.

- a. The implementation of the new role of the organized civil society in the European instances after the integration of the article 8-B on participatory democracy and the development of rules of conduct related to:
- the integration of these rules of conduct in a “**European Civil Society Charter**”, dealing with relationships between the associations and the European institutions, based on mutual trust. Participation as a right enshrined in this agreement would improve undoubtedly considerably the communication practices of the institutions and would have a real substantial influence on the minimal standards of consultation. The goal is to achieve to one decision implying the citizens including the “hard-to-reach” communities and groups that are far away from European institutions;
 - the promotion of **participatory democracy and good governance** in all sectors of social and political life, as fundamental factors of social cohesion and citizens’ development;
 - the recognition of the **specific role of non-governmental Organizations (NGOs)** (in comparison with the commercial lobbyists); the “code of conduct for representative interests” must identify the value of civil society for the public benefit rather than for commercial gains;
 - the identification of models and of **best practices of civil dialogue processes** to present as such to the authorities and to the national, regional and local civil societies;
 - the setting up of a permanent **contact point** with civil society in each DG of the European Commission, the General Secretariat and the Presidency;
 - the integration of **civil society observers** in the intergroups of the European Parliament and in the Council of the EU;
 - the definition of a new role for the **European Economic and Social Committee - EESC** to make it representative of the organized civil society;
 - the setting up of a liaison group between organized civil society and the **Committee of the Regions**.
- b. The setting up of adequate core funding tools for European Networks of the social sector from legible and transparent criteria allowing them to participate completely in the elaboration processes of the European public policies
- c. The upturning of the process leading to a “Statute of European Association” after a previous impact study:
- d. The setting up of appropriate conditions allowing the development of Social Services of General Interests (SSGI):
- the clarification of European SSGI rules and the definition of a juridical guaranteed framework;
 - the adoption of common quality principles for SSGIs in the 27 member states of the European Union;
 - the setting up at the European level of a process of observation of national juridical and fiscal frameworks allowing the development of the associative sector, just like the recognition of the specific role of associations and of the non-profit sector as SSGIs providers;
- e. The setting up of a guideline allowing the evaluation of the impact of every EU process on Social Cohesion, on Environmental and Social Dimensions and on Social Economy
- f. The setting up of a common framework promoting the development of social economy
- the setting up of a set of mainstreaming tools in order to allow that the Social Economy dimension can be taken in account in all EU policies in every DG.
 - the setting up at the level of the General Secretariat of the European Commission of a unity of coordination for the promotion of Social Economy.
 - the setting up in “EUROSTAT” of a specific section in charge of the statistical observation of social economy and of satellite accounts for non-profit organisations.