



A CAMPAIGN OF THE CIVIL SOCIETY
CONTACT GROUP

<p>BULLETIN 11 <i>Brussels, 3rd September, 2003</i></p>

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EDITORIAL - TIME TO ACT4EUROPE

Dear Friends

I hope most of you had a good and recreational break before the “craziness” of September started again. The EU Presidency and our Foreign Ministers have been quite busy over the summer designing the IGC, and we were busy collecting information about their plans. They will in fact make their decisions this coming weekend (interestingly enough before the other EU institutions have even finalised their opinions...). The European Parliament is in the final stages of agreeing its report and you can find the draft report of the Committee on Constitutional Affairs on our webpage. We expect the Commission to publish its opinion by mid-September.

At the Brussels level, the Civil Society Contact Group is organising informal meetings with all sorts of background actors in the EP, Commission, and the Permanent Representations of Member States to gather information and influence the process, so we can feed the act4europe campaign. The campaign has grown significantly over the summer spreading into more countries, yet not all countries are covered and we are still seeking NGOs willing to coordinate the approach cross-sectorally in their country.

Time is pressing from now on, so you find the first call for action for this week below. In the last week of September we will send you the next call for action, this time with a sample letter, to be launched before the start of the IGC on 4 October when public attention is high. By then we can also give you more detailed information about the structure of the IGC. Within the next couple of weeks we will also publish our lobbying toolkit for the campaign that will give you all the necessary details for an easy participation in act4europe actions. You will receive a separate announcement.

On 7 October we are holding our next NGO event in Brussels aimed at NGOs from national level who have taken up coordinator roles by then and European NGO networks. Please note the date in your diary, you will receive more practical information soon. It will be an afternoon event.

Looking forward to working with you over the next few months
Nicolas Beger
Campaign coordinator

Call for action on “Gymnich” meeting

This weekend 5th/6th September the Foreign Ministers are meeting in an informal so-called “Gymnich” meeting (Gymnich was the place in Germany at which they first had such an informal meeting). Despite the fact that the European Parliament and the European Commission are not due to publish their final opinion on the draft Constitution and the plans for the IGC, many knowledgeable insiders have confirmed to us that the Italian Presidency held bilateral meetings with all EU Member States and Accession Countries over the summer and the final decision about the IGC, who will be involved – diplomatic level or only political level, the length, and the format, will be deciding this weekend. We ask you to please send faxes to your Foreign Minister before Friday making her/him aware that civil society organisations in your country and – if you want to mention us – the act4europe campaign all across Europe are closely monitoring the IGC. Please demand opportunities for civil society input according to the principle of participatory democracy, full transparency of the IGC process and all its debates, and a rights/value based Constitution in which the mechanisms of implementation ensure and realise the rights/values established in Part I.

Campaign coordination event 7 October 2003

Act4europe is inviting European NGO networks and NGOs at national level for another information and strategy meeting around the IGC campaign. The event will be held on 7 October in the afternoon in the building of the Social Platform, Avenue des Arts 43 in Brussels.

Call for papers the ‘ACT4EUROPE TIMES’!

Act4europe and BOND, a development NGO in the UK, are launching an activist mobilisation/education project. BOND manages and leads the publication for this project. So if your organisation campaigns or has an activist/supporter membership base, then contact Howard at BOND (hmollett@bond.org.uk) to participate in 'The Act4Europe Times' activist mobilisation project.

Our proposal is to produce a 20 page publication to educate and mobilise activists, in the style of a 'parody newspaper'. We hope that act4europe partners will contribute entry-level feature-articles, which explain how issues that activists care about (trade justice, labour rights, environment etc) relate to the EU.

Contributors can use this free publication to disseminate information through your national networks and at events like the European Social Forum. Its purpose is to support cross-sectoral civil society collaboration around the IGC,

and beyond towards the EU elections next year. We have funding for 15,000 copies - more funds = more translations.

To participate your organisation should:

- 1) Decide at campaign director level to use it for your own campaigns
- 2) Propose and contribute an interesting article
- 3) Disseminate the publication to your supporter networks.

To view a one-page concept note go to:

<http://www.bond.org.uk/emailings/eu/act4europe-activist.doc>

For more information contact: Howard Mollett, BOND, hmollett@bond.org.uk, +44 207 837 8344, <http://www.bond.org.uk>

SECTOR NEWS

Green Eight

The environmental NGO sector has just published a 40 page comprehensive assessment booklet of the whole draft Constitution. You can find the full document on the act4europe webpage or on the webpage of the European Environmental Bureau. It explains the purpose of the booklet, the role of the Green Eight, gives an overall assessment, and then proceeds to very specific amendments to all three parts of the draft Constitution text, but focusing on Part III. It finishes with another call for the deletion of the Euratom Treaty and the inclusion of a "Protocol on Sustainable Development".