
U.E.F. NEWSLETTER
N° 42

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Dear friends,

The ratification of the Lisbon Treaty moves slowly but steadily. With the House of Commons deciding not to put the Reform Treaty to a Referendum it looks like the turning point in this ratification will be the Irish referendum to be held next May-June. Unfortunately, UEF does not have a section in Ireland but we will do what we can to influence it.

The Reform Treaty, even though is not yet ratified, has already triggered several discussions about how will its implementation be. Some people have already proposed Blair as President of the European Council and some others started campaigns against him... looks like exciting times for European politics are back. 2008 appears to be a year of preparations and 2009 will probably be the year of action.

Implementation of new treaty, EP elections, new Commission, President of the Council: all this will happen in 2009 but the ground for good decisions has to be paved in 2008. For this reason UEF is finishing the preparations of the European-wide actions that should bring the federalist ideas at the forefront of the agenda.

The first step of the federalist campaign has been, based in the resolutions adopted in Prague, the sending of letters to political parties at local, national and international level asking them to nominate their candidate for President of the European Commission. The action was very successful and we received positive feedback. However, the action shouldn't stop until we get the president of the Commission elected by a Parliament majority. This is why

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UEF is launching the project *Who is your candidate?*. The aim is to bring as many organisations as possible to support the initiative so that our message is well-spread.

On the 3rd of April a delegation of European Federalists will be meeting the Federalist Intergroup in the European Parliament with the aim to exchange ideas with MEPs on the ratification of the Reform Treaty, the *Who is your candidate?* campaign and the forthcoming EP elections.

Two days later, on the 5th of April, the UEF will celebrate its Federal Committee in Brussels where the federalist strategy for the EP elections will be presented and we will have the chance to debate our next political messages.

Finally, I would like to welcome once again the mobilization of our young section, JEF, for the democracy in Belarus on the 18th of March. For the third year in a row the action of ‘Give the People of Belarus a Voice’ will mobilize young people from all over Europe in favour of a democratic future in common. I invite our UEF members to second the action and for those most daring to join it!

All in all, an exciting month that should help us to sow what would be the future fruits of 2009.

I look forward to seeing you soon for the UEF Federal Committee in April!

Federalist regards,

Joan Marc Simon

2. PAST EVENTS

Who is your candidate? Open letter from UEF to European political parties, February 11th, Brussels

In view of the forthcoming 2009 European elections, the Federalists see a historic opportunity for the European parties to regain the trust of the citizens by presenting their Candidate for President of the European Commission who would be in charge of implementing the program presented to the voters.

Mercedes Bresso, president of UEF said *“If the Lisbon Treaty is ratified the European Council will elect its President, who will have specific responsibilities concerning common foreign and security policy. This is a step forward for the European construction, which must be combined with the reinforcement of the European Commission’s political role”*.

“Without a strengthened Commission the European citizens would be voting for a European Parliament, whose powers would still be unclear. The real power of an elected assembly is to control the executive body in charge of carrying out a programme presented to the voters. Lacking a clear link between European vote, programme and the executive body, European elections are in danger of turning into a mere juxtaposition of national elections where national problems are at stake, not the future of Europe” concluded president Bresso.

Furthermore, UEF asked the European political parties:

- to include into the electoral programme the firm resolve to “put forward, after the 2009

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elections, new proposals for a further constitutional settlement for the Union, in accordance with the clause on treaty revision”, as stated in the resolution of the European Parliament of 11th July 2007;

- to put in place a system of cross-border party lists, including citizens from all over Europe; to reject the idea that the negotiations to choose the future President of the European Council and the High Representative for foreign and security policy encompass the choice of the President of the European Commission as well. If this was the case European citizens would be seriously deceived since all the highest authorities of the European *governance* would be already agreed upon at the moment of the elections. If the European Union is to become a real “supranational democracy”, European parties must not support obscure manoeuvres to designate the highest posts in the European institutions.

Eastman Building Debate

"Does the European Union need a budget revision in 2009?", February 27th, Brussels

After the debate on IGC in November 2007, the public debate organized by the UEF in the Eastman Building of the European Parliament the Federalists was dedicated to the EU budget issue.

While closing its position on the financial perspectives 2007-13 the European Council also called for a wide-ranging debate on the future of the EU budget, with a review to be presented in 2008/09.



The debate took place in the framework of the regular Eastman Building debate series and featured a panel of experts assembled by the UEF. Mrs. Dalia GRYBAUSKAITE, European Commissioner in charge of Financial Programming and Budget, Mr. Janusz LEWANDOWSKI, MEP, Vice-President of the Budget Committee, Mrs. Helga TRÜPEL, MEP, Green budget spokesperson, Mrs. Indhira SANTOS, Research fellow at Bruegel Think-Tank and Mr. Joan Marc SIMON, Secretary General of UEF, were part of the panel. The debate was moderated by Mr. André WILKENS, Director of the Open Society Institute in Brussels.

Under the title "***Does the European Union need a budget revision in 2009?***", the event sought to open the discussion between the European Commissioner for Financial Programming and Budget and members of the European Parliament from member states that are concerned in having to cut back on national social programs in favour of giving more money "to Brussels" or that strongly feel that this review should actually be a revision and change the EU's spending priorities. The debate was fuelled by the comments of the research fellow at Bruegel, a European think tank devoted to international economics, author of

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the research paper *“Do Structural Funds Work?”*

As an opening note, Mr. Joan Marc SIMON stressed that the budget of the European Union was still too tiny and little to fit the expectations one should have towards a European Union. Moreover the EU budget was lacking of transparency, especially on the income side. This should change as the EU also has to overcome its dependency on national governments. *“It’s important to raise our own resources. When it comes to financial terms we shouldn’t always discuss and ask ourselves what Europe can provide us with but rather what we can give to Europe”*.



Mrs. Dalia GRYBAUSKAITE mentioned that previously discussions and financial interventions concerning the EU budget were

really not transparent. For future discussion all European member states agreed that a serious approach was necessary and fundamental changes were needed.

For Mrs. GRYBAUSKAITE the EU budget was a mirror of the European policies. *“If we are talking about the reform of the budget we are talking about reforming Europe”*, Mrs. GRYBAUSKAITE said.

Mr. LEWANDOWSKI stated that the EU budget was one percent of the GDP of the European Union and one third of this were directly paid according to the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). *“In 1988 the expenditures on CAP were about 60%, today it’s about 33%. So the budget is changing. It is not frozen”*, Mr. LEWANDOSWKI said. *“If we want to finance new policies, we should face new challenges like immigration, energy security, renewable energies and we also should device new policies and new budget lines”* he added.

For Mr. LEWANDOWSKI, the EU should implement an evolution but not a revolution to reach this aim.

Mrs. Helga TRÜPEL opened her part stating that we obviously will need a budget revision in 2009. *“What kind of a European Union do we want? We have to preserve the common interests and the spirit of a European Union. If we fail to have this we cannot solve our problems”*, Mrs. TRÜPEL said.

Concerning the structural funds, the EU should stick furthermore to cohesion and balancing as a strong asset. *“Should the new member states repeat all the things the old member states did when we should include the idea of a better, more effective and more sustainable development in the Eastern European*

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countries? It is out of question to do again what the EU did it in the last decades”.



“We need more money for research and development, we have to invest more in the qualification and education of European citizens (i.e. ERASMUS programme), we need more cultural movement and exchange. Concerning the Common Foreign and Security Policy, we have to answer the question of the role of the EU in the world. Changes have to be implemented in those sectors” mentioned Mrs. TRÜPEL, calling for the change of the European budget.



Mrs. Indhira SANTOS completed the panel as expert of the Bruegel Think-Tank. She

mentioned that to implement EU policies one should not only focus on the EU budget, as the EU also has other tools to regulate.

“If we talk about the EU budget we should ask ourselves if the way we spend the money we will reach our previously defined aims and if we have reached those aims in the most efficient way”, Mrs. SANTOS stated. “Here structural funds are the main instrument. The problem and is that those funds are not efficient and they do not maximize growth even if efficiency is a difficult term when it comes to structural funds”. According to the given evaluation of the Think Tank of Bruegel, this should be changed.

Eventually, the debate was opened to the audience and the moderator Mr. André WILKENS invited the participants to ask their questions to the panel.

The expert panel had to answer several questions, as if the Lisbon Treaty offered the tools and possibilities to overcome the old budget restrictions and to increase the EU budget according to its needs, if there was any procedure to consult the citizens within this topic and how to create more solidarity between the member states, or on the rebate policy for some EU countries and the CAP, focusing on France.

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3. FUTURE EVENTS

European youth against the Belarus dictatorship! March 18th - 19th



On the night of 18th-19th of March 2008 JEF will organise a co-ordinated pan-European action in different cities across the continent to show support to the suppressed civil society and opposition movement in Belarus. The date coincides with the 2006 Presidential elections in Belarus.

The action consists of gagging statues in cities throughout Europe and the world that will symbolically be prevented from speaking freely, much like the current situation of the people in Belarus. The 2008 Action will call on Europe to stand up for democracy in Belarus in defence of human rights. Signs such as “*Europe, Give a voice to the people of Belarus*” will be hanged around the necks of the statues.

The same event was organised successfully a year ago in 60 European cities. JEF invites civil society and organisations of all backgrounds who believe in democracy and respect for human rights to join us in this action against Europe’s last dictatorship during the night of the 18th and 19th of March. All it takes is some

tape, paper and a cloth! Go with your organisation and friends or join a JEF local section - simply contact [belarus\(at\)jef.eu](mailto:belarus(at)jef.eu) - to find a section near you or tell us about your planned activity. Please also send any pictures from the statues you gagged for immediate release online - [info\(at\)jef.eu](mailto:info(at)jef.eu) - together with all other pictures from the pan-European action in support of democracy!;

Meeting with the European Parliament’s Federalist Intergroup, April 3rd, Brussels

Representatives from the sections of the **Union of European Federalists** together with the **Young European Federalists** (JEF), are invited to meet the members of the Federalist Intergroup of the European Parliament in order to exchange their views regarding the ratification of Lisbon Treaty and the common strategy for the European Parliament elections in 2009.

The Federalists want to exchange their opinions and ideas concerning the current and future challenges of the European Project in order to build up a consistent campaign for the EP elections together with the Members of the European Parliament.

This meeting should also be the occasion to present future projects of the Union of European Federalists.

UEF Bureau meeting, April 4th, Brussels

Prior the Federal Committee on the 5th of April the UEF Bureau will have a strategic meeting.

The UEF Bureau will evaluate and discuss the so far implementation of the work programme

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2008-2009 as also plan on contributions from the UEF side within future events.

UEF Federal Committee, April 5th, Brussels

The UEF has the pleasure of announcing that the next meeting of the UEF FC will take place in Brussels on April 5th 2008 at the Piemonte Regional Representation.

You will very soon receive more information about the agenda and the travel reimbursement conditions.

Please note that the proposals for resolutions should be submitted before March 28th at 12:00.

Open doors day of the European institutions, 4th – 9th May, Strasbourg – Brussels

On the 9th of May, Europe celebrates the anniversary of May 9th 1950, when France's Foreign Affairs Minister Robert Schuman urged European nations to pool their coal and steel production, which later turned out to be a first foundation on which to build closer European integration.

On what has become a traditional celebration, the European Union's main Institutions open their doors to the public on the "Europe day".

Each year, the interested public is invited to visit Europe's main institutions such as the European Commission, the European Parliament, the Committee of Regions, or even take a rare guided tour of the Council of the European Union. There will be several outdoor events as well, such as concerts and exhibitions.

The UEF, along with other civil society organisations, will be present on this special occasion, both in Strasbourg and Brussels.

Congress of Europe 1948-2008, May 23rd-24th, The Hague

On the 23rd and 24th of May the European Movement will celebrate its 60th anniversary of the Congress of Europe in The Hague.



The Congress of Europe in The Hague was held from the 7th to the 11th of May 1948 with 750 delegates from 26 European countries participating as well as observers from Canada and the United States. It had a profound influence on the shape of the European Union, based on the subsidiary principle, shared sovereignty rights, democracy, the rule of law and solidarity.

Besides the Congress in The Hague the European Movement will celebrate with a coordinated series of events across Europe.

4. PROJECT

Who is your Candidate? Project

Who is your Candidate? Is a project to follow-up on our last action to send letters to political parties asking them to nominate their candidate for President of the European Commission.

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It is based on a website that is currently being developed by New Europe (a Danish organization) and the UEF, should be ready in a few weeks. The launch is envisaged for the 5th of April, during the UEF Federal Committee meeting.

The aim of this campaign is to turn into a platform that hosts as many organizations as possible. So far JEF and Permanent Forum of Civil Society have already joined the initiative.

It can be used as on-line campaign, but it can also brand and host local street actions in the countries where local section feels like doing so.

5. PRESS RELEASES

20.02.2008

Ratifying the Lisbon Treaty is only a first step for more European democracy

The Union of European Federalists (UEF) welcomes the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty in the European Parliament. However, Mercedes Bresso, President of the UEF stressed: *"More must be done for European democracy. If European citizens are not informed about the content of the new European Treaty, its democratic progress will be no more than a farce. Representative and participatory democracy can only work when people know about their rights and duties."* Therefore UEF demands from the European institutions and the member states more communication about the new Treaty.

UEF regrets that compared to the Constitutional Treaty, the Lisbon Treaty is less clear and

readable and less ambitious in founding a political and democratic Union. *"The shortcomings of the new Treaty are mainly due to the procedure of establishing this new Treaty, which was far from being transparent. It is particularly sad that the member states did not yet allow an official consolidated version of the Treaty to be published"* said Mercedes Bresso.

Next step for European democracy is the European Parliament elections. For a higher turnout in 2009 we need a stronger personalisation of European politics. This is the responsibility of the European political parties. *"The European political parties have to nominate their candidates for the Commission President before the European elections in 2009. The UEF has sent a letter to the European political parties and is expecting a reconfirmation of their commitment to take up their role as foreseen in the new Treaty"*, concluded Mercedes Bresso.

6. CALENDAR OF ACTIVITIES

- *JEF Federal Committee, March 28th – 30th, Biel, Switzerland*
- *Meeting with the European Parliament Federalist Intergroup, April 3rd, Brussels, Belgium*
- *Launch of Who is Candidate Campaign, April, Brussels, Belgium*
- *UEF Bureau meeting, April 4th, Brussels*
- *UEF Federal Committee, April 5th, Brussels*

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- *The Conference on European Neighbourhood Policy, April 11th and 12th, Sofia, Bulgaria*
- *Open doors day of the European institutions, Strasbourg – Brussels, 4th – 9th May*
- *Congress of Europe 1948-2008, The Hague, Netherlands, May 23rd-24th*

The UEF Newsletter is a free monthly service prepared by the European Secretariat of the Union of European Federalists (UEF) with the financial support but not representing the opinions of the European Commission.

Editor: Joan Marc SIMON & Mana LIVARDJANI

Contributions: Mana LIVARDJANI, Jörg JANSSEN, Joan Marc SIMON

The UEF, founded in 1946, is an independent and non-governmental European organisation, campaigning for a federal Europe. Since April 2005, it is presided over by Mrs. Mercedes BRESSO, President of the Italian Region of Piedmont, Member of the EU Committee of the Regions.

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214 D Chaussée de Wavre, B-1050 Brussels
Tel. +32 2 508 30 30, Fax. +32 2 626 95 01
e-mail: info@federalesurope.org
Internet: www.federalesurope.org