

ACCENT

Community Colleges for Europe!



A European Demos

No.4 April 2006

Publishers' perspective

This issue of the ACCENT, A European Demos, as well as the blog of the same title is the concrete result of the *European Citizenship in Action* project. The project consisted mainly of two residential seminars (*Demos Community College* & *Active Citizenship Community College*).

It is the standpoint of the ACC that the reflective approach to Europe and Europeanness is what may define Europeanness and a common European value. This approach may direct us in the future towards a worldwide idea. A reflective approach is per definition decentralised and avoids eurocentrism.

This rather process oriented concept of rationality, ethics and values obliges us to not only reflect on the reflective approach, but should also try to draw conclusions on how this could be better formulated and implemented in schools, events, education studies as well as in general education.

We stubbornly try to take the consequences of this approach. The residential school format is the guarantee that the reflective approach does not stagnate into incontrovertible statements as happens in traditional conferences. It is the mixed group of Europeans taking part in this process that is the guarantee that the reflective approach is not reduced to a replay of well-known national positions.

"Demos" is defined as a group of people gathered around a purpose; conscious, active citizens, members of the city, "politela" in ancient Greece. By taking our point of departure around the theme of "Demos" we feel perfectly aligned with the ACC's mission to promote the creation of a European Public Sphere.

Even if neither Plan D of EU-Commissioner Wallström, nor the so-called "period of reflection" was foreseen, when this project was drafted, we do hope this issue of the ACCENT will be seen in the context.

We keep asking ourselves the question, how do you depict a reflection process? Dear reader, if we didn't succeed, it is up to you to see the process for yourselves and join us!



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A different history: the Union could be possible!

At the Demos Community College in the city Rhodes (October 9th-18th 2005) a group of Europeans met to find out how they could contribute in enhancing democratic values, exploring and moving European democracy forward. "Demos", the core theme of the Community College, carries the meaningfulness of the ancient Greek practice of active citizenship. It was the spark for revisiting Democracy in Europe today by the mixed group of Europeans. By creating a vibrant learning community, by living and learning together within the principles of the European Community Colleges non-formal educational format, the group developed their own small Demos within a highly participatory process.

At the roots of the journey leading to this issue of the **ACCENT** were participants at the Demos Community College in Rhodes. One of many outcomes of the deliberative learning process was a branchy mindmap of challenges for Europe of today. Europe's current challenge, this rapidly changing social, economic and political organization, is depicted in the bunch delivered from the Demos Community of Rhodes.

At the beginning of January of 2006 an invitation crossed Europe. The Association for Community Colleges invited Europeans to consider their future in Europe. The mindmap from Rhodes was delivered alongside the invitation, and participants of the next event, the Active Citizenship Community College (Elsinore/Helsingør March 20th-27th 2006), were asked to pick from the branches and write their opinion about it; ideas, questions and doubts raised by participants at the Demos Community College were put in the middle of a new mixed group of Europeans. New participants' questions and solutions to the future of Europe were then framed by the Demos of Rhodes in order to be re-opened by the Demos of Elsinore.

More than one hundred people from different places in Europe sent their articles (available at <http://demos.acc.eu.org>). Twenty of them arrived to the International People's College in Elsinore/Helsingør, where the final editorial of the articles and the final countdown to the publication took place.

People with much and nothing in common but with a desire to influence the future of Europe and the European Union went to propose ideas on how to construct bridges among them. This time people came from The Netherlands, Spain, Latvia, Albania, Bulgaria, Malta, Romania, Russia, Czech Republic, Poland, Portugal, Turkey, Ukraine and Belgium ... but they all believed to have a common future in Europe.

Different personalities, different countries, and different visions of the world, different religions, different education, different language... but all with the same mission: to review the concept of Europe and to propose one single future. When all together are united for the same purpose towards one common project, all kind of barriers are eliminated. The pretext was to write a magazine with different articles from the present time of the European Union. Nevertheless, when we started to work on it we realised how complicated is to work in order to build a common Europe.

However, the coexistence is superposed and the differences of nationality, religion or language, do not create barriers. The barriers are broken down when a project is in common and for an also common short, medium and long term where everyone wants to participate.

If these people can work together and forget all these differences, why can't our political representatives in the European Union? Why are these differences not broken down when in the end they are just in the heads of everybody?

This group of Europeans can give example to the politicians that it is possible to build a stronger and more unified Europe. If only the politically responsible in Europe would take up the glove and work by this way and try to walk further on. In this case another Europe is possible, a strong Europe, united, and with one thing in common that everybody can feel, the feeling of being contributor of a reality with vocation of future.

In this issue of the **ACCENT**, with the title A European Demos, we present what we picked from the branches and elaborated further. We have clustered the elaborations into three chapters (*Europe's borders*, *Challenges for the future of Europe & Citizens' participation in the EU*) while another one has been added with contributions from presenters at the Active Citizenship Community College.

All this history has been possible thanks to all and each one of you, thanks to:

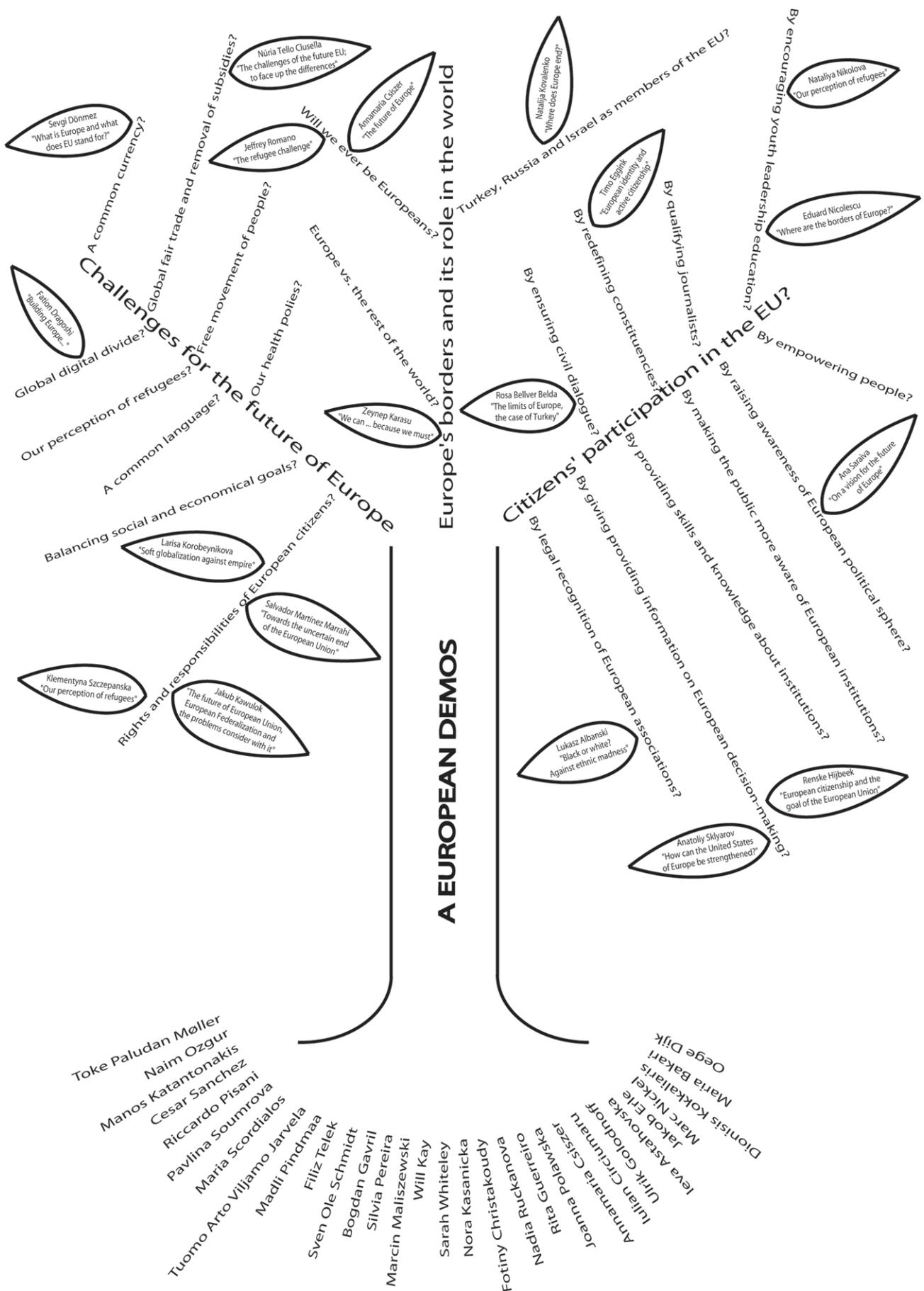
Ieva Astahovska, Fation Dragoshi, Naim Ozgur, Nuria Tello Clusella, Manos Katantonakis, Jeffrey Romano, Cesar Sanchez, Natalia Nikolova, Riccardo Pisani, Annamaria Csiszér, Pavlina Soumrova, Anatoliy Sklyarov, Tuomo Arto Viljamo Jarvela, Zeynep Karasu, Madli Pindmaa, Sevgi Dönmez, Filiz Telek, Renske Hijbeek, Bogdan Gavril, Jakub Kawulok, Silvia Pereira, Natalija Kovalenko, Marcin Maliszewski, Klementyna Szczepanska, Will Kay, Marc Nickel, Lukasz Albanski, Nora Kasanicka, Timo Eggink, Fotiny Chrisakoudy, Ana Sariva, Nadia Ruckanova, Dionisis Kokkalis, Larissa Korobeynikova, Rita Guerreiro, Eduard Corneliu Nicolescu, Oege Dijk, Joanna Polawska, Salvador Martinez Marrahí, Iulian Circiumaru, Maria Bakari, Sarah Whiteley, Ulrik Golodnoff, Maria Scordialos, Toke Paludan Møller, Sven Ole Schmidt, Jakob Erle, Runa Midtvåge, Garba Diallo, Malene Jepsen, John Petersen, Lucie Cizkova, Maite and many more

If the roots are the participants from Rhodes, if the participants from Elsinore/Helsingør climbed the branches, if the fruits are contents of this **ACCENT** issue and on the Demos Community Blog, and if the fruits are the seeds to more of the same, then *A European Demos* is this process as a whole!

A professional hosting group offered the space, time and stimuli for this highly creative, meaningful, transformative, and sustainable learning experience. Thanks to *Interchange* (www.interchange.dk), *Hara* (www.haraconnection.com), *Facile* (www.days.dk) and *International Academy for Education and Democracy* (www.iaed.info).

Rosa Bellver Belda

Did you know that: There are 25 memberstates in the EU right now (2006).



A European public sphere - a dream, a fact or both?

Presentation by and interview with Elisabeth Arnold
Excerpt by Lucie Čířková and John Petersen

Elisabeth Arnold is the chairman of the European Affairs Committee (EAC) in the Danish parliament. She has been member of the Danish parliament for the Danish Social-Liberal party (Radikale Venstre) for 18 years and a member of the EAC ever since she was elected for the parliament.



In this presentation and conversation with an audience of a mix of Europeans, Elisabeth Arnold presents the challenges for developing a European Public Sphere just as a discussion emerges with the audience, if a transnational debate space in fact does already exist in Europe of today? The presentation is an answer to the letter printed on page 10.

The presentation out of which this excerpt is taken took place at the Active Citizenship Community College in Helsingør/Elsinore on March 24th 2006:

"... The task of that committee [EAC of the Danish parliament, ed.] is actually very simple. Every Friday we have a meeting with the Danish resort minister who is going to make decisions in the European Council the week after ... and the minister in question ... comes to me in our committee and he has to make sure, that whatever he decides at the Council meeting in Brussels, it must be in accordance with a majority in the Danish parliament. Because if the parliament disagrees with him, he risks his position and he might be forced to step down. So the whole system goes through that the parliament has very strong influence on the minister who goes to the ministerial meetings or to the Council meeting in Brussels.

We have "exported" that model with a parliamentary committee controlling the minister of the government to most other EU member states. We had this committee for more than 30 years in Denmark, but now all the other member countries have that committee also, and twice a year we meet with all the other EACs of the EU. Every time we have a new presidency in the EU we meet with our colleagues in all the other parliaments. It means that in May I am going to Vienna together with four or five of my colleagues from Denmark. The extreme benefit of that "institution" is that we discuss Europe, and we discuss specific topics. Because we all meet with our governments in the week before they go to Council meetings, we sit every Friday all over Europe and discuss the same topics, because our ministers are going to the same place in Brussels the following week to discuss the same agenda.

So, we have a European debate, it is fragmented but I think it is going to develop over the years, because we are now having a homepage for this "organization" where all the EACs they can discuss and we can exchange views on the same topics. This is just an example on how you can facilitate EU/European debate; in fact we have done it already at this very elite level, because it is not at all public in any way. It is only us politicians sitting in the parliamentary committees discussing with each others, but anyway it is a beginning".

- (Elisabeth Arnold) You wanted to ask something?

- (Timo Eggink) *Yes, on these national meetings, you give the ministers some sort of mandate to go to Brussels and decide something and to make sure that he doesn't have a majority against him when he comes back ... so, it's like there are people from all the parties?*

- (Elisabeth Arnold) Yes!

- (Timo Eggink) *Coalition and opposition?*

- (Elisabeth Arnold) Yes!

- (Timo Eggink) *When you go to Vienna, you decide to become a new ... ?*

- (Elisabeth Arnold) We only meet, and then we discuss something that has been decided the year before, so we don't discuss anything specific unless we have put it on the agenda. It means that we know our colleagues in all the other parliaments.

- (Timo Eggink) *So, it is some sort of evaluation?*

- (Elisabeth Arnold) Yes, and also if we have for instance a specific problem, every country is discussing, for instance the services directive, then we take it up and say, ok next time we meet, we must discuss the services directive, because it is very important in all the countries and this is making a lot of discussion and some are against and some are pro and so on ...

The size of the European border is on the moment 11,215 km and the coastline is 65,414 km.

- (Timo Eggink) Then you discuss something and you decide something and then what is done with that?

- (Elisabeth Arnold) We cannot decide anything, because we are just a naturally grown organization from "below", if you can say parliamentarians are below ... we parliamentarians, we wanted somebody to discuss with. We wanted some partners, dialogue partners, because everybody are sitting in their own parliaments ... in our national context and discussing a specific problem, ... discussed in the Council meeting the week after with all the ministers from all 25 countries, and all the ministers are coming with their mandates from back home. We would like to discuss with our colleagues in all the other countries. Why are you giving your minister this silly mandate? Why don't you feel the same as we do? So, that's the exercise, we want to get to know each other, our fellow-politicians in all the other countries, so we can have some sort of uniform platform how to deal with these very technical problems. Ok, I am chairman of that committee in Denmark ... And, because we have colleagues doing the exact same thing in all the member countries, we decided many years ago, that ok, why don't we meet sometimes and discuss our problems or our experiences or our successes or our failures? ... We have no power, because we just decided to meet. We are not an institution.

- (Timo Eggink) Ok, that's what I wanted to know, how much power can come from this meeting? No power right?

- (Elisabeth Arnold) We have not wanted to be another institution having some placement in the organigramme or whatever you say, we just want to meet with our colleagues to discuss how do you manage early warning for instance or how do you manage the green books of the commission, how do you treat them, do you read them, how do you deal with the debates on the working plan of the commission for example and we take out some topics and we say, what do you feel about the services directive in your country, and that's, a very good example, because all the new member states of the EU, the new member states of 2004, they all feel they would like very much they would like to have the services directive, as it was originally, and all the old member states they want to have it changed, so, there is a shift between the old member states and the new member states, so it is very useful for us to discuss with our colleagues from the new member states to ask them, why do you think that this directive is a very useful thing while we think it is so harmful. I think it is a good dialogue to have; eventually you might end up by understanding each other, which is not too bad. But all this was only meant as an introduction to tell you, ... if you feel you have a need to discuss with other people doing something like yourself do in your own country, then of course you can always meet... I'm trying to use it as an example of where there is a need for a debate, the debate is coming. If there's an obvious need for debate across borders then people will come. We will find a language to communicate if we want to communicate.

"What I was actually going to say was that it is one of the problems in the EU that there is no common public debate. It is very, very difficult to have this common debate in a space like the EU because you don't have the same language, you don't even have the same alphabet, you don't have the same political system, you don't have the same time span between elections, you don't have the same scandals, you don't have the same political culture, you don't have the same press culture, you have so many difficulties to overcome. There have been some efforts to make common European TV programs, and high schools or community schools like this one and other efforts to make people come together because they should be able to create a common debate. **But, my experience is that a debate is only coming when there is a need for a debate, when there is a common problem you must debate.**

I try to say that sometimes, some of the European problems they call for a common European debate and then the debate will be there – for instance the accession of Turkey to the EU will be a topic debated much in the future and for instance the energy supply to Europe is becoming very, very actual ... So, whenever there is a common European destiny, a common European fate, there will be a need for a common European discussion and it will be there ... "

- (Guest) I was thinking, you were talking about this debate about different major issues of the EU ... is it at membership level or between the politicians or which level do you mean?

- (Elisabeth Arnold) I am talking about the politicians and the civil servants and those who are working in the ministries and so on having to communicate with people from other countries. I am not talking about the citizen's level, because there is a lot to do there. I am talking about the so-called elite; my colleagues and civil servants and their colleagues in all the countries.

"I was talking about the lack of common agendas and of a common language, that's the first one and also of the lack of a common agenda on the daily basis. For instance the political systems are different in the different countries; they are in accordance with the constitutions of the different countries. Some have elections every third year, some have elections every fifth year, some have elections every fourth year, some have fixed election periods, some have flexible election periods, ... and the public debate in that specific country is always very dependent on when your next elections are going to be ... so it is only when you can have a European parliament election we have a common debate ... and then also we have a problem with the persons who are active in that public debate. In every nation, in every different nation you have your faces. In Denmark people know my face; of course, I have been on television many times. They know my face from the photos in the papers, but when I go to Sweden nobody knows me ... In Sweden we know about, perhaps three politicians, so it is very difficult to have a debate when people ... in other countries they would say, who is this person? We don't know her, is she important?"

The EU has two lowest points of -7 meter; Lammefjord in Denmark and Zuidplaspolder in the Netherlands.

It is very difficult to overcome all these fragmented debates so important for the national understanding of how the political or democratically life is going on, ... you also have the different habits of what kind of things do we discuss in the public space and what organizations are important, not only parties. My party is very specific Danish party, and it has no sister parties in Sweden or Germany or England or Holland. We have some affiliated parties who we think are like us, but in some aspects they are not. There is only one party who has an overall organization..."

- (Fatjon Dragoshi) *International Socialists I believe.*

"Yes, and they are having the same group in the European parliament, and there is no discussion on where you belong, but if you go to the left wing, do you belong to the communist or some other Eurocommunist, or ... they have so many fractions in that part of the political spectrum, so sometimes they don't even want to be in the same room. The Greens for instance, the green parties in Europe, are they left of the social democrats or are they right to the social democrats? That differs also from country to country ... I think, as long as you have all these differences in Europe, it is very difficult to have a public debate on what is filling the newspapers, so I think it is very ambitious to call for a public debate in Europe and I don't think we will get it before you have a pure, a real federation, a parliament that has some real political power, ... parallel to the Council and where every citizen in Europe has direct voting to all the levels of the EU ... There are so many different political systems and so many national barriers are still present in Europe, so this will not happen in the first 50 or 100 years."

- (Renske Hijbeek) *I thought, when there is an issue that is directly at the citizen then there is a public debate! Like, when we had the constitution debate and we could vote for it in Holland or France or wherever you are. And if we should send our troops to Iraq? Then people follow, what is happening in other European countries and especially about the constitution, everybody looked at each other, what do you think? I live in Wageningen where there are students coming together from all Europe, and you really talk about it, and then you don't need the names of the politicians. In Holland, I don't think lots of people know the names of the politicians in Holland, but they still discuss about like agricultural things, and they talk about it and discuss it, but they don't know about the names of the politicians, but it is an issue that they are confronted with, so I think 50 or 100 years ... it is already happening now, but you just don't have European papers and that's why you don't see it.*

- (Elisabeth Arnold) I think you are mixing up two things, because you have a national debate, because you are having a referendum and you have a national debate, because you are discussing Iraq ...

- (Renske Hijbeek) *No, I think it is European! It think it's...*

- (Elisabeth Arnold) But have you discussed it with anybody outside Holland?

- (Renske Hijbeek) *yes and no, but it is because I live and study at an international university, that I can; because it is possible, they are close! And ... I also don't discuss European matters with Dutch people who live 100 kilometers away, and that's the same why I don't discuss with French people who live 100 kilometers away, but then just because people live nearby me, does it mean I only do the national debate? I don't think it's fair to say! You see my point?*

- (Elisabeth Arnold) No, because ... we are having this reflection pause after the Dutch and the French "no" ... and we were going to have a referendum in Denmark last September. It was postponed, because we could see in the opinion polls that when people in Denmark was asked, what am I going to vote on the constitutional treaty before the French and Dutch referenda many of them said "yes". There was a big majority for "yes". After the French and Dutch "no", the "yes" dropped dramatically, because everybody in Denmark says, if the French and the Dutch say no, there must be something wrong. So, it is very, very difficult to keep on having a referendum in one country, if there are some neighbors who saying "no". So, this reflection pause, which we are confronting now, which we are performing now here in Denmark; we are going to have discussion in ... we are having actually, because we are carrying through discussions in many high schools and in universities and in organizations and I have been to lots of meetings. They are all discussing some overall problems of Europe. For instance, how big can it be and how should we construct a new constitutional treaty for instance. But in those 14 countries, who have said yes to the treaty there are no discussions at all, because they have said, ok, we have ratified this constitution treaty, why should we discuss anything? We are just waiting for the others; for the French and for the Dutch to be more sensitive; they are not discussing anything, and I know it, because I have talked to their politicians and they are not discussing anything at all.

- (Renske Hijbeek) *But maybe that's because it's a national referendum, but if you have like a really European policy like agriculture or something? You discuss it with people in the pub or that you meet at the street and its normal that it's only close to your environment, but you follow the whole EU about it ... I don't think you need the names of the politicians and you really ...*

- (Elisabeth Arnold) I disagree with you. It might be otherwise in Holland, I don't know, but I know specifically, that there is no reflection pause debate in Holland, because Dutch politicians they say, we do not want to discuss it. What are you discussing in Holland right now? About the future of Europe?

- (Renske Hijbeek) *Well, we are talking about Turkey anyway.*

- (Elisabeth Arnold) But that's a problem with ... if you want to have a common debate in all European countries on the same topic, it must be relevant to all the countries and the constitutional treaty is not relevant to discuss in those countries where it

In 2002 the EU (consisting of only 15 member states) consumed 2.711 trillion kWh of electricity, almost one sixth of the world electricity consumption.



has been ratified, because they say, why do we have to discuss it? We have ratified! We are just waiting for the rest; we are waiting for the other countries. They must discuss it. We have made it, we have had this referendum, like in Spain or in Luxemburg ...

- (Renske Hijbeek) *So, maybe we should hold a European referendum?*

- (Elisabeth Arnold) That would be very good, but then again you have some countries that do not have referenda at all. Germany for instance, it is not possible to have a referendum in Germany, because of their constitution.

- (Nataliya Nikolova) *So, as far as I understood you are speaking about the complicity of the political system in Europe - of the reaching of so many institutions - in having a EU with democratic deficits. So nowadays we have, as far as I understand, the debate on a political level, but don't you think it is quite important this debate to be ... we to have a European public debate, somehow to communicate on a European level, not on a national level?*

- (Elisabeth Arnold) Yes, I think it would be very beneficial, very important ... but I don't see how? There is a problem; I have tried so many years. And I have been talking to my colleagues in other countries and we have a debate on a political level, but you don't have a debate on the public level ... only if you have something like a terror act for instance. Then everybody in Europe speaks about this, and they say, what can we do to prevent to happen in the EU? And perhaps you also have discussion on the agriculture policy, if you have a scandal, but I can assure you that it is not everywhere in Europe that you speak about their agricultural policy.

- (Nataliya Nikolova) *But as when we live in civic societies, this civic society combines us ... we have dangers, we have ...*

- (Elisabeth Arnold) Yes, but you all, we all have our national debates. We know how they are running and we know how we shall communicate with our neighbors and our colleagues, with our families and our political enemies or political friends, but when you go out across the borders to your neighboring country or to even countries more far away, what do you do then? You must travel to go there. You must be quite sure you will meet somebody you can ask; you don't have common newspapers, you don't have common television, you don't have common topics...

- (Sevgi Donmez) *There are many EU-initiatives to create public debates for example Socrates, Grundtvig and also today there is the internet, there are many discussion groups, yahoo-groups, so we don't have to have just one newspaper or to discuss about the same issues; so many young people are speaking English, so I think we are close to create the public debate; so I think, don't you think public debate is more important than at political level?*

- (Elisabeth Arnold) ... I know also many Danish people are attending them; different groups having the same area of working for instance or area of interest they go together with other people doing the same things in other countries, but they are all actively engaged in something professionally, but if you ask the ordinary citizens on the street, who do not travel very much – except for holidays - or the old age pensioners for instance. The typical old age pensioner in Denmark doesn't care a shit about Europe. Doesn't care about any public debate outside the Danish public debate and that's my problem because as a politician, I want to discuss Europe with everybody - not only with the professionals who are engaged in active interacting with other European professionals. And you are very lucky and excellent, because you are actively joining in the debate. You are yourself doing something, you are traveling outside your country, you are learning different languages, and you are communicating with other peoples from other countries, so you are perfect persons doing this, but I don't know which country you are coming from?

- (Sevgi Donmez) *Turkey!*

- (Elisabeth Arnold) You come from Turkey, ok, I am quite sure there are many, many persons in your countries, who don't know anything about Europe or the European construction and if they hear about the parliament or the commission or the council, they say, ok, all these institutions, it is so complicated ... I am sounding very pessimistic, I know that, and it is not my aim, I am just trying to tell you why it is going so slowly. It is going so slowly with this European debate, because you have to overcome so many barriers ... You are educated, you can speak languages, and you are not afraid of traveling, so you can do a lot of European debate and you can do a lot of good things for the European debate, but many, many, many persons in your own country, they will have to wait many years before this happens ... I am trying to be realistic.

The national holiday of the EU is 9 May, because at 9 May 1950 Robert Schuman proposed the creation of an organized Europe.

Developing a European Demos via new networks and associations

by John Petersen

John Petersen is the chairman of the Association for Community Colleges (ACC). The focus of this survey is the obstacles and challenges you face, when taking off as if there was a European civil society context.

The points mentioned were originally formulated in a letter to Elisabeth Arnold, Chairman of the Danish Parliament European Affairs Committee, as one of the responsible for the EU-period-of-reflection-debate as it takes place in Denmark in the spring 2006.

I mentioned to you, that the "nationalization" of the period of reflection to me seemed bizarre, since by nationalizing the debate probably one contributes to strengthening problems rather than solving them.

That we should work for the development of a European public sphere has in many contexts been stressed already as the only way forward. That is a huge and long-term task anyway. I do fully understand when you answer: "...yes, but we have no clue how to do it..."

This just to make the point, that when we yield and invest in EU-debate in a national context, then it often leads to a drawback for the ambition to develop a European public sphere – even if considering this causality necessity would probably be too much.

Our experience comes from 7-9 years work on the idea to develop a European public sphere by the help of the European Community College format. In the association ACC we worked both politically (tried to "place" the idea of a future with European Community Colleges), practically (proved that it would work by practicing), and coherent (founded a European civil society organization that is standing behind). We have in many ways had great success, but there are many examples how we are opposed by – lets say – systemic defense mechanisms within the states and their established civil societies. Here you are some examples:

- Just as often as this above mentioned idea is described in Danish media, it is described as stemming from different Danish civil society organizations – even if we are in fact a European organization and even if a previous and similar initiative as ours was everything but Danish. We, as a European association, are simply not interesting for the Danish media. We play no role in the Danish-domestic political game, nobody benefits from being friends of ours, and we do make no red alert in any camps within the Danish public debate that a newspaper could benefit in provoking. In brief, we have nothing to bargain with, *because* we are a European organization.
- But still, the idea is sometimes described – even in Danish media. When it happens, not only does it stem from Danish civil society organizations, it is then also described as Danish! Moreover, the idea is sometimes described referring to a heritage and a line to N.F.S. Grundtvig [Danish 19th century clerk, ed.], even if, to our own knowledge, we are not.
- Some years ago we were encouraged to send our magazine **ACCENT** to the Dansk BiblioteksCenter (Danish library registry) to be validated for the Danish article-index. We thought it could be interesting for Denmark, since **ACCENT** was probably the first place the large scale project Youth 2002, which finally took place in Denmark, was described on print, and since there was something new – in Danish context – about Transylvania. The articles were not considered relevant for the Danish article-index. As far as we know, they didn't pass some relevance criteria, and that is probably fair enough. The point is that we do not know of any European article-index within which our magazine would naturally find its place, where the European angle would be the guarantee for its relevance.

We are writing this to get to the principal question: *How would it ever be possible to promote a European narrative on these conditions?*

- Associations linked up with the nations are and will be dependent on national political moods, paths forward and dead ends. To a European democracy there should parallel belong a European civil society. It is therefore a natural step to establish European associations. That's where you meet a lot of interesting problems, like for example in many states you will need to register as an association before you can open a bank account. Very laborious, very expensive, and suddenly you are considered belong to one of the states.
- In the same breath as the EU-Commission launched its plan D, that means to work for the development of a European public sphere, it wraps red tape around a suggestion to establish a common model-statute for European associations – recognized in one country, recognized in all the countries.

In 2005, 230,097,055 people in the EU were using the internet.

For how long can European initiatives keep on believing that their endeavors are taken to be serious – on these conditions?

- Attempts to develop European civil society initiatives are often suffering from the fact, that national civil society organizations being in receipt of national support, for the very same reason, have much better conditions and drive out of competition European initiatives. To take the example of ACC, we do not have the means to go to Brussels time and again, and to pay staff etc. The best thing we can do, should our ideas come true is to make alliances with national associations, because they do have the money, staff etc. The problem is that our ideas are then identified as Spanish, Slovenian, Latvian or whatever and all network- and capacity-building ends up in real life at the national association. In Denmark a good (and in many contexts annoying) example is the *Nævnet til fremme af Debat og oplysning om Europe* [Danish government foundation for EU-debate]. "Nævnet" does contribute to make Danes in Denmark debate European issues with Danish in Denmark, but first and foremost it contributes to strengthening those elements within the Danish civil society organizing projects of the kind. Again to use the example ACC; it is not eligible, since it has members all over Europe – not only in Denmark – and then it cannot be considered. Similarly in other countries!

- A brief remark in this context: the kind of support you can get from EU is minimal, always preconditioned by co-financing, and most of EU-money are used for administering the very same EU-money, because of very strict and square rules and procedure – probably imposed on EU by the member-states.

- When member-states establish possibilities to support EU-debate-initiatives it is generally accompanied by an ironical structural problem. When foundations and supporting possibilities emerge and are paid by the tax-compiling administrations (Länder, states, etc.) it follows naturally that initiatives are wished to benefit only the tax-payers of these very units. This means strengthening the e.g. national civil society and exactly the parts of the national civil society dealing with EU-matters, but at the same time it leads to draining those, who could become the beginning of a European civil society.

Our principal question would once again be how a European civil society - meaning a constitutive part of a European public sphere - could ever emerge on those conditions?

And even more general: Is the prompting to the nationally defined civil societies to monopolize the debate about European issues doing harm or good?

GLOBALIZATION AND DEMOCRACY

Globalization

We live in 'a global shift', that is, a world being moulded, by economic and technological forces, into one shared economic and political arena. This creates a governance vacuum. The boundless mobility of capital, goods, ideas and (some) people, greatly diminishes the power of national states. This makes it increasingly difficult to meet the challenges we encounter in the workplace, in the political sphere, in daily life, with political decisions – democratically controlled through elections, the efforts of social partners, the media and NGO's. New relationships between challenges, power and participation are on their way. Old institutions are under transformation and new forms of governance are being built on the global and regional levels. Obvious examples are the development of the European Union, the World Trade Organization, the International Criminal Court and the World Health Organization. This does not mean that national states are fading away. The development of democratic governance at global and regional levels is essential for the sustaining of governance at national and local levels.

The Edu-game

The IAED has developed an edu-game that contributes to the essential understanding of diversities of governance - and the understanding of means to control political power through the participation of citizens. The edu-game is open-ended, thus reflecting the current world where we do not have all the answers, where questions of values, rules and structures are under construction, where the future of governance and democracy is being structured as we go - and negotiable.

The Edu game has been used as part of two ACC projects - the Demos Community College in Rhodes, Greece and the Active Citizenship College in Elsinore, Denmark.

IAED

The International Academy for Education and Democracy is a non-profit organization based in Denmark, developing methodologies and networks that promote multilayered democracy.



IAED

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In the EU there is approximately 220 thousand km of railways and 4.6 million km of roadways.

Developing a European Demos via existing national networks and associations

Presentation by Knud-Erik Therkelsen
Excerpt by Lucie Cízková and John Petersen

Knud-Erik Therkelsen is the Secretary General of the Danish Border Association. At the Active Citizenship Community College in Helsingør/Elsinore on March 23rd 2006, Mr Therkelsen was invited in his capacity of former folk high school principal and co-initiator of a range of European folk high school initiatives.



The focus is the obstacles and challenges you face, when taking off from existing networks, associations and identities, while an implicit point is, that you have to work in the continuum between existing and future identities.

"I became a teacher at that school, Rønshoved Folk High School [folk high schools are government independent residential colleges, ed.], strongly rooted in the national movements of the Danish nation-state. It was founded in 1920, just after the reunion, after Southern Jutland having been under the German emperor, was reunited with Denmark [the division of Schleswig, ed.]. This school was started with the purpose to inform about the history. I was there for 7-8 years and it is a very national oriented folk high school, and then suddenly someone started a new folk high school or wanted to start a new folk high school in Aabenraa, and with the purpose of bridging between language and culturally between Denmark and Germany and that was very, very provocative to have such a folk high school because the folk high schools were national. That was the tradition, their purpose was to put the young people into the Danish historic, lingual, cultural and so forth context. That was the whole idea. I remember as a teacher at Rønshoved Folk High School I taught typewriting. I had to teach the young people how to use ten fingers on a typewriter, and the interesting thing was that when we started a lesson at Rønshoved – and this is in the mid-80'ies – we would always even in typewriting lessons start with a song and a national song naturally because that

was the most important to teach these songs, to put them into the Danish historic context and so forth. This is very strange to think about, its only 25 years ago, but this is how it was, that was the atmosphere.

Then coming to Højskolen Østersøen in Aabenraa, my wife and I became the leaders of that school. We started in 1993 and this was a shock because here I came for the first time or almost for the first time with my national background came in close contact with young Germans. I had hardly ever spoken to a young German about anything. I was quite prejudiced against Germans and Germany because of this tragic history. And this was the way I was brought up not so much as a child but at the folk high school. And here suddenly we were at the school and had the purpose of bridging between Denmark and Germany, cooperate, being hospitable meeting and this was really literally a painful process to go through because I found out that the Germans did not live up to all my prejudist attitudes against the Germans. Actually it was very inspiring to meet those Germans who had played such an important role in forming my own and most Danes' national identity. In forming national identity there's nothing as effective as an enemy picture, and the Germans have been very "friendly" in that respect. Throughout history we had numerous national conflicts between Danmark and Germany beginning in the mid 1800s and up to the WWII. There I was and suddenly in a close contact and discussions with young and well educated Germans, it was painful because I had to restructure my attitude, how the world is. Maybe that's banalities to you but it was really a painful process to go through and very, very inspiring.

At Højskolen Østersøen after going through this process of change and new ways of thinking and also meeting John - John was also a very inspiring part of Østersøen in this period - we started to make these international courses – Minority Course, East-West Dialogue, Youth 2002 and other courses and this of course also was very inspiring.

...

And now I have gone over to the "enemy" again. I have returned to a national agenda. I have accepted a job as secretary general of an organization called Grænseforeningen or The Danish Border Association, which was formed in 1920 right after the reunion, right after Southern Jutland became part of Denmark again, with the purpose to support the Danish minority, that

Malta is the most densely populated country of the EU; 1257.3 inhabitants per km² (2003)

was still living in Germany and with the hidden agenda to work for a new border even 20 or 30 km further south, because they said that the Danish people had a historical right way back from medieval times that this part of Jutland, Southern Schleswig, should be part of Denmark and there should be a reunion. The Danish Border Association was and still is quite conservative and quite national. If you are wondering what I do there in an organization like that, then my idea is that such organizations need to be reformed, need to think in accordance with globalization and what is going on in the world and not be stuck in old history, especially in national agendas like the Border Association was. And taking that step has been problematic. And I am still wondering why did they offer me the job? Why did they actually call? And I thought because they want information, they want new ideas, they want to modernize the Border Association but in fact it's a lot more difficult than you can imagine, because our 30.000 members are pretty old people in their sixties and seventies and many of them will remember the second world war, the occupation, the German occupation in Denmark and so forth. But there is no way, we must reconcile and we must accept that the Germans and the Danes are not anymore enemies but they are very much friends actually and they have the same agenda. So, this is what I'm doing right now.

And this job is interesting because it brings you close to fundamental questions of what is national identity, what is it being Danish or any other nationality, how do we define that, in the modern age with globalization. How do we do that? Maybe you can hear, I think we should try to define the cultural identity. I think it is important for a human being in the globalised world to feel, to have a community feeling, between being an individual - and the marketplace has a tendency to leave us as individuals - and being a global citizen, there is a long, long distance between being a sole individual and being a global citizen. And in this context, within these two poles I think cultural identity is very, very important. And it is also important to stress that this cultural, lingual identity does not have to have political consequences; that we have to divide between having a political identity and having a cultural-lingual identity. This process is very difficult. In Denmark and for the Danes and for the members of the Border Association!

Last summer we carried out a project that was called Cultures in Dialogue and a movie was made, a TV program was made describing the project. Part of the movie was interviewing young students at the Duborg School - it is the Danish Gymnasium for the Danish in Southern Schleswig. A girl was asked, what she felt, what identity she had? And she said, well, in some contexts I am German and in others I am Danish. And the guy who interviewed her couldn't understand, and said again who are you? And then she said: "first of all I am me". And she was saying that she had several identities, at least two identities, maybe more. I have tried to use that exact example in my association. We are trying to formulate a political paper for our work in the next five-ten years and stress the fact, that young people today easily can have more than one identity, but that's where the problem is. Exactly when I talk about that to people older than myself and especially to people who haven't had that international experience and not been in these discussions, they just cannot comprehend

...

You have as you remember, in Denmark we have had enlightenment, "folkelig oplysning" [in this case it means the formation of inhabitants into Danes and/or citizens, ed.]; enlightenment has exactly done what we did at Rønshoved; put the young people into their national, historic, cultural context for a 150 years. Since the middle of the 1800's. In spite experience that we Danes have forgotten how effective that enlightenment was. It is so effective, that we don't even realize it ourselves. We are beginning to realize. If you begin to analyse the, begin to think about the Mohammed case, the Mohammed-crisis, that is where the Danes have a chance to begin to think about what pictures we carry around in our mentality. We also have to remember, that the Danes have had tremendous success with this nation state project, the national thinking, national identity, one identity, Danish. We have developed one of the most successful societies – it is not very modest to say that, but it is a good place. We have a lot of wealth, and the Danes have had a good experience with that.

...

My parents they had two identities, but they have forgotten. When I was four-five years old, they moved from Jutland to Copenhagen, and they spoke the Jutlandish dialect and they had Jutlandish farmer identity. And certainly they were in Copenhagen, and they never learned to speak "Danish". They speak Jutlandish. You can say that they sort of had two identities. One of their region, and then a national or Danish, and that's not two languages, but two dialects. I think we have forgotten that we can have more than one identity. I think it's important that we develop the ability to have more than one identity and I think that it has a lot to do with education, enlightenment, and how do you do that? Well, my answer to that is, and that's from my experience from Højskolen Østersøen very, very strong, and also from my personal experience from being an exchange student and from being through the process of being very prejudist against the Germans. The only way to built on this is to start with the personal meeting between people of different cultures like what you are doing. I think it is very, very underestimated the impact of doing that. When I move around and also in the Border Association, I meet members who are open, broad minded, very open, very interested, very motivated for international things, and I ask them, where have you been? There is always behind this an international experience of some kind – always! I think it is a condition to establish this, and this

Finland is the least densely populated country of the EU; 17.1 inhabitants per km² (2003)

is where we found, that the folk high school idea is not outlived and old fashioned; well it is in a national context, yes definitely, but definitely not in the European and global context.

...

I should say that when I talk about European or global identity, I have to say that I don't mean that we should all be identical. You used the word multicultural, intercultural, and I think that is very, very important. What is happening in the US is a catastrophe. They have this melting pot. People lose their identity in order to become Americans. We should keep our cultural and lingual identity - as Ove Korsgaard says - our ethnos, our ethnic. And then at the same time develop our demos, so that we could take care of political issues together. We have to divide it.

...

I don't believe in a European culture as such. I think European culture is great and it's a wonderful thing and this is the whole meaning of being European and we should be proud of it ... It is very important to separate politics or citizenship from culture as long as we are discussing European or anything, any political matter, it is very important.

...

All political thinking, and political structures that we have come to live within for the past 150 years, has mixed these two things and it's a long, long process to separate them again. I think we have to be very much aware of the strength of this, of how much this means to people in order to move on. And it's very important for future politicians to understand how these mechanisms in people in order to make good politics. But to understand that you have to have a feeling yourself.

...

We were limited! We broke a code, the Southern Jutlandish code. We were hospitable, we were friendly; we were bridge-building towards the Germans. Then there was a lot of prejudice against us because we were a folk high school. That's part of the folk high school history in Denmark there's not much prestige involved in being a folk high school teacher or principal. It's a low status in Denmark. And I found out it was much easier to fundraise from the EU, when we went to Brussels than it was to do it in Copenhagen. In Brussels they didn't know the difference between a folk high school and a business school and that was a big advantage for us. That was a structural problem that the folk high school became low status in those years.

Because of the whole history of Denmark there is this national way of thinking. This has also infected the parliament in fact. We went several times to the secretary [minister, ed.] of education; I think I visited three of them in their office; asking for help or for money to realize a European project. And they were all three very sympathetic, they wanted to help but they always mentioned if this comes into the parliament, if Dansk Folkeparti - very right-wing oriented party in Denmark right now - hears about that, I will be killed. They didn't use exactly these words but the minister of education was always afraid. She or he wanted to support our ideas, they were European thinking and so forth but they were very scared of these questions being publicized in the parliament and become a discussion there, and that was very big problem.

...

The folk high school legislation we have in Denmark is very progressive in a way, very free, no control, no exams, no curriculum, and no demands. Actually the folk high school legislation permits the school to invite young people to be together; to live together... And this freedom is very closely related to the nation-state project because the whole folk high school idea was made to support the nation-state project. And now when you invite all other nationalities, young people from all over Europe, it has nothing to do with the nation-state building at all, it's actually the direct opposite. And this is when the nation-state turns against you and only very progressive politicians and very brave politicians will support you. So that's the difficulty.

The folk high school legislation is also a bit stupid. It says directly in the legislation, in the law, that a folk high school can only get state or government support when at least fifty percent of the participants are Danish citizens. Schools, like Højskolen Østersøen, always had to respect, to live up to that more than fifty percent had to be Danish citizens. We managed to get dispensations from the Minister of Education with good arguments, very good arguments. The one argument that carried through was that if we could prove that a European community or another association or organization with governments as members support this - NATO, Nordic Council of Ministers, OSCE, EU, the UN of course - if they come with as much money as the Danish government, we will give you a dispensation. That was an opening and it worked a few times but not always.

The EU has an area of 3,976,372 sq km, which is less than one-half the size of the US.



Impressions from the Active Citizenship Community College at the International People's College

The population density of the EU (2005) is 114.9 inhabitants per km²

Europe's borders....

Seen from history, the European Union has manifested itself as the greatest project of European Integration. More than 55 years after the establishing of the European Coal and Steel Community, the EU finds itself in front of the necessity to decide upon its future strategy. From the perspective of this article one of the most important questions that has to be answered is: *Where are Europe's borders?*

With regard to this problem it is vitally important to define the borders of EU. Do we speak about geographical borders of Europe? And in this case, do the borders of EU have to fit the geographical framework? Or does EU have also cultural and ideological dimensions? The members of the EU share a common European history and cultural heritage. This binds them together and makes the EU stronger. But is this a criteria for future members of the EU?

The acceptance of Cyprus as a member state of the EU has showed the irrelevance of the geographical criteria while speaking about the EU further enlargement. This simultaneously implies that we have to regard EU more as an ideological community and the problem to be solved is whether the countries as for example Turkey or Russia fit into this ideological community. In order to answer this question we have to decide upon what is the idea which unites European countries.

“A line separating a person from the rest of the world is as crucial as the person's name. This is why I believe that borders in general and the borders of Europe in particular are in people's mind. And only people can remove them.”

“Where are the Borders of Europe” by Dilyana Kourdova, Athens

If we take a closer look to the historical context of the establishing of the EU, it becomes obvious that the commitment towards ideas of democracy, human rights and tolerance can be regarded as a ground the whole EU project was built upon.

Signing the Treaty of European Steel and Coal Community in 1951, the six European countries approved that the new organization shall be opened for each democratic country. Almost 50 years later the Copenhagen criteria which aimed to define the political and economic standards to be achieved by each candidate country in order to enter the EU, were laid down. Together these two components nowadays constitute the borders of the EU. To deny the central meaning of the idea of democracy means to endanger the whole future of European Integration.

It is a fact that today EU suffers from the lack of democracy and legitimacy in the eyes of the European and world community. This is why the European leaders in both their verbal speeches and press publications try to emphasize the importance of democracy in Europe. Since democracy is proclaimed to be the inevitable feature of European co-operation the discrimination on any ground has to be prohibited. From such perspective the new countries regardless to such factors as religion, historical heritage and cultural traditions cannot be excluded from the EU. The significance of the Copenhagen criteria must be emphasized one more time: When the given country meets the criteria it can be accepted as a member state of the EU.

Finally, in order to sum up; Copenhagen criteria together with the idea of democracy constitutes the borders of contemporary Europe and identifies which countries can be accepted as a member states.

New states joining the EU

At the moment there are five candidate-states: Romania, Bulgaria, Croatia, FYR Macedonia and Turkey. Romania and Bulgaria will probably join the EU in 2007. For Turkey, Croatia and FYR Macedonia the future is still uncertain. What will be the implications of these participations? What are the arguments in favor and what are the arguments against this participation?

At the foundation of the EU, in principle every democratic country with the same values and economic level could join the EU. But, as more countries in the world become democratic and economic stable, where are the limits of our organization? Can for example Turkey or Morocco join? And if yes: Why not China, or Australia? In this article we would like to focus on the possibility of Turkey joining the EU. Because we think this is a significant example of a country entering the EU in practice, and where the borders of Europe should be.



The highest point of the EU is 4807 meter; the Mont Blanc in France.

BORDERS

Turkey joining the EU

The start of negotiations with Turkey is linked, as has been the case for all other countries, to the fulfilment of a set of criteria and standards. The criteria relate to the capacity to function as a competitive market economy, stable democratic institutions, the rule of law and the respect of individual human rights and the rights of minorities.

Already in 1964 Turkey showed interest in becoming part of the EU and from 1997 she became a candidate. Nevertheless, the case has been postponed several times; while different other extensions of the Union have begun and are completed. States that in 1989 not even had their own government (Estonia, Latvia, Slovenia, Slovakia...) have entered the European Union without anybody questioning their rights. At the moment there are lots of protests about the possibility of Turkey joining the EU, especially in the countries with a lot of immigrants from Turkey. We will now show the different arguments among European citizens.

The counterarguments:

Geographically Turkey lies only with a small part in Europe.

There is a lack of identification of Europeans with Turkish people.

One of the fundamental aspects for the future of any political community is the cohesion between its components and the agreement and peaceful acceptance of all of them as members of the group. Several European citizens think that Turkey is not Europe, neither by its people, nor by their costumes, nor by their culture, nor by its religion...

New European borders will become very weak and hard to defend.

If Turkey joins the EU, the outer borders of the Union will arrive until Syria, Iraq, Iran, Armenia and Georgia. Then the Union will have direct bonding with two specially unstable zones of the planet; Near East and the Caucasus. And hundreds of kilometres of our border lines will become the new front door to the Union for million originating immigrants of the Arab world, increasing the integration problems that we live with every day in the western societies.

Precedent

If Turkey enters the Union, it will also become possible for other neighbouring states, like Morocco, Algeria or Israel, to ask for a request of entrance. In Israel, a very important percentage of the population was born in Europe or are children of European who emigrated there after World War II, and their customs are more similar to ours than those of the Islamic countries. Can the EU reject such countries? And why not, a few years later, Libya, or Mauritania, or Mali, or Niger or Jordan or Egypt, to mention bordering states with the previous ones? This would weaken the EU completely. If we accept Turkey, what solid arguments can we give to the others for rejection?

“Turkey cannot be admitted as a member to the EU, simply because it is Asian, it would be the end of the European Union, as we know it if Turkey were actually to get in.”

Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, the Chairman of the European Convention and the former President of France

Turkey is too big

Turkey is a big country which will not easily accept the points of view and the desires of the countries already inside the EU. This would cause a shift in the balance that now exists in the EU. Turkey will be difficult to dominate and this makes it a different country than the previous extensions of the EU.

Violation of human rights in Turkey

The European Union must be a community of values based on Democracy and to the respect to the Human rights, In Turkey there exists an undeniable reality of discrimination because of sex (woman) or of origin (Kurd)

A flood of Turkish people towards Western Europe

Because the salary in Western Europe is higher, there is a possibility that Turkish people will go and work there. This can increase unemployment among native inhabitants of these countries.

Background of Turkey in relation to the EU

Since the foundation of modern day Turkey in 1923, this country with a predominantly Muslim population has been a secular democracy closely aligned with the West. Turkey was a founding member of the United Nations, and a member of NATO (since 1952), the Council of Europe (1949), the OECD (1961) and an associate member of the Western European Union (1992). Ankara chose to begin co-operating closely with the then European Economic Community in 1959, and Turkey's prospective membership in the EEC's successor, the European Union, has been a source of much debate since. Turkey stresses its involvement in European history for about 500 years, through the Ottoman Empire and as the seat of the Eastern Roman Empire. It considers itself a European state. A prevalent point of view in Turkey, echoed by its prime minister Erdogan, is that the EU seems to be a "Christian club", the EU has no right to consider itself that way, and that this causes reluctance to accept a Muslim state into the Union.

"Am I afraid of Turkey, Russia and Israel entering the EU?"
Suela Jahaj, Tirane (<http://demos.acc.eu.org>)

In July 2005 there were 456,953,258 people living in the EU, which is one and a half times more than in the US.

The problem of Northern Cyprus

It is still occupied by Turkey (for almost 30 years) and they are not willing to negotiate with Greek- Cyprus and with Greece.

The pro-arguments

Turkey has become a modern and democratic country.

Important progress has been achieved in increasing the transparency and efficiency of public administration. Inflation has been reduced in Turkey and there have been very good growth rates. Entrance in the EU would only help to reinforce this process. Turkey is at the moment maybe still poor, but not significantly more than Bulgaria or Romania, that will join in 2007.

Turkey already participates in European scopes

Turkey is a part of the NATO, the Council of Europe, and their sport selection competes for example in Europe.



Turkey smiles to you. Can you resist?

There will be an opening of the EU to a Muslim state.

A Union that promotes democratic values can not ignore the different major religions that live within the European population. As the EU pleads for a pacific solution of conflicts and for the extension of representative political systems on our planet, it should use this opportunity to welcome a secular state with a Muslim religion

It will keep the flow of money inside the European Union

Money from immigrants in Germany and for example Austria will stay in Europe when they send it to Turkey. And if western countries place their companies in Turkey, the profit will not be lost, but stays in the EU.

“A divided Europe is no Europe. And this integration must be a two-way process in which both sides mutually recognize values and shortcomings of the other.”

“Main problems in the EU” Roberta Stanef, Bucharest (<http://demos.acc.eu.org>)

Cheaper labour

Because Turkish people will probably work for less money then western people. This can stimulate European companies and the economy.

Turkey has waited a long time for entrance.

Negotiations between Turkey and the EU started in 1964, and there has been a long time of adaptation from the side of Turkey.

Looking at the arguments, there is not one finite solution. First all these criteria should be carefully examined by the EU. Because the EU wants to be a democratic organisation, the decision should also be made by all her citizens. If there is not enough support, maybe the participation of Turkey should be postponed. This possible postponing does not have to imply a weakening of its relations with the Union. It is advisable that Turkey (or Russia) will get a status of relation privileged with the European Union, as much from the economical as from the political point of view. In the same way the EU must maintain special agreements with other neighboring states (Near East, the Caucasus or Magreb) conforming the situation and concrete circumstances of each case.

Another way to look at Armenian Turkey

While many supporters concede that Turkey should do more to confront the Armenian massacre they argue that other member countries have been allowed to forget their past. Turks themselves were, during the early twentieth century, victims of atrocities at the hands of Greeks and Armenians. In quite recent times Muslims and Turks were victims of persecution in the last years of communism in Bulgaria and in Kosovo and Bosnia Muslims have been victims of genocide. “Yet neither Greece nor Bulgaria has been pressed to acknowledge these crimes as the price of membership of the EU; nor have European parliamentary resolutions recognised them.” As S. Hungtinton has stressed leaving Turkey outside the club, it will, probably, make turks feel more nationalists than even, because of their exclusion, and frankly I am not sure that we can affaord such a sentiment from such a powerful neighbor.

*“Am I afraid of Turkey, Russia and Israel entering the EU?”
Suela Jahaj, Tirane (<http://demos.acc.eu.org>)*

We think that this example of Turkey gives a lot of insight about the possible problems we will face with other candidate-states and in general the borders of Europe. In future the borders should not create problems, but solve them. We should not forget that a border is just a line on a map “a virtual concept”, one can not force a border from above, but it should come naturally from inside.

In 2005 approximately 218.5 million people were working legally in the EU.

A view on borders

There exist different types of borders; geographic, political, religious, linguistic etc. But there is another border in the minds of people. This is the most difficult border to take away. The people decide themselves who belongs to their group in their minds. As a politician you can not make this decision for everybody.

The *borders of Europe* is a question about the definition of Europe. What is exactly Europe? Is Europe a geopolitical state or just a state of mind? **We are in Europe because we all believe in democracy and freedom.** The future shape of the EU and the cooperation between all its members is one of the biggest tasks of the 21st century.

The identity of Europe has formed itself through the centuries by thought, the social and political organization, the religious beliefs, the artistic manifestations and other things in common. These signs of identity of people that live in the towns of Europe are different from the people in towns in Asia or Africa. **Those signs of identity are neither better nor worse than others, but different.**

“If we think that everything that is different from what our perception is, then we should live isolated in our perfect well-constructed world, far away from anything that we do not know and consequently what we fear.”
“Am I afraid of Turkey, Russia and Israel entering the EU?” Suela Jahaj, Tirane (<http://demos.acc.eu.org>)

The conformation of the European Union through the last 50 years and their viability in the future happens to consolidate the European political project in easily recognizable borders and with members accepted by all with naturalness, without elements that put in danger the internal cohesion at level of the towns of the states.

We think that at the moment the geopolitical and strategic limits of the European Union should stop at the western borders of Russia and Turkey. To avoid a set of a destabilization factors that in few years would finish denaturing it and destroying it. For further future we should make a path that the EU can walk on, a direction in where we are going to stabilize our actions.

By Renske Hijbeek, Eduard Corneliu Nicolescu, Rosa Bellver Belda and Natalie Kovalenko



The life expectation for women in the EU is 81.6 years, while for men 75.1 years

Challenges for the future of Europe

Political and economical needs towards a strong EU.

INTRODUCTION

The EU is undergoing a construction process, whose end is uncertain when one takes into consideration its current crisis: the rejection of the Constitutional Treaty, the discussion on the limits of the Union and the recently reopened debate on the budget of the Union. All of this at a point of no return for the Union. The European Union is also still too weak when one takes into consideration the effects of economic globalization and the so-called information society.

Although it is certain that the Union has come a long way in the 55 years of its existence and it has improved the prospects of its citizens, the initial ECSC (European Coal and Steel Community) was rather an expression of joint will and common policies for countries which tried a fresh start after a cruel war. The continuous extensions and the political will for the construction of an ample economic space and the welfare of its citizens, has constructed the Europe that we have today, with near 455 million citizens distributed in 25 member states plus two countries in the process of incorporation and a further three in negotiation. All quotations below are taken from the articles found at <http://demos.acc.eu.org>

Ms. Lyubov Gribkova, Yalta. *My opinion about the future of Europe.*

“The European countries must have to build relations based in a beneficial partnership between each other. The Europeans family without common economical, legal and political connections can't exist. To build relations in that way of collaboration it's a guarantee of prosperity of European future.”

Sergi Núñez i Alberola, València. *The future of Europe.*

“The European institutions are collapsed because of the special nature of european division of power. The institutions try to play the role of traditional powers but they can't because this power is too much delimited. Then, the democratic future of Europe need to reform of the present institutional division towards a traditional powers division (Legislative power-Bichameral-, Executive power and Justice power) with more powerfull roles, and maybe that have to follow the Germany model.”



Miquel Villamon i Alonso. València. *Our model of European Union.*

“A stronger EU needs a common policy of foreign affairs and defense based in a human right defense and democratical alternative against neoliberal globalization. The EU is the best hope for the citizens to manage the globalization and protect the minorities but also into the EU, because the TCE (Treaty establishing a European Constitution) is defending the actual status quo and are excluding the minority languages (like Valencian/Catalan language) and the same to the militarism support, maybe that will happen if the EU institutions have

more independence. Many citizens thinks that the European project does not shielded a situation by a lack of democracy. Maybe the future of European Union reformer project will be good but that reform becomes flexible and faster, but the EU will be built by pro European people or not.”

Xavier Soler Santamaría, València. *How we may build another European Constitution.*

“The TCE is at the door's gate and then now we need to give step down to prepare the future in the best way. Maybe the big mistake was to edit a European Constitution behind European peoples. The European Constitution needs more democracy and legitimacy to go forward, we need make it all together, and we must assume the reasons of the supporters of the non-European Treaty and that will get more pro-European followers. Maybe the solution would be a referendum to the entire European citizens asking twenty questions about the problematic issues, but this solution must be managed in best way. The questions should be negotiated with the main actors and assumed by all the European by referendum.”

Simone Nicolini, Castelnovo Sotto. *The future of Europe.*

“The cooperation in Europe is driven more by security-related issues than by common roots. A great jump towards cooperation: not only the same money, also common monetary policies, free movement of peoples. The creation of European parties common all across Europe. We need to involve toward a new institution that could be considered not a forum of countries, must be a unique organization, that must be EU more effective and powerful, and give more visibility to the decisions taken at the European levels.”

Christina Malliou, Thessaloniki. *The future of Europe.*

“The future of the Europe is nowadays connected to the future of the EU. The European Union is a big chance for us to come closer to meet other civilisations, to learn and speak other languages (Comenius programme). It's a chance to

Turkey has an area of 780,580 sq km, which is almost one fifth of the now existing area of the EU.



observe other working systems and see which elements should be adopted to our own working system and which other should be lent (Leonardo Da Vinci programme). During common European Union we can establish peace in the area called Europe. We can say that European Union is not the politicians it's mainly all these millions people who participate in this organization called EU."

Sara Del Bene, Sesto Fiorentino. *This Europe*

"European Union should be not only a Europe of the nations -it's Europe for the nation state."

Gabil Aliyev, Baku.

"The mainly task is that we should really think what does it mean citizen of the European Union and citizenship of the European Union. We should try to eliminate as much as it's possible the distance, in changing of information, between institutions and citizens. One of the many solutions which are able to solve this difficulty in flow of information between EU. institutions and citizens is to create civil society organizations."

Jakub Kawulok, Hradek. *The Future of EU, European federalization and problems to consider it.*

"What do we exactly need for save future of Europe is a strong and autarchic Europe. Europe we can understand like a European Union or Europe itself. We must conserve our culture and common history, that's the most important things. European Constitution is a necessary instrument to help us preserve our common values and culture. European Constitution as a superlative degree of European Law System is a kind of guarantee which we as a Europeans need in this times, I think that immediately. If it will be possible to create Federal Nations of Europe show us a time..."

Paola Coletti, l'Aguila. *How do we strengthen citizen's participation in Europe.*

"One of the main problem in European Union is that almost 53% of Europeans believe that the European project does not

take into account their opinions. Should we be aware of enlargement of the EU when even "old members" countries of EU have a problems with communication between institutions and citizens."

Larisa Korobeynikova, Tomsk. *European demos in the context of soft globalization*

"The alternative to the contemporary globalization process might be represented in the form of soft globalization, which must have not only material, but spiritual character oriented on creation of the new norms of democracy on the base of a new form of spirituality formation, which excel the problem of human surviving on the way of achievement of quintessence of human spiritual activity. Soft globalization gives the opportunity to Europe to avoid imperialist desires."

Nicolae Dragusin, Alexandria. *European constitution, the right balance between social and economical goals*

"Creation European constitution is the perfect tool to keep going the Europe on its way towards the future. The constitution integrates all the people under a common set of values and ideals. In fact, this is the meaning of citizenship."

Simon Christopodolou, Limassol. *The future of Europe*

"Europe with the European Union is entering in a whole new era, full of advantages and changes for lives. The main challenges may be describes as following:
i) more job vacancies will have been occupied by people who will have been trained by European projects,
ii) young students will have more experiences abroad,
iii) an active participation have been expected by women."



CONCLUSION

1. The EU needs strong institutions for the future.
2. The EU need a common law and one principal European law that gives the values and explains what must be the role to face up to in the future and the political system that must be like traditional federal systems and to go towards emulate the traditional system.
3. The roles must take into account the minorities (national minorities, language minorities...).
4. The future of the EU needs a strong coordination between all the European countries.

By Jakub Kawulok, Salvador Martinez Marrahi and Larissa Korobeynikova

The size of the borders of Turkey on land is 2,648 km, which is also almost one fifth of the now existing borders of the EU on land.

Cultural challenges

Introduction:

As we know now the European Union is a unified group of diverse and democratic European countries. All Europeans have many different traditions and languages, but they all share basic and essential values such as democracy, freedom in all its forms, multicultural respect and a desire for social justice. The European Union, as an institution, defends these values and cannot conceive Europe without them. It is the primary home for cooperation among the European people, promoting unity while, at the same time, keeping diversity and ensuring that citizens can participate in decision making procedures, once every European decision affects each and every European citizen's life.

In the increasingly interdependent world, the globalized world where we all live, it is more indispensable than ever for every citizen in the European Union to work together with people from other countries in a spirit of curiosity, openness and solidarity.

Some of the most important challenges in Europe today may be, in a cultural and educational point of view, the multiculturalism problem, the lack of civil participation in democracy, linguistic challenges related to the diversity of languages spoken in all the European countries, the necessity to create a European public opinion, or a European public sphere. In some way this means that new methods (like Citizen Journals) should be created in order to unify every European citizen in our common causes and debates, like wide spreading the 'Glocal' principle and making formal and non-formal education available to every one so we can empower the people and make everyone a true European citizen.

When ACC first invited the Europeans to participate in this debate, many of them wrote about what was going on in their minds and the way there were feeling about given issues. This article is a common reflection based on most of the articles and drafts ACC received. Here we are trying to be most faithful to a true idea of a common cultural discussion and embracing a culture of peace, tolerance, empathy, comprehension and total acceptance of every human being.

These said, there are several challenges posed on those who believe in a truly European Community, a truly unity with mutual understanding and mutual respect. In our reflection we will focus on cultural, social and educational challenges. How is the future of Europe projected in the eyes and minds of the young people?

All quotations below are from the articles found at <http://demos.acc.eu.org>

ON LINE



"In 2004 the European Union has been enlarged with ten new member states and in the near future it will be enlarged with other states as well (Romania, Bulgaria). This means that new methods of integrating citizens have to be introduced... being these methods, for example, Citizen Journals and education of young and adult people.

These methods may include the creation of Citizen Journals – obviously with the help of the Internet – tools through which European citizens can virtually meet and discuss the current issues. I am talking about citizens because in my opinion these journals should be created mainly by ordinary people, although the cooperation with professional journalists is necessary. In this way, citizens would be able to report on events concerning their lives in order to give a view to citizens from other countries about their own community, town or country. Obtaining knowledge and spreading information about the other Europeans' way of life, national and cultural values will result in a more coherent Europe where people can feel closer to each other, become more tolerant, open-minded and understanding".

Annamaria Csiszér, Battonya

Ukraine	
Median age:	total: 38.22 years
Ethnic groups:	Ukrainian 77.8%, Russian 17.3%, Belarusian 0.6%, Moldovan 0.5%, Crimean Tatar 0.5%, Bulgarian 0.4%, Hungarian 0.3%, Romanian 0.3%, Polish 0.3%, Jewish 0.2%, other 1.8% (2001 census)
Religions:	Ukrainian Orthodox - Kiev Patriarchate 19%, Orthodox (no particular jurisdiction) 16%, Ukrainian Orthodox - Moscow Patriarchate 9%, Ukrainian Greek Catholic 6%, Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox 1.7%, Protestant, Jewish, none 38% (2004 est.)
Languages:	Ukrainian (official) 67%, Russian 24%; small Romanian-, Polish-, and Hungarian-speaking minorities

The coastline of Turkey is 7,200 km

"The recently called 'Participative Democracy', based on the oldest of the democracies – the Atheniest -, can only be achieved through the empowerment of all citizens. This way of "arming" the people with resources for practicing a good participation is fundamental to call the people for the local governance and, by this way, apply the 'glocal' principle and so build a better Europe.

For a better understanding it is necessary to reveal the meaning of empowerment. This isn't just the act of "give power to someone else" or "the achievements of the basic knowledge for understand and participate in the society". This concept doesn't refer only to the process of individual emancipation but to the acquiring of a collective consciousness of a social dependence and a political dominance.

In reality, this concept allows to build a bridge between 'local' and 'global', and give to a wide range of individual responsibilities, beyond its family or community, through a macro level and a, possible but wanted, action."

Ricardo Guedes, Amadora

Belgium	
Median age:	total: 40,55 years
Ethnic groups:	Fleming 58%, Walloon 31%, mixed or other 11%
Religions:	Roman Catholic 75%, Protestant or other 25%
Languages:	Dutch (official) 60%, French (official) 40%, German (official) less than 1%, legally bilingual (Dutch and French)

"I have selected the word "European Village" as to highlight the strong connection between the European countries. Today through the use of transportation, technology, internet and multicultural working environment people moving from one country to another, from the north to south, from east to the west to study, work, volunteer in Europe. Today within the use of internet in European Union, it will seem in the future like a multicultural location, where people must be equal, have the same rights and the nations have common policies.

We want to empower the dialogue and the citizenship between the countries and the participation of the citizens. How this may be? I think we need to increase the dialogue between citizens and nations, nations and Europe and citizens and Europe. This means that we need to create a big network which refers in every location of each country. We need to increase the e-democracy in Europe as the people to feel safe and trust the European policies. When I refer to e-democracy, I refer to the electronic ways of voting, control and representing the governance on the web as each citizen may be informed and participate in the common and political decisions.

Nowadays we live in a meta-capitalistic society, knowledge society and people have to be well informed and be updated for the activities of Europe. There is increasing mobilization of the workers and employers, business and education. People need to be familiar with that internationalization and the mixture of the cultures. There are no boundaries inside Europe. It is an organization which promotes e-government, the cooperation and collaboration between the governments of the 25 and the politicians for the common good."

Georgia Toitsiou, Roskilde

Spain	
Median age:	total: 39,51 years
Ethnic groups:	composite of Mediterranean and Nordic types
Religions:	Roman Catholic 94%, other 6%
Languages:	Castilian Spanish 74%, Catalan 17%, Galician 7%, Basque 2%; note - Castilian is the official language nationwide; the other languages are official regionally

"The education of young people is only one of the tasks. The other one is the education of the adults (the generation that is now adult). Adult education is only possible in the non-conventional school format like for example Community Colleges, where they can personally meet and exchange views. Such events can function as contact areas between different cultural and social entities. But adult education is more problematic than that of the younger people. One of the reasons is that they are not as mobile as the younger generation. Even if free movement is provided they tend to stay at home in their own communities, therefore it is less likely that they will meet somebody from another European country. The other problem is that adults have their own ingrained points of view, stereotypes and prejudices which are hard to change or even impossible. That is why I consider young people's education more important than adult education. Educated, open-minded and unprejudiced young people might be the core of a European Sphere."

Annamaria Csiszér, Battonya

In July 2006 there were 70,413,958 people living in Turkey.

“The religious question shapes two ways of defining an identity, within the EU. It is true that these two ways existed already when the EU had five-ten Member States because among them there were more religious states, differences seen in the national constitutions. Furthermore, with the entrance of Greece, an orthodox country, the EU also had to face the religious difference. However, with a Union of twenty-five this difference is more obvious. In the new Member States religion is much more important than in the old ones. Is religion a restrain mechanism to the creation of a European identity? Should the EU choose the possible future Member States depending on its religion? Is the political border of the European Union different from the religious border?”

It is true that religion is a factor that creates differences among the EU Member States. It is also true that these differences lead to some conflicts when decisions have to be taken, like in the case of the European constitution. Nevertheless, I don't think we should be afraid of differences among the Member States. Differences are richness and we should know how to take advantage of these differences. Nowadays there is a difference between Lays and Christians. Among Christians there are Catholics (Poland), and Evangelists (Estonia). How would the Union face the entrance of a country which is not Christian? Turkey is the best example of this situation as it is a candidate state with a majority Muslim population.

In the future a lot of decisions will have to be taken and the EU should be prepared for it. In the case of building a European identity, will the Union manage to make the population of all Member States feel European? Is it possible to make a Christian and a Muslim feel part of the same Union? We don't have to fall in the error of thinking that if the Member States are culturally more equal among them, then it is easier to make their citizen to feel equal. The EU must carry a pedagogical activity so that the differences among the Member States don't become an obstacle for building a European identity.

In conclusion, as abovementioned, the last enlargement highlighted the possible difficulty that the EU will have to face up in future: the differences among its members. From now on, the states that will become Members of the EU will increase the heterogeneity of the Union and we must be prepared for it. When something is unknown, it makes people be afraid and with fear we won't move forward the European integration. The EU should increase its pedagogical activity in order to make European citizens understand that the difference is a challenge and an opportunity, but it is never a menace. This is the only way to build a European identity and to achieve a really European integration.”

Núria Tello Clusella, Brussels

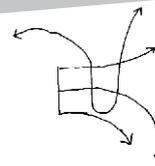
Median age:	total: 28.52 years
Ethnic groups:	Albanian 95%, Greek 3%, other 2% (Vlach, Roma (Gypsy), Serb, Macedonian, Bulgarian) (1989 est.) note: in 1989, other estimates of the Greek population ranged from 1% (official Albanian statistics) to 12% (from a Greek organization)
Religions:	Muslim 70%, Albanian Orthodox 20%, Roman Catholic 10% note: percentages are estimates; there are no available current statistics on religious affiliation; all mosques and churches were closed in 1967 and religious observances prohibited; in November 1990, Albania began allowing private religious practice
Languages:	Albanian (official - derived from Tosk dialect), Greek, Vlach, Romani, Slavic dialects

“Several EU officials have expressed their intention to promote the use of English (along with two or three other European languages) in the European institutions as a ‘lingua franca’. Certainly, to a certain extent, this policy reflects a realistic approach to the organisation and the operations of the EU bodies. In terms of logistics, it would be too ambitious to translate all documents or carry out international negotiations in all EU languages. Otherwise, Brussels would become a 21st century version of the ‘Tower of Babel’. It would take lots of precious time to reach and apply even the most trivial decision, let alone an exorbitant functional cost.

On the other hand, many EU native speakers of minor or minoritarian languages have expressed fears of seeing their linguistic tools being superseded, mainly, by English. The EU officials and heads of member-states are confronted by a Gordian knot: marrying flexibility (i.e. limiting functional costs) with a declared and fundamental respect for each and every European national identity.

In principle, balancing and institutionalising the official use of EU languages is related to the debate about QMV and alliances within the EU institutions. Inevitably frictions have arisen and will continue to exist among major and minor countries in terms of population contingent. Therefore, it is of paramount importance to maintain a sound balance when it comes to the official use of EU languages without, however, losing sight of the budget limitations and other practical restrictions.”

Vasilios Thomopoulos, Nea Filadelfi



In both Poland (2003) and the United Kingdom (2002) 17% of the population is living beneath the poverty line

"The way towards common future has been far from easy. The changing alliances in a European Union where near a hundred parliaments will affect us in different forms and different linguistics and cultural realities, today the cultural basis, the necessary substrate is still in the collective mind of the European. It is necessary to increase that. To draw up more bows of union, mainly thinking to lay the foundation of a future in common based on the respect and the brotherhood between people and towns.

The internal problems of the states' members and the lack of a more homogeneous European public opinion in certain questions makes necessarily the creation of a pan-European mass media which will help to shape the European reality. This will greatly contribute to the establishment a common public opinion, like Democracy theorists considered necessary for the continued existence of the Union... Is possible a European common television channel with the same image and different direction. One European channel in each country dedicated to inform on the European reality and to make a European conscience, like is doing Al-jazeera towards pan-Arabian countries. Show our real problems twenty-four hours a day would contribute to create a common base of the European public opinion that now is based on little more than the free market of the anything. And the European young people have much to say on the matter: we gambled our future, if it is that we want it united."

Salvador Martínez Marrahí, Albaida

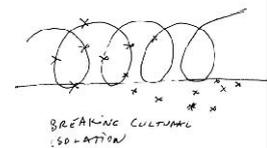
Hungary		total: 38.57 years
Median age:		
Ethnic groups:	Hungarian 92.3%, Roma 1.9%, other or unknown 5.8%	(2001 census)
Religions:	Roman Catholic 51.9%, Calvinist 15.9%, Lutheran 3%, Greek Catholic 2.6%, other Christian 1%, other or unspecified 11.1%, unaffiliated 14.5%	(2001 census)
Languages:	Hungarian 93.6%, other or unspecified 6.4%	(2001 census)

"The only way Europe can be a just place, a sphere of countries and persons who believe in the respect for the cultural and traditional Identity of all countries and regions, is if we believe in an effective participation in all the domains at our hands like our school, our neighbourhood, our town, our country, is if we all work to spread out the knowledge, the means, the tools to empower every citizen in despite their age, their social status, their formal education.

But true Freedom, true Liberty, can only come from Education. Freedom must be bold-faced in all actions and spheres of our lives. The range of possibilities that one have, always framed by the respect for the cultural and traditional identity of all the countries and regions of Europe, should be almost infinite. And the only way to choose in conscience is throughout education. Education is what empowers us to become the best citizens possible. Education in every sense of the word, formal and non-formal is one (for me the best) answer to Europe's challenges. Non-formal education is of the most importance, because, only non-formal education allows us to become real interlocutors, to become speakers and teachers, acting according to our convictions and our desire to contribute to the development of Europe's best potentialities. In my opinion our most precious contribution should be to teach people to use strong arguments, speaking out what they defend is the way to the real changes. The empowerment of the people is the most visible when everyone speaks out without blame.

I argue that, in the end, it's up to each and every one to take in their own hands the power to succeed in the task of changing and making Europe, as Voltaire would like, the best possible place for living, for developing our potentialities and for being happy. Let's empower the people, let's make Europe our home."

Ana Saraiva, Lisbon



Conclusion

Although Europe is facing several complex challenges, it is still a really strongly linked group of states and nationalities. The link that unites everyone is the **belief** in multicultural and social values, where everyone has his space and the conditions to become the best possible citizen. In respect to cultural diversity, esteeming national and linguistic identity is one of the pillars that the European founders left us and that we should hold and cherish. By enlightening the European debate and giving people the tools they need to act in European public sphere, we can surely solve these challenges and make Europe a truly wonderful place for its citizens and whomever wishes to become part of the European family.

During this week in Helsingør we realised that there are numerous challenges that we should face. At the same time, the solutions are there and considering the energy and the willingness with which we act, the future looks promising. If there is a will there is a way.

By Nuría Tello Clusella, Annamaria Csiszer, Fation Dragoshi, Ana Saraiva and Anatoliy Sklyarov

The median age in Ireland is 34 years, in Turkey 28.1 years, in Germany 42.6 years, in Bulgaria 40.8 years, in Romania 36.6 years and in China 32.7 years.

Refugee challenges

A refugee is someone who, "owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable, or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it...".

Jeffrey Romano wrote (<http://demos.acc.eu.org>) that "this problem is not new, but has troubled Europeans for quite some time. During the last century, most of the refugee movements in Europe have been due to political revolution and the subsequent oppression of nonconformist groups. If we take the Russian revolution (1917) and the ensuing civil war as an example, we see that 1.5 million people were forced to flee the Communist regime. Another example is the Armenian Genocide that took place between 1915 and 1923 where an excess of a million Armenians had to leave Turkish Asia Minor.

On the other side of the Mediterranean, during World War Two, several hundred thousands Spanish Republicans left for France after the Nationalists won the election in 1939 and a civil war broke out. In addition, at the end of the war, millions of Europeans were left displaced. At the Postdam Conference, a number of European countries authorized the expulsion of German ethnic minorities resulting in 12 million people having to be re-allocated to West Germany. One must also account for those millions of East German asylum seekers who tried to make it to west.

In addition to all this, from the 1960's till the end of the century, state-sponsored persecution by the Soviet Union forced over a million Soviet Jews to emigrate to Israel, the USA and Germany. And finally, as recently as 1991, political upheavals in Eastern Europe such as the breakup of Yugoslavia, displaced another 2 million people by the summer of the following year.

The above shows that refugee movements in Europe have been common throughout the last century and so the whole problem regarding African immigrants should come as no surprise to anybody."

Many Europeans, especially those living in the EU border countries are quickly becoming aware of how serious this problem is. In fact, Klementyna Szczepanska (<http://demos.acc.eu.org>) describes the situation as "one of the biggest problems in the future of Poland....migration in Poland is a new problem". However what must be clarified is that this challenge that



Poland and other European border states are facing is not only a challenge for those countries which are immediately affected, but it should also be treated as a problem (and hence given its due attention) by the other European states. Thus the EU would become more like a family type organization, which is what it is increasingly becoming.

As is many times the case, the problem is not what should be done but rather how something should be done. Regarding the integration process, Nataliya Nikolova (<http://demos.acc.eu.org>) tells us that the integration strategies should "combat discrimination and racism...and promote cultural integration". She goes on to say that "nowadays, the EU Member States should fully implement instruments relating to the equality of treatment of third world nationals legally resident in the EU, that provide additional legal basis for promoting the integration of refugees."

Furthermore, regarding the integration policy, many countries feel that the EU must intervene in the situation and help make the situation better. Klementyna Szczepanska goes on, "our [Poland] policy depends on EU directives which must be worked out together". However, what is also important is that the spirit with which these directives are planned out must be one of sympathy for the refugees. It must be important that the current situation is not only seen as a problem, it must not be seen only from the economic perspective, the situation must be examined and seen how for example, the culture of the affected area would be enriched.

Before seeing how to integrate the refugees, the governments must decide the policies on how to differentiate between the illegal immigrants and refugees (or at least people who qualify for humanitarian status). "In Europe there are detention centers preoccupied with people due to the slow procedure of whether to grant refugee or humanitarian status to the immigrants." In addition, there is an "an opportunity for the people to re-apply over and over in some countries."

Unfortunately, the situation in these detention centers is many times shameful. This is due to many reasons such as lack of funds, bad organization and the ever increasing numbers of illegal immigrants.

In conclusion, one must say that it is close to impossible to solve this refugee challenge altogether, mainly because, as Jeffrey Romano points out, "for such a complex problem as is this, the immigration problems can boil down to a whole host of causes, not just one, making it all the more difficult for the EU to find a solution."

As Klementyna Szczepanska tells us, one must realise that "the EU is a young association...[and as an organisation] firstly we must "clean our yard" and then think about others. But an effective migration policy is, I think, one of the most important "corners" of this "yard". On the other hand, Nataliya Nikolova writes that "the topic of refugees and their status is a moving target and we need further efforts in order to find good working strategies. The successful integration of refugees would play a key role in the effort to strengthen economic growth and social cohesion within the EU Member States, and thus the EU would achieve one of its fundamental goals, that is, to become a competitive and successful knowledge-based economy"

By Klementyna Szczepanska, Natalya Nikolova and Jeffrey Romano



In all the states of the EU, less than 0.7% of the adult population (15-49) has HIV or AIDS, in Swaziland 38.8% of the adult population has HIV or AIDS

What is your perception of the refugees in Europe today?

During the week at International Peoples' College we addressed the following question: "What is your perception of refugees in Europe today?" to four persons. You can read the interesting answers below.



Kristof Kristiansen, Helsingør, Principal of IPC

Living in Denmark and working at IPC, it is very obvious that I don't think that Europe is doing enough for the refugees. There is a strong trend in right wing people in Denmark and Europe to believe that refugees will come here to benefit from the welfare system and exploit us and that they [refugees] will be a danger to the labour market, that they will steal jobs away from Europeans and Danes. I don't hear that fear, I don't think that anybody will want to be a refugee unless they are absolutely forced to live in another country and culture. It is one of the most complicated and difficult things you could do in your life. And secondly, Europe and Denmark need refugees, we need a labour force, especially in Denmark, there is 0 unemployment and we need extra hands. Europe is the richest part of the world, especially Denmark...and I think we have a humanitarian obligation to do more to help these people often suffering from traumatic experiences like war, natural catastrophe or long term starvation. So...refugees are not a threat and I think that we should try to do more to help Europe and them.



Ayman Ayad, Helsingør, chef at IPC

I am from Palestine, what you would call now Israel....now I live in Lebanon. I think it's a complicated issue, it's a political issue, rich countries who would like to be more rich, they would like to make weapons and they would like to sell it, if they don't sell it they lose money. They [refugees] have to escape so they come to Europe, and when they come to Europe they have to pay a price. Europe is not like Africa where it is very dry...so people escape and come here. Now, lets take it as positive, because if you take the big cities in Europe like Paris, London, if you don't have refugees, then nobody will drive their busses, no-one will serve in the restaurants, no-one will clean their airports, so we need these people.



John Petersen, Århus, Chairman of ACC

In general, it is still so that EU Europe is a huge economy and we have economically the possibility to do a lot. I think we are obliged to do it and I think that especially right now, when everybody say that the European economy needs labour force, there is no reason to avoid an influx of refugees.

Concerning the global, economical divide, Europe is not only part of the reason why it is there. It could also be part of the solution, and a good way forward would be to establish strong contacts, personal contacts between Europeans and people from other parts of the world. Refugees could easily develop into being the contacts or links in the future. Of course we should not be stupid in Europe and allow whatever, or allow is the wrong word, but basically I think we should see and think of an influx of refugees as a good thing for the world and for Europe.



Garba Diallo, Helsingør, teacher at IPC

Ok, firstly what I think the situation of refugees in Europe is a shame and that the refugees coming to Europe are a product of European history and the product of current European economy and current European policy. These are the third world and other countries where refugee come from, mostly refugees coming come from the middle east like Iraq and certain African countries. These countries were colonized and created by European colonial powers which created the situation that led to a conflict and this conflict has to do with the international economic and political system which put Europe on the top of the world, together with the US and Japan, always called the 'West'. Europe constitutes about 15% of the world's population but they control maybe 80 or 90% of the world power and then they do not use that in order to improve the system but instead they use it to create these problems...the institutions that were created because of European problems after the second world war like the Geneva convention, these institutions and conventions are no longer respected by European leaders ... because these conventions and protocols were created to solve our [European] problems, now they are irrelevant because now the problems are not

ours anymore ... they are third world problems.

This problem is like a fire, if you don't solve it, it tends to spread and contaminate and generate into an epidemic. Another thing I feel is, it is too much exaggeration because actually refugees are so few, they are less than what European countries need in terms of new population input

There are so many jobs which are not being done because there are few people so the refugees are so few and the problems in Europe are so few that especially, there is too much money and eh too few problems so they do not need to politicize this and make into a big problem. And now if you compare to 1989, the number of refugees coming to Western Europe is about one third, so much much much less....we have too much of everything and these refugees can come and help in the healthcare system and social services for old people.

18.7% of the population of Croatia (2004) is officially unemployed, in Germany this is 11.6%, in France 10% and in the Ukraine 2.9% (2005)

Citizens' participation in the EU

by

European Identity and Active Citizenship

INTRODUCTION

56 years ago, when Schuman first told about his famous idea "a unified Europe", it was a dream to get rid of borders because of economic, political and cultural reasons. Nowadays, major progress has been made, but to reach the ideal of Schuman, we will have to overcome some challenges.

One of the most important challenges of the European Union will be to retain the support from its member-states. To accomplish this, support of the European citizens is of great importance. Besides the support, a more active attitude towards Europe might be necessary as well. At the moment, the support for the EU is not self-evident throughout Europe. Last year we have seen two referenda on the European Constitution. In France, and as well in the Netherlands, the majority voted against this constitution. Political analysts had difficulties finding the reason for this rejection. In their opinion it was not just the idea or the content of the constitution. Disapproval of the countries' European politics, the unpopular introduction of the Euro, or even the domestic political situation were given as alternative reasons. Another problem with the support for the EU is the low turn-outs for the elections for the European Parliament.

The question now is; how to increase the European awareness, and retain the support of the countries and the citizens?

First we start with the idea of the European Identity. It is important that Europeans not only identify themselves as 'Dutch', 'Danish' or

'Spanish', but also as 'European'. Individuals hold multiple identities. So, besides considering themselves as a citizen of their home country, people can consider themselves as (a) European citizens as well. Identity is "a process of classification involving boundaries of inclusion and exclusion". The attitude towards Europe depends on whether a person is exclusively loyal towards his nation-state, or if he has some degree of multiple identity. There are different ways of identifying with Europe. People can see themselves as European because of Europe's culture, history and values; secondly people can also identify themselves with the EU as a political entity. The goal should never be to suppress national, cultural and ethnic identities. As mentioned before, different identities can very well go together.

Living together, we can also enrich our society. Our unity must be founded on confidence in our own individual identity providing some respects for others and willingness to share common ideas, attitudes and values.

Second, citizens should become more active in politics. The lack of interest of Europeans in the EU can not only be explained by identity, it has also has to do with the declining of political interest and awareness in the last decennia. This is a problem which we can see both on a national and regional level as well.

We will now give our ideas on how active citizenship and a European identity can become stronger.



Education

There should be more educational attention for Europe. Besides the national history, children should learn the history of Europe. A part of the European citizens do not really know why the EU was established, and this might have a huge influence on their perception of European integration. Through good education people can form a more balanced opinion on European Politics and this will strengthen their identification with Europe.

To make citizens politically more active, people should become more aware of the importance of democratic values and what their active role can be in the contemporary national and European democracy. Besides the democratic values, it is also important to learn how the system works and how to obtain influence. A good education at a young age can result in active citizenship when one grows up. Active citizenship also has to be promoted by European politics through subsidization for formal and informal education, institutions and promotion campaigns.

In 2004 10 new countries joined the EU; Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia.

Lukasz (Szklarska Poreba, 24):
As a product of European history, Polish identity is strongly connected with a sense of belonging to roots and cultural heritage. But more important, I think we share a lot of values with the other European countries.



Sevgi (Izmit/Kocaeli, 23):
Identity is how you define yourself; so I am a girl, I am Turkish and I am a world citizen who wants to know more about what is happening all around the world.



Núria (Brussels/Barcelona, 22):
Although identity is defined by common history, tradition and language I feel more identification with Europe than Spain. The EU makes you feel like that you really make a part of Europe, and in Spain, as a minority, you don't feel appreciated. First of all, though, I would identify myself as a Catalan.



Timo (Amsterdam, 23):
I have the idea that people can have more identities at the same time. I identify myself with the citizens of Amsterdam, the Netherlands and Europe at the same time. Identity is a thing that can change over time.



Networking

Through contacts with other Europeans, people become more aware of their common values and culture. This will strengthen their European identity. There are different ways to establish European networks. Examples of this are the Erasmus program, whereby European students can easily study in another European country. Other possibilities are European citizens projects like the residential Community Colleges (www.acc.eu.org).

Mass media

In the national media throughout Europe there is not enough information about the European politics. The European decision-making process is very complicated and not very transparent. Journalists should be better educated in order to inform more and on a higher level about Europe. A European newspaper or tv-channel could also inform the European citizens about what is going on in the EU.

European politics

A European identity and active citizenship also have to be promoted by European politics. This has to be done in different ways. First of all, the politicians have to try to make European politics more transparent, and more understandable for the average citizen. Secondly, they have to subsidize European exchange and mobility projects and other projects which strengthen a European identity.

Building Bridges within states

Strong ethnic communities allow their members to build bridges. First of all, they help individuals to forge social contacts with others and adopt in a new environment. Secondly, being engaged in an active dialogue with the host society and governmental authorities, they can articulate their interests and become full participants. In the past it has shown that good organized minorities are active citizens, not only within their own community but also on a national and European level. In the end, providing suitable institutions, activities and actions such as minority organization, open debate, festivals and training courses are the best way they can encourage people to open their eyes on different views, and become actively involved in the political process.

Being full participants, European will feel more willing to display their ethnic pride and they will also become free to borrow and blend with other ethnic groups than ever before. Europe will always have its differences. Trying to agree on the EU funding, trade agreements and monetary union, we should not ignore cultural matter.

In 2005, the inflation rate in the EU was 2,2%, in Sweden this was 0,5% and in Iraq 40%.

"It is important to make people aware of what is happening in the European Union, they should have the feeling that they take part in the whole process. This will lead to more active citizens in the European Demos." (Núria Tello Clusella, 22. Brussels/Barcelona)

"Active citizenship is about contributing in a political or social way to Europe, a nation or a local community. I'm active in a organization which is called the Active Malta Anthropology Society. This organization has two goals. First, it wants to promote how anthropology can contribute to better understanding of different cultures. Secondly this society wants to create goodwill and friendship between different cultures by organizing social events." (Jeffrey Romano, 18. Santa Venera).

"In Eastern Europe a lot of things have changed and power politics have no more use when dealing with problems in society. There is need for a more intellectual approach. This is the moment that young people should start acting as active citizens, especially, if these countries are trying to join the EU." (Fation Dragoshi, 23. Tirane).

"To me, active citizenship means the closest way to reach the citizens. It is a way in which societies can change and develop. I'm active in the House of Europe, which has houses in different countries where Europeans are exchanging knowledge and organize debates about Europe." (Ana Saraiva, 23. Lisbon).

Quotes about IDENTITY

John Petersen (Århus, 39):

European identity is destiny, caused by history. It is something that you can not escape. Turkey is part of the European destiny, but for example a country like Indonesia is not.

Sevgi Dönmez (Izmit/Kocaeli, 23):

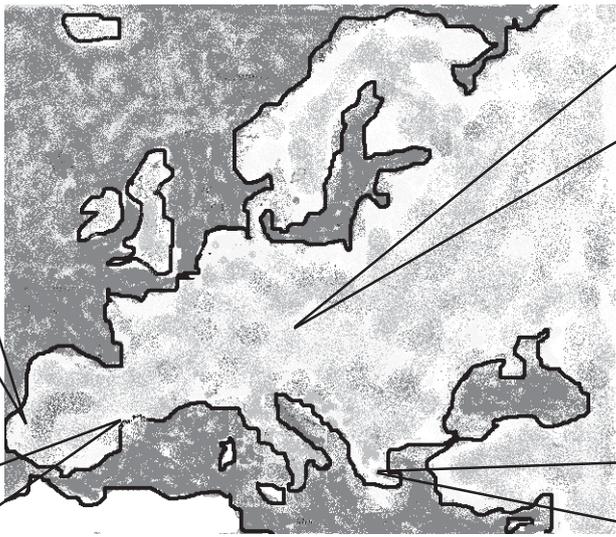
Identity is how you define yourself; so I am a girl, I am Turkish and I am a world citizen who wants to know more about what is happening all around the world.

Edward Corneliu Niclescu (Athens/Busau, 30)

European identity is just an invented concept to organize a new system which is called European Union and nationality is just a paper thing. I was born in Austria but I live in Greece and I can't speak German. I identify myself as Greek/Romanian orthodox Christian.

"I expect a really multicultural EU, which can, through serious education on democratic values, lead to real active citizenship."
Ana Saraiva, 23, Lisbon

"The European Union should take profit from the diversity among its member-states for the further European integration. It is a source of knowledge."
Núria Tello Clusella, 22, Brussels/Barcelona

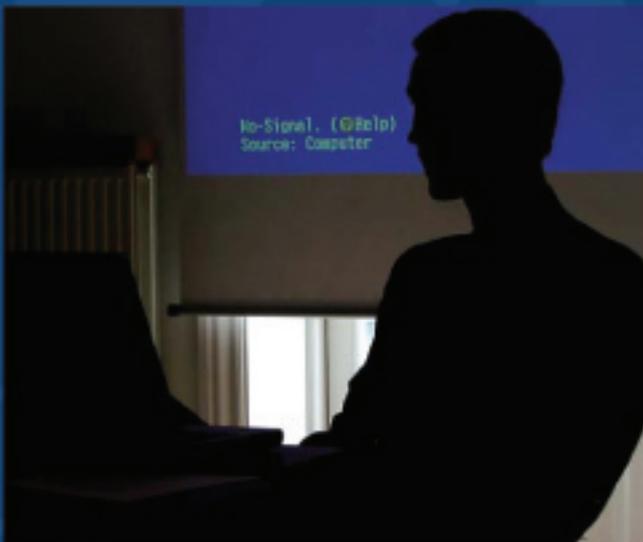


"I am sure that future of creating common public sphere is going on good way. Everybody knows that future of each country depends on well-educated young people, and the same rules are also in the EU. Therefore we cannot stop to organize European community colleges, because it is one of the best ways hwo to show youth of Europe that we are able to overcome all predictions."
Jakub Kawulok, 24, Hradek

"I'm an optimist. I think the EU will be the driving force for the coming years. I have faith in the EU as a stabilising power. I put more trust in the pacifist ideas of the EU than in those of some individual countries."
Fation Dragoshi, 23, Tirane

By Timo Eggink, Zeynep Karasu, Sevgi Dönmez and Lukasz Albanski

According to Amnesty International in 21 of the 25 countries of the EU human rights were violated in 2003.



Community Colleges for Europe

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