

NGO TOOLKIT
European Parliament
Elections

*Civil Society and the
European Parliament elections 2004
What is at stake?*

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Introduction from the Civil Society Contact Group

2004 is truly a European year: accession of 10 new Member States, negotiations to adopt a European Constitution, the European Parliament election, and a new European Commission to be appointed. There will be a new wind blowing in Brussels and throughout Europe, with much needed input from the new Member States.

The European Parliament is the only directly elected EU body, representing 470 million EU citizens. A low election turnout and a new Parliament without broad democratic legitimacy by voters would be a bad start to this new phase of European integration. Organized civil society has an interest and a responsibility to engage in the election process in a way that encourages participation in the election.

For civil society the EP is a particularly crucial: our work very much depends on good networking among NGOs from different sectors and on connections of trust to the European institutions. The European Parliament has traditionally been an ally to civil dialogue and more often than not appreciates the expert knowledge NGOs bring to them and the European policies they shape. MEPs have also been the most accessible to NGOs based in the Member States. However, only a third of the current MEPs will be returning to the Parliament and with 162 new MEPs from the new Member States, the EP will almost start afresh.

For NGO networks this means that many relations of trust and joint work will have to be re-established. The need for a civil dialogue between the EU and civil society will have to be re-argued, but also enhanced from the current status. Without the help of NGOs at national level and their freshly built connections during the election period, this will be a more than difficult task. This toolkit is intended to aid NGOs at national and European level in designing and conducting their efforts around the European elections. It is intended as a cross-sectoral addition to more specific campaigning of many NGOs, whether around human rights, environmental, social, or development issues.

We hope the information will be useful to all those who have participated in the act4europe campaign so far and to all those who intend to involve themselves in the European project in one way or the other. Please do not hesitate to contact the act4europe office if you have any further questions regarding the content of the toolkit or if we can be of any assistance with your campaigning plans.

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I. The European Parliament in an overview

Introduction

The European Parliament represents, in the words of the 1957 Treaty of Rome, 'the peoples of the States brought together in the European Community'. After having been a simple Assembly of appointed members, the European Parliament is elected directly since June 1979 – **and remains the only directly elected body of the European Union.**

The European Parliament derives its legitimacy from direct universal suffrage and is elected every **five years**. It has steadily acquired greater influence and power through a series of treaties. They have transformed the European Parliament **from a purely consultative assembly into a legislative parliament**, exercising powers similar to those of the national parliaments. Today the European Parliament, as an equal partner with the Council of Ministers, passes the majority of European laws - laws that affect the lives of Europe's citizens.








Members of the European Parliament (**MEPs**) are elected under a system of proportional representation. Elections are held either on a regional basis, as for example in the United Kingdom, Italy and Belgium, on a national basis, as in Spain and in Denmark, or under a mixed system as in Germany. Since the Maastricht Treaty came into force in 1993 every citizen of an EU member state who lives in another country of the Union may vote or stand for election in their country of residence.

The sixth European Parliament's elections will take place from **10 June to 13 June 2004** with different dates for the Member States. Most of them will vote on 13 June for the **732** new MEPs.

Composition of the European Parliament

The number of Members per state is laid down in the Treaties; there will be **732** MEPs from June 2004 onwards.

MEPs per Member States:

Member State	MEPs 1999	MEPs 2004
 Germany	99	99
 France	87	78
 Italy	87	78
 United Kingdom	87	78
 Poland		54
 Spain	64	54
 Netherlands	31	27
 Belgium	25	24
 Czech Republic		24
 Greece	25	24
 Hungary		24
 Portugal	25	24
 Sweden	22	19
 Austria	21	18
 Denmark	16	14
 Finland	16	14
 Slovakia		14
 Ireland	15	13
 Lithuania		13
 Latvia		9
 Slovenia		7
 Cyprus		6
 Estonia		6
 Luxembourg	6	6
 Malta		5
Total	626	732

Percentage of women MEP per Member States (February 2004)

Rank	Member State	Seats	Women	% Women
1	France	87	39	44,8
2	Finland	16	7	43,8
3	Sweden	22	9	40,9
4	Belgium	25	10	40
5	Austria	21	8	38,1
6	Denmark	16	6	37,5
7	Germany	99	37	37,4
8	Ireland	15	5	33,3
9	Luxembourg	6	2	33,3
10	Spain	63	21	33,3
11	Netherlands	31	9	29
12	UK	87	21	24,1
13	Portugal	25	7	28
14	Greece	25	4	16,0
15	Italy	87	10	11,5
	Total	625	195	31,2







Women observers from new Member States (May 2003)¹:

Rank	New Member State	Total	Women	% Women
1	Slovakia	14	5	35,7
2	Cyprus	6	1	16,6
3	Poland	54	9	16,6
4	Czech Republic	24	3	12,5
5	Hungary	24	3	12,5
6	Latvia	9	1	11,1
7	Lithuania	13	1	7,7
8	Estonia	6	0	0
9	Malta	5	0	0
10	Slovenia	7	0	0
	Total	162	23	14,2

¹ The full list can be found under:
<http://www.europarl.eu.int/observers/information.htm>

Political Groups

In the Chamber, Members sit in **political groups**, not in national delegations. Parliament currently has **seven** political groups, plus some 'non-attached' Members. Each political group has a chairman, a bureau and a secretariat.

	<p>EPP-ED</p> <p>Group of the European People's Party and European Democrats</p>	<p>Rue Wiertz B-1047 Brussels Tel: +32-2 2846242 Fax: +32-2 231 10 11 epp-ed@europarl.eu.int http://www.epp-ed.org/</p>	<p>Klaus Welle, Secretary General</p> <p>European elections manifesto: http://act4europe.horus.be/module/FileLib/EPPelectionsmanifesto.pdf</p>
	<p>PES</p> <p>Group of the Party of European Socialists</p>	<p>Rue Wiertz B-1047 Brussels Tel: +32 2 284 46 61 Fax: +32 2 230 01 41 webmaster@socialistgroup.org http://www.socialistgroup.org/</p>	<p>Christine Verger, Secretary General</p>
	<p>ELDR</p> <p>European Liberal, Democrat and Reform Party</p>	<p>Rue Wiertz B-1047 Brussels Tel: +32 2 284 25 61 Fax: +32 2 230 95 34 abeels@europarl.eu.int http://www.eldr.org/</p>	<p>Alexander Beels, Secretary General</p> <p>Search Machine for candidates: http://new.eldr.org/eldr2/candidatesSearchnew.asp</p>
	<p>GUE/NGL</p> <p>European United Left / Nordic Green Left</p>	<p>Rue Wiertz B-1047 Bruxelles Tel: +32 2 284 2683 / 2686 Fax: +32 2 28 417 80 http://www2.europarl.eu.int/que/</p>	
	<p>The Greens/ EFA</p> <p>Greens / European Free Alliance</p>	<p>Tel : +32-2-2843044 Fax : +32-2-2307837 jbehrend@europarl.eu.int Tel : +32-2-2842117 Fax : +32-2-2307837 vtsetsi@europarl.eu.int</p> <p>http://www.europeangreens.org (European Green Party) http://www.greens-efa.org/ (Group in EP)</p>	<p>Juan Behrend, Vula Tsetsi Secretaries General</p> <p>Green Party's European elections manifesto: http://www.europeangreens.org/info/policy/manifesto04.pdf</p> <p>All Green candidates throughout Europe: http://www.eurogreens.org/cms/candidates/rubrik/2/2065.candidates.htm?PartyID=1</p>
	<p>UEN</p> <p>Union for Europe of the Nations</p>	<p>Tel: +32-2 284 29 71 Fax: +32-2 284 49 87 Fbarrett@europarl.eu.int http://www.europarl.eu.int/uen/</p>	<p>Frank Barrett, Secretary General</p>

	<p>EDD Group for a Europe of Democracies and Diversities</p>	<p>Rue Wiertz, 2H 361 B - 1047 Brussels Tel 00 32 2 284 3043 Fax 0032 2 284 9144 E-mail: cvangrunderbeeck@europarl.eu.int http://www.eddgroup.com/</p>	<p>Claudine Vangrunderbeeck Secretary General</p>
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These political groups are not necessarily political parties themselves, do not always reflect party traditions of Member States and can be subject to changes after the next elections. The Greens / EFA group for example is composed of a diverse range of parties, not only national Greens. However, a statute for European parties is currently being established so that European parties can be created, as lately, for example, the European Green Party or Party of the European Left.

The European Parliament is the only Community institution that meets and debates in public. Its decisions, positions and proceedings are published in the *Official Journal of the European Communities*.

The European Parliament has its official seat in **Strasbourg** where the 12 periods of monthly **plenary sessions**, including the budget session, are held. The **committees** of the European Parliament **meet in Brussels**. The **General Secretariat** of the European Parliament is based in **Luxembourg**. For practical reasons, however, a number of officials and the staff of the European Parliament's political groups work in Brussels. Two weeks in every month are set aside for meetings of Parliament's committees in Brussels. The remaining week is devoted to meetings of the political groups.

The Parliament can be reached at the following addresses:

<p>Bruxelles / Brussels</p> <p>Rue de Wiertz / Wiertzstraat B-1047 Bruxelles / Brussels</p> <p>Tel: +32 2 284 2111 +32 2 28 + ext.</p> <p>Fax: +32 2 284 6974 +32 2 230 6933</p> <p>Telex: 26999</p>	<p>Strasbourg</p> <p>Allée du Printemps B.P. 1024/F F-67070 Strasbourg CEDEX</p> <p>Tel: +33 388174001 +33 3881 +ext</p> <p>Fax: +33 388256501</p> <p>Telex: 890129 or 890139</p>	<p>Luxembourg</p> <p>Place du Kirchberg B.P. 1601 L-2929 Luxembourg</p> <p>Tel: +352 43 001 +352 43 00+ext</p> <p>Fax: +352 43 00 294 94 +352 43 00 293 93 +352 43 00 292 92</p> <p>Telex: 2894</p>
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The committees

Parliament's **standing committees**, of which there are currently **17 (20 in the next period)**, do the preparatory work for Parliament's plenary sessions and can be

considered as the “heart” of the political process within the EP. Each committee appoints a chair, three vice-chairs, and has a secretariat. These committees draw up and adopt reports on legislative proposals and own-initiative reports. Before votes in plenary sessions, the groups consider the **reports from Parliament's committees** and often table amendments to them. For the different reports, the committees choose **rapporteurs** who will do the main work on drafting the report and who are, thus, in a Lobbying process the most important contacts. The main work on a report is done within the committee; the reports will rarely be changed decisively in the plenary session.

- **AFET** - [on Foreign Affairs, Human Rights, Common Security and Defence Policy](#)
- **BUDG** - [on Budgets](#)
- **CONT** - [on Budgetary Control](#)
- **LIBE** - [on Citizens' Freedoms and Rights, Justice and Home Affairs](#)
- **ECON** - [on Economic and Monetary Affairs](#)
- **JURI** - [on Legal Affairs and the Internal Market](#)
- **ITRE** - [on Industry, External Trade, Research and Energy](#)
- **EMPL** - [on Employment and Social Affairs](#)
- **ENVI** - [on the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Policy](#)
- **AGRI** - [on Agriculture and Rural Development](#)
- **PECH** - [on Fisheries](#)
- **RETT** - [on Regional Policy, Transport and Tourism](#)
- **CULT** - [on Culture, Youth, Education, the Media and Sport](#)
- **DEVE** - [on Development and Cooperation](#)
- **AFCO** - [on Constitutional Affairs](#)
- **FEMM** - [on Women's Rights and Equal Opportunities](#)
- **PETI** - [on Petitions](#)

For the new Parliamentary period, these committees will be slightly changed (some are split, some are new) and their number is increased from 17 to 20 with the following changes: There will be committees on

- **legal affairs** (legal bases, international law, commercial law, immunity, Court of Justice etc.),
- **internal market and consumer protection**
- **regional development**
- **civil liberties, justice and home affairs**
- **international trade**
- **environment, public health and food safety.**

Powers of the European Parliament

Like all parliaments, the European Parliament has three fundamental powers: **legislative power**, **budgetary power** and **supervisory power**.

Legislative power

The "normal" legislative procedure laid down by the Treaties is **co-decision**. This procedure puts the European Parliament and the Council on an equal footing, and together they adopt legislation proposed by the Commission. Parliament **has to give its final agreement**.

Co-decision has enabled the European Parliament to have a major impact on European decision-making and to push through much stricter anti-pollution rules for fuel and motor oils, stricter and more visible health warnings on cigarette packets and the ban of heavy metals in the manufacture of vehicles as from 2003.

Co-decision

The co-decision procedure involves one, two or three readings.

- The **Commission proposes** a legislative text;
- The European Parliament adopts a position on the basis of a **report** by its relevant standing committee; it usually suggests changes to the Commission proposal in the form of **amendments**. This is the **first reading**;
- The **Council** of Ministers either approves Parliament's amendments - in which case the legislative proposal is adopted - or modifies them by adopting a **common position**;
- On the basis of a recommendation by the relevant standing committee, the European Parliament delivers an **opinion at second reading**: it approves, rejects or amends the Council position by an absolute majority of its Members
- The **Commission** takes account of Parliament's amendments and forwards an **amended proposal to the Council**. The Council can adopt Parliament's amendments that have been accepted by the Commission by a qualified majority, or modify Parliament's amendments only by a unanimous vote.
- In the event of disagreement between Parliament and the Council, a **conciliation committee** made up of the members of the Council and a delegation from Parliament meets for a maximum of six weeks. The 15-member EP delegation always includes Parliament's **rapporteur**.
- In the vast majority of cases the two parties reach an agreement, in the form of a **joint text**;
- Parliament is invited to confirm this agreement at the **third reading**. If no agreement is reached, the proposal for a Community 'law' is not adopted.

Co-decision applies in the following areas:

- The free movement of workers and the right of establishment
- Non-discrimination on the basis of nationality
- Social security for migrant workers
- Transport

- Harmonization of internal market
- Employment (incentive measures)
- Custom cooperation
- Development cooperation
- Education (incentive measures) and vocational training
- Mutual recognition of diplomas
- Health (incentive measures)
- Consumer protection
- Trans-European networks (establishment and funding)
- Environment (general action programmes)
- Culture (incentive measures)
- Research
- Social exclusion and public health
- Equality between women and men
- Implementation decisions regarding the European Social Fund and Regional Development Fund
- Judicial cooperation in civil matters
- Economic and social cohesion actions (outside the Structural Funds)
- Transparency
- Statistics and data protection
- Preventing and combating fraud

Consultation

There are still important areas in which Parliament is only consulted; The Commission sends its proposal to both the Council and the Parliament and Parliament can accept, reject, and suggest amendments, which the Commission will consider, accept or reject. Council will then either accept the final Commission's proposal or amend it further unanimously. Areas of consultation are

- Police and judicial cooperation in criminal matters
- Revision of the treaties
- Discrimination on the grounds of sex, race or ethnic origin, religion or political conviction, disability, age, or sexual orientation
- EU citizenship
- Agriculture
- Visas, asylum, immigration and policies associated with the free movement of persons
- Transport with significant impact on certain regions
- Competition rules
- Tax
- Economic policy
- Enhanced cooperation

Assent

In this case Council has to obtain the European Parliament's assent before certain important decisions are taken. The procedure is the same as in consultation, except that Parliament cannot amend: it must accept or reject. Assent requires absolute majority of the vote cast. Areas of assent are:

- Specific tasks and statutes of the European Central Bank
- Structural and Cohesion Funds
- Uniform electoral procedure for the European Parliament
- Certain international agreements
- Accession of New Member States

In any case, the Parliament has **no power to initiate legislation** – this power remains with the European Commission. However, the EP frequently adopts at the instigation of one of its committees (legally non binding) reports designed to steer EU policy in a particular direction.

Parliament's legislative work is organized for the main part as follows:

- The **Commission** submits a legislative proposal to Parliament; one of the standing **committees** (the 'committee responsible') appoints a **rapporteur**, i.e. a member of the committee who will be charged with the task of drafting the **committee's report**. One or more other committees may be asked to deliver opinions. Each adopts its opinion and forwards it to the committee responsible;
- MEPs - and the committees asked to deliver opinions - can table **amendments** to the draft report drawn up by the rapporteur; it is then adopted, possibly with some changes, by the committee responsible;
- The political groups examine the report from their own political standpoint;
- Finally, the report is discussed in plenary session. Amendments to it may be tabled by the committee responsible, the political groups or a number of Members. Parliament votes on the report, thereby adopting its position on the original proposal.

Budgetary power

European Parliament and the Council share the power of the purse, just as they share legislative power. The preliminary work on Parliament's decision-making in this area is done by its **Committee on Budgets** in cooperation with the other standing committees. Since 1986 annual expenditure has been part of a multi-annual framework - the 'financial perspectives' - adopted jointly by Parliament and the Council. Parliament has the last word on most expenditure in the annual budget, such as spending on the less prosperous regions, spending on training to help reduce unemployment etc. In the case of agricultural expenditure Parliament can only propose amendments, but the Council has the final say. Parliament and the Council consider the Commission's budgetary proposals in two readings (between May and December). **Parliament can also reject the budget** if it believes that it does not meet the needs of the Union. The budgetary procedure then starts all over again.

Supervisory power

Parliament exercises democratic oversight of all Community activities. This power, which was originally applied to the activities of the Commission only, has been extended to the Council of Ministers and the bodies responsible for the foreign and security policy. To facilitate this supervision the European Parliament can set up **temporary committees of inquiry**. It has done so on several occasions, as in the case

of mad cow disease, when Parliament's inquiry led to the establishment of a European Veterinary Agency in Ireland. Parliament also secured the creation of the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF).

Parliament's growing political role

Co-decision on legislation has enhanced the European Parliament's political power. This influence is ever more evident in key areas of European Union activity, from the Common Foreign and Security Policy and co-operation in police and judicial matters, to European Monetary Union, the Charter of Fundamental Rights and the Convention on the Future of Europe. The European Parliament attaches for example importance to the protection of human rights both inside and outside the Union and has used its power of assent as one way of promoting respect for fundamental rights. It has, for example, rejected a series of financial protocols with certain non-member countries on human rights grounds, forcing those countries to release political prisoners or to subscribe to international undertakings on human rights protection.

Cooperation on security, i.e. police and judicial matters - criminal and civil cases, asylum policy, immigration, terrorism and organized crime, the fight against drugs, corruption, racism and xenophobia - now fall within the competence of the Union. Parliament plays a full legislative role in these areas.

Finally, the EP plays a role in the discussions around a **Constitution for Europe**. It has two representatives to the Intergovernmental Conference (IGC; currently MEP Klaus Hänsch and MEP Elmar Brok) and can try to influence discussions through resolutions and the intervention of these two MEPs. An agreed Constitution by the IGC will be voted on in the EP. Even if a rejection does not have immediate legal consequences, it would surely have a major impact on the ratification process at national level.

II. Lobbying the European Parliament / The European Elections 2004

Introduction

The **rising scope of co-decision** made the European Parliament a much more influential institution of the EU. The reports of the EP shape European policies. Addressing MEPs, and particularly the rapporteurs, at the right time can make a real difference on the coverage of issues that are of concern to rights and value based NGOs. More often than not rapporteurs welcome the expertise NGOs can deliver, which makes their reports more inclusive and broad in vision.

At the same time, the European Union is increasingly committed to the **concept of civil dialogue**, i.e. to have an active dialogue with organized civil society on policy issues. The European Convention reflects this commitment in its Draft Constitution Article I-46 on participatory democracy calling **for an open, transparent and regular dialogue to be established between all European institutions and civil society**. So far this principle has not been threatened during the IGC negotiations, even if the final Constitution is still not agreed. Civil society organizations need to start working on establishing transparent and democratic rules for a more structured civil dialogue now and the European election will be an important moment in assuring the support of future MEPs for civil dialogue and participatory democracy.

The Year 2004 will bring about a major change in the EU political environment: **10 new Member States** by 1 May; a **new Parliament** with the elections in June, a **new Commission** in November and **newly elected national governments** in Spain, Luxembourg, Greece and Poland. Many new faces to be briefed on environmental, social, development, and human rights concerns. The European Parliament's composition for example is braced for a major face-lift: According to Parliament insiders some two-thirds of the present 626 MEPs will go and there will be 162 new faces coming from the accession countries – **An overall of around 580 new MEPs!** And in some countries, Eurosceptics are better placed in the lists than Europhiles. Potentially, we have to expect an overall of some 150 MEPs who are rather skeptical about European integration as a whole.

There are three major issues that make the coming EP elections an important field of activity for rights and value based NGOs:

- 1) With the **Intergovernmental Conference on the Constitution** being "**suspended**" after the European Council in December 2003 - the Member States could not agree on the voting system in the Council proposed by the Convention - it will be of utmost importance to continue the work around the Constitution with the newly elected representatives, who might not be that aware of the EP's work during the Convention.
- 2) The new Parliamentarians will have to take into account the opinions of civil society in their constituency in all the different areas of their work – so it's time to raise awareness on the issues you are campaigning on and to ask the politicians what they propose to do in the areas of your concern. One of the transversal areas interesting all parts of civil society is the above-mentioned **civil dialogue**. It will be important to ask the candidates about their commitment to ensure this type of participation of civil society and how they

would like to shape it. To get in touch with civil society organizations during their electoral campaign and to listen to their claims and concerns is already a first step into a functioning dialogue in which national and European level can intersect – so you might want to remind them of their “duty” in this regard.

- 3) Finally, the four NGO sectors put forward concrete claims to ensure that Parliamentarians are aware of our concerns. You will find the concerns of each sector [in Part III](#) with **key questions that you could put to future MEPs**. The MEPs as the only directly elected representatives play a major role in general policy-making and European policies often have a direct influence on your constituencies. It is, thus, important to help MEPs with your expertise in certain areas, so that they have the tools, the knowledge, and the overview in order to input into reports and decisions in a way that protects, for example, fundamental human and social rights, global solidarity, and the environment. The more “friendly to your cause” MEPs are in the right EP committees, the greater are your chances to see improvement in those fields that really matter to millions of citizens. Tell your MEPs which committee you would like to see them in and how you will support their work.

General advice

- **Define your interest:** Be clear about your concerns and the role the European dimension plays for you. If necessary contact EU networks to find out more about the impact of European policy making in your area of work.
- **Provide a clear and sharp document with these concerns,** e.g. in form of a manifesto – you can use the different sector’s documents in [Part III](#).
- **Design a strategy** of the actions you might want to take. You find some suggestions further down – Take into account timing and resources of your organization and those of the candidates. Do not contact them too late or too close to the elections, but assure they have not forgotten about you by June.
- **Join forces** with other NGOs of your country to get more visibility and have a bigger impact on candidates / public opinion – and to economize your resources.
- **Make sure that candidates become aware of civil society** as a major player with political views representing organized citizens and constituencies and that they position themselves towards participation of civil society (civil dialogue) as well as towards your specific claims.
- **Try to establish “privileged contacts” with some candidates** – it is very important to have “advocates” of your cause later on that will sit in the right committees and that you can address to push your issues. It can be useful to do some research on the background of the candidates – it is obviously easier to address those familiar or in favour of your claims.

- **Get your members/citizens on board** – they decide on the political framework of the EU for the next five years.
- **Think about joining efforts with European networks** – you will profit from their expertise in contact with European institutions / the European Parliament and strategic / political information they provide, and you will at the same time be able to contribute valuable contacts and visibility of your particular concerns.
- **Keep records** on all your actions / meetings / hearings/ answers to letters: They will be important later on to remind elected MEPs of their promises during the electoral campaign.
- **Do not hesitate to contact the act4europe office for any information or advice you may need.**

Possible actions around the EP elections

1) Get to know the EP Groups' manifestos / National Parties' manifestos

The contact details in Part I (Political Groups) and in the Annex (part IV) will help you to get in touch with the parties you want to lobby. They will all have manifestos that reflect their views on European integration and their priorities. Skim them and compare them to your own visions and claims. Your strategy might be twofold:

- Contact those parties/candidates that do include some of your concerns in their programmes: **They might become important allies** once elected and you can remind them of the promises they gave.
- Contact those who do not pick up your concerns in order **to raise awareness** with those candidates.

2) Draft letters to candidates / current MEPs standing again

You will find in **Part III the major concerns** of the 4 sectors represented in the Civil Society Contact Group **and in Part IV the contacts of parties throughout Europe standing for the elections.** The focus of any letters or interviews should be on an official reaction from their side besides informing them of the European dimension of your interests. Make sure that the letters are short and concise – the average politician is rarely keen on reading many pages. But be able to provide more information for those that show interest.

Do not forget that civil society actors become more significant in the European political process. We represent many organized citizens and elected representatives cannot simply ignore our views. The EU is very keen on bringing the European project closer to its citizens. And that is where civil society can play a major role. So when you address the candidates remind them of the **importance of civil society representing the concerns of huge constituencies and of the need to bring the European project closer to its citizens.** The above-mentioned **civil dialogue is, thus, a key issue to be discussed with candidates.**

Make sure that the candidates give an answer to your letter. Call them or contact them again after a week or two. Every reaction can be used later on to establish friendly contact for the next 5 years - and to remind them of their promises. You will not be able to establish these contacts with all candidates – this is not necessary. But you can make sure that you get some **personal, “privileged” contacts with different parties**. It is very useful to have some “advocates” at hand, who appreciate a relationship of trust and expertise that can be useful to them.

Due to the high number of candidates it will be impossible to write individually to all of them. You could **concentrate on those candidates who are on the top of the lists and have the biggest chances of being elected. However, these candidates are not always the most approachable. It might be better to have a two-tier strategy of identifying important players and those further down who have a history of supporting and protection rights in the social, environmental, development, and human rights field.**

3) Meetings with candidates

A good way of creating lasting contacts is a meeting with candidates before the election, either individually or through hosting a larger event with a panel. If you have succeeded in organizing a meeting, use the **key issues** you have identified and be realistic on how much you can cover in one meeting. Find out about the topics the candidate is/might be most interested in and be clear and concise about your claims (don't let them side-track you away from your concerns). Some new MEPs might not be familiar with the role civil society can/should play in European politics or with the possibilities to act in favour of your issues. You might make suggestions (mostly to those who are open and supportive to your work) about the kind of committees you would like to see them in. For this, it is important to familiarize yourself sufficiently with how the EP works or to get information from your relevant EU networks on what they advice.

4) Organize events with candidates from different parties (hearings) – Get your members/citizens on board

It can be useful to organize **hearings with some major candidates** of your country/your constituency. Due to the poor turnouts at the last elections the candidates will likely be open to take part in such events as they will consider them as good opportunity to get in touch with the electorate. **Join forces with other partners** (NGOs) to prepare such a hearing and to ensure that your members/citizens get involved. Present briefly your concerns/claims and give the parliamentarians the possibility to talk about their priorities. A panel discussion of the candidates and the possibility of the public to address substantial questions to them can make the event a real contribution to the election campaign.

Make sure that your members get active and interested in these meetings. Both candidates and electorate will find this contact useful: the politicians can spread their “visions”, and your members can highlight their concerns and test whether the candidates represent them.

5) Media interest

Events with candidates can also be an important tool to attract media attention. In most countries media confines itself to reflecting a pessimistic view on European integration or to complaining about Brussels' bureaucracy. One can be skeptical about European integration – but the Parliament plays a major role and it makes no sense to contribute to citizens' indifference towards elections. A candidates' event combined with press releases on civil society's major concerns may emphasize European issues that are usually never reported, such as minority rights or pollution issues, and additionally transport a "positive" signal towards the importance of elections (without necessarily being Euro-enthusiastic at the same time).

III. The 4 sectors' concerns towards the Parliament

Environment



Environmental Manifesto from the Green 8 for the EU elections 2004: Key targets for the next 5 years²

Decisions concerning the environment are increasingly being made at the European level. This makes sense: polluted air and water does not respect borders, Europe's products are being used and eaten everywhere, industry insists on common standards throughout the Union.

Also, unlike in the field of foreign policy, where national governments hold sway, the European Parliament has a strong say in shaping environment policies and has, historically, been a keen advocate of consumer, health and environment issues. Europe now has one of the toughest legislations anywhere in the world on the labelling of genetically modified food, for example.

Anyone who cares about the environment and its impact on our health and quality of life should therefore look closely at the policies of candidates standing for election to the European Parliament on 10-13 June. We all have our own opinions about the European Union and the way it works, but the decisions of the European Parliament matter. The new Parliament (2004-2009) will get to decide, for example, on the following five key issues.

- Energy use in the EU is too high and inefficient, contributing to **climate change** that threatens the lives of millions and could have catastrophic effects on our economies. The EU needs to show leadership in international negotiations to curb climate change, must invest in energy efficiency and commit to producing 25% of all energy from renewable sources by 2020. We also need more green and effective transport technologies and to tackle the causes of high transport demand.
- Many **chemicals** used in cosmetics, household products, clothes and furniture are a threat to our health and the environment. The European Parliament will vote new laws on chemicals – these must be strengthened to ensure that products are free from the most hazardous chemicals.

² This is a short version. Please contact the Green 8 for more detailed information. See contact details and the end of this section.

- Global **biodiversity** is decreasing at an unprecedented rate, threatening habitats, forests, birds, animals and oceans. The Parliament needs to push for proper enforcement of existing EU legislation and prevent the EU from funding projects that harm nature in Europe and beyond. As a major buyer and importer of illegal timber, the EU must clean up its act by supporting new legislation to clamp down on forest criminals and their business allies, and set an international example.
- We want **agriculture** that protects biodiversity and supplies clean food. Agricultural policies must be reformed to favour sustainable land use, sound agricultural products policy and more equitable trade with developing countries. The contamination of nature and food by genetically modified organisms must be prevented, pesticide use reduced and water and soils protected. Provisions should be made to pay farmers who play a role in nature protection.
- The European Parliament must ensure the development of a fair **trading** system that defends stringent environmental rules and does not result in the overexploitation of natural resources. Rules must be developed that hold corporations accountable and liable for their environmental and social impacts.

What can I do?

Make sure your candidates know that the environment is a priority. What they decide in Europe will affect your everyday environment – and will have global impacts.

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The above challenges for the European Parliament are a selection from the *Environmental Manifesto for European Elections 2004* issued by the Green 8 (the 8 undersigning NGOs). The manifesto is available in several languages and more will be added: <http://www.eeb.org/Index.htm>

BirdLife International www.birdlife.net

Climate Network Europe (CAN) <http://www.climnet.org>

European Environmental Bureau (EEB) www.eeb.org

Friends of the Earth Europe www.foeeurope.org

Friends of Nature International www.nfi.at

Greenpeace European Unit <http://eu.greenpeace.org>

European Federation for Transport and Environment (T&E) www.t-e.eu

WWF European Policy Office www.panda.org/epo

Development



Confédération européenne des ONG
d'urgence et de développement

“A strong agenda for development co-operation in the new Europe”

The following text presents a civil society manifesto for the term of the new European Parliament agreed by the members of CONCORD, the European confederation of non-governmental organisations working in international development, emergency relief and development education. Millions of European citizens support the work of CONCORD's members. It constitutes a call for a civil society and inter-institutional partnership towards setting a development agenda for the new Europe.

The European Parliament arrives at a moment of great change both within and outside of the Union's borders:

- Enlargement will bring ten new member states into the Union; increasing the EU's size and role in the world. There is a risk that the Union will turn inwards and neglect its commitment to international development. There will be opportunities too, as new Member States bring experience in democratic political transition, humanitarian assistance and political relations with neighbouring countries troubled by conflict and poverty.
- Up-coming decisions on the EU Constitutional Treaty and world trade policy will shape the remit of EU policies and institutions with manifold implications for development. Current proposals risk marginalizing or subordinating development to a narrow commercial and security agenda.
- The EU must decide on its global role in the post September 11th world. With new priorities and evolving international alliances, other countries and regions are looking to Europe, a 'civilian power', to see where it stands.

The European Parliament has a vital role to play in strengthening and safeguarding the Union's commitment to development policy focused on poverty reduction, human rights and democracy. All new MEPs, the old and new Member States, have a role to play in keeping development high on the EU agenda. The Parliament committees tackling development, foreign affairs, security, the EC budget, trade, environment, agriculture and women's rights will be crucial partners for advocating pro-development EU reform.

This CONCORD manifesto offers a development perspective on the new Europe. It identifies three key objectives:

1. Clear priorities for EU development co-operation tackling Poverty, Human Rights and Democracy
2. Promoting policy coherence: Trade, Agriculture, Fisheries, Foreign and Security policies should strengthen, not undermine development commitments
3. Democratic Accountability: A strong political voice for Development Policy

Civil society organisations and NGOs working in international development, emergency relief and development education across the EU and accession countries are keen to work together with MEPs. Please do not hesitate to contact us for further information and to collaborate on public awareness or policy work.

Objective 1:

Setting clear priorities for EU development co-operation: Poverty Eradication, Human Rights and democracy

Global aid flows must more than double in order to meet the Millennium Development Goals and the EU should take the lead. Efficient and effective aid targets those who need it most. Yet the gap between EU policy commitments to poverty eradication, human rights and democracy and the reality of European Community aid flows is striking. MEPs can fight to reverse this disgraceful trend.

European Community aid is increasingly directed to middle-income countries in the 'Near Abroad' important in terms of trade or migration concerns. Insufficient political will and resources are invested into democratic development. In 2003, the Commission announced a new 250 million euro programme to fund anti-migration measures in third countries agreeing to sign readmission agreements – over two and half times the total European Initiative on Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) budget. In the absence of genuine participatory EC Country Strategy Paper processes in developing countries, the transport sector and budgetary support have dominated EU aid funding, rather than targeted spending on the basic needs of people living in poverty.³

Members of the European Parliament, especially those on the committees responsible for development, the European Community budget and foreign affairs, can be strong advocates for EU aid reform.

By using its power for budgetary matters, the European Parliament has a great role to play regarding the fulfilment of the European Union's commitments in favour of development cooperation:

- The annual EC budget and the new Financial Perspectives 2007-2013 should increase allocations for aid primarily targeted at poverty reduction and to low-income countries.
- Legal guarantees should be given in the decision on EDF budgetisation that the resources for ACP (African, Caribbean, and Pacific) countries will not diminish during the period covered by the Cotonou Agreement (until 2020).

³ Recent aid figures suggest that education and health represent only 6.3 per cent and 4.3 per cent respectively of total aid to African, Caribbean and Pacific countries, in the Cotonou Agreement. (<http://europa.eu.int/comm/development/cotonou/agreement>). Figures from most recent 9th European Development Fund (Source, Aprovev)

Objective 2:

Coherence of European Policies with Development Policy

More than two thirds of Europe's citizens believe that the EU contributes to the eradication of global poverty. In its co-operation with developing countries the Union has committed itself to pursue development policies and strategies based on the fight against poverty that promote the observance of Human Rights and which seek the achievement of the Millennium goals.

It is important to ensure that this remains a distinct objective. The elaboration of a European Constitution as well as the modification of the Commission's structure that are discussed currently indicated that there is a risk for development co-operation to be considered as a sub-policy or a tool of the External Relations. Other concerns are raised about the impact of Trade, Agriculture and Common Foreign Security Policy on the development policies.

Distinct Commissioner for development co-operation and Humanitarian Aid

In the next Commission, development co-operation and Humanitarian Aid should be represented by a Commissioner in order to reflect the expectations of the European citizens. He/she should have full voting power, a distinct mandate and a portfolio allowing her/him to represent development and humanitarian interests in front of the Council, the Parliament as the International Institutions. It should allow him/her to co-operate with the EU delegations on development aspects and to promote the coherence of EU policies with development objectives when they have an impact on developing countries. She/he should have responsibility for an administrative structure that oversees the entire project cycle from the elaboration of development policies to the development aspects of the programming and the implementation of development projects.

Coherence of Trade Policy with Development Policy

EU trade policy promotes free trade when it suits European interests, rather than fair trade for developing countries. Within the European institutions, the balance of decision-making power places the export potential of EU-domiciled corporations firmly over development policy. Decisions on trade policy are taken by the opaque "Article 133 Committee" – comprised of trade and industry specialists with no seat at the table for development experts. The European Parliament can help promote trade policy which supports poverty reduction and sustainable development.

Coherence of Common Agricultural and Fisheries Policy with Development Policy

40% of the 100 billion euro annual European Community budget is spent on the Common Agricultural Policy, even though farmers constitute just 4% of the Union's working population. European cows are allocated average daily subsidies amounting to 2 US dollars (1.60 euro) whereas half the global population lives on less than a dollar a day. The European Parliament can advocate reform of EU agricultural subsidies, which cause 'dumping' of artificially cheap products that wreck the sustainable livelihoods of communities in developing countries. The principle of 'coherence' in the EU Treaty is explicitly pro-development:

EU agricultural policy should be reformed and made coherent with EU commitments to sustainable rural development in Europe and in the developing world.⁴

Coherence of Common Foreign and Security and Common Security and Defence Policies with Development Policy

Coherence should be a key goal for the European Union foreign policy.⁵ As a consequence of the post September 11 2001 global security agenda, discussion on EC aid in the draft EU Constitution has been dominated by hard security issues. Development institutions, policies and instruments must not become marginalized or subordinated in the new Europe: coherence should not equal co-option. Both the Common Foreign and Security Policy and the Common Security and Defence Policy should reflect a coherent, holistic and global European security strategy that prioritises human rights and democracy and focuses political attention and resources on the 'forgotten crises' in developing countries. The Union should use its influence to leverage a greater voice and greater vote for developing country governments in multilateral institutions. Another Rwanda or Srebrenica must not be allowed to happen, the actions of the new Europe must be equal to its global responsibilities.

Objective 3:

Democratic Accountability: A strong political voice for development

The reforms of EU external relations and development co-operation will depend on their democratisation. Accountability to stakeholders and beneficiaries should be central to the workings of the EU, including the Union's relations with developing countries. This requires procedural, institutional and budgetary reforms to promote transparency and participation in decision-making, the creation of democratic spaces for citizens to actively participate, and the strengthening of the role of the European Parliament.

EU delegations in developing countries should be given the political direction and resources to ensure effective participation of local communities in the decisions on EU policy which impact on their livelihoods and communities.

Human and financial resources to support civil society engagement in development education, policy dialogue and implementation are woefully inadequate. At EU institutional level, the political space for development must be strengthened and safeguarded.

⁴ Article 130U (Article 177 in the Treaty of Amsterdam) is the first Article with relation to development co-operation in the Treaty of Maastricht. It sets out the general development objectives for the Community [CEC/CEC, 1992:61]: "*The Community shall take account of the objectives referred to in Article 130 U in the policies that it implements which are likely to affect developing countries.*"

⁵ The OECD provides a helpful analysis of the tools required for policy coherence: political leadership, strategic policy framework, central overview and coordination capacity, clear definition and good analysis, mechanisms to detect and resolve policy conflicts, reconciliation between policy priorities and budgetary imperatives, monitoring mechanisms and a conducive administrative culture.

Human Rights

The Human Rights and Democracy NGO network

The human rights challenge for the new European Parliament

A message to candidates and political parties from NGOs working in the fields of human rights, democratization and conflict prevention⁶

As a community of values, the European Union is firmly based on the principles of democracy, human rights and the rule of law. These principles should guide and govern all EU policies and actions to ensure protection of fundamental rights within the EU and to promote human rights worldwide.

It is the role of the European Parliament to hold the Council and the Commission to account for the way in which they conduct the EU's human rights policies, domestically as well as globally.

Human rights in the European Union

The EU and its member states are bound to uphold international human rights, humanitarian and refugee law. Racism and xenophobia, discrimination, police brutality, poverty and social exclusion are still an everyday reality also in Europe, and EU member states face significant questions about their own human rights performance.

The EU's aspiration to establish an area of freedom, security and justice in Europe has generated a range of legislation and concrete action in the fields of judicial and police cooperation, and asylum and immigration, and the EP will see its powers of co-decision increase in the area of Justice and Home Affairs. At the same time however, overriding concerns for security since 2001 have put civil liberties as well as refugee and migrant protection regimes at risk.

The enlargement of the EU adds new significance to the protection of human rights within the EU. The adoption of the Charter of Fundamental Rights and its inclusion in the proposed new constitution anchors the EU's commitment more firmly, but it does not in itself ensure effective observance.

The European Parliament should ensure that:

⁶ The Human Rights and Democracy NGO Network includes Amnesty International, Christian Solidarity Worldwide, Coalition for the International Criminal Court, Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network, Human Rights Watch, Humanist Committee on Human Rights, International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), International Federation of Christian Associations for the Abolition of Torture (FIACAT), International Federation Terre des Hommes, International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT), Open Society Institute, Search for Common Ground, World Organization against Torture (OMCT), World Vision

- ***Effective mechanisms of monitoring and accountability are put in place to ensure the highest possible standards of human rights observance within the EU.***
- ***The EU's common asylum system is firmly grounded in principles of international refugee and human rights law.***
- ***The Charter of Fundamental Rights becomes legally binding by guaranteeing the rights of all individuals without discrimination and being fully justiciable by the European Court of Justice and by national courts.***

Human rights in the world

The EU is committed to pursuing the protection and realization of human rights and democratic values worldwide. To deliver on this commitment, a coherent foreign policy is required in which member states act in line with a Common Foreign and Security Policy that is guided by international law, and that is consistent with Community action in the fields of external assistance and cooperation with third countries. However, at a time when it is facing major changes, the EU is finding it increasingly difficult to pursue a strong and effective human rights agenda.

To put human rights policies into practice requires the EU to effectively apply its human rights instruments, including the human rights clause in agreements with third countries and the guidelines on death penalty, torture, human rights dialogues, and children and armed conflict. At the same time, human rights and conflict prevention must be mainstreamed across all aspects of external policy, while in the pursuit of the 'war on terror' any measure taken to increase security must be built on human rights guarantees, including for human rights defenders. The EU's evolving security strategy should include the control of small arms, and make the rights dimension of prevention more concrete, paying particular attention to those most vulnerable including children and women.

As an increasingly important international actor, the EU is in a position to make a crucial contribution not only to breaking down barriers of poverty and social injustice, which are inextricably linked to advancing human rights and democratization, but also to developing a more equitable world order through responsible global governance. This requires a comprehensive strategy on sustainable development that encompasses human rights, economic, environmental and social dimensions.

The European Parliament should ensure that:

- ***The EU regains the collective strength of purpose that is required to pursue human rights goals effectively and coherently at the core of all its external policies.***
- ***Effective mechanisms are set in place to monitor and advance the fulfillment of the human rights commitments in the EU's agreements with third countries.***
- ***Systems of mainstreaming human rights are applied across all areas of the EU's external relations, using human rights impact assessment.***
- ***Rights protection is placed at the heart of conflict prevention and resolution.***

Into a new European Parliament legislature for human rights

The European Parliament has championed human rights throughout its existence. While in most areas affecting human rights its competence has been political rather than formal, in its 1999-2004 legislature it has begun to develop a clearer focus on its role as the body that holds the Council and the Commission to account for the way in which they conduct the EU's human rights policies. However, it has lacked the structure and the resources necessary to address these questions more effectively.

To fulfil its responsibilities, the European Parliament in the forthcoming legislature will have to strengthen its capacity to bring more coherence, transparency and accountability to the EU's human rights endeavour. That way, it can help to narrow the gap between aspirations and political realities, and to enhance the democratic legitimacy and force of all of the EU's actions to advance human rights at home and in the world.

The European Parliament should strengthen its structure and capacity on human rights:

- ***Structured cooperation is necessary between the committees dealing with human rights (Foreign Affairs, Citizens' Rights, Development, Women's Rights) to foster coherence of the EU's human rights policies.***
- ***The re-established subcommittee on human rights of the Foreign Affairs Committee must act as the focal point for human rights across all of the EU's external relations.***
- ***The administration must be strengthened to support the EP's human rights effort in all areas.***

Hoping for an extension and deepening of the dialogue between the European Parliament and civil society, human rights, democratization and conflict prevention NGOs are ready to engage fully with the new European Parliament and all its members to pursue the twin goals of making the EU a more effective force for change in the world and to ensure observance of fundamental rights at home.

Contacts for the Human Rights and Democracy NGO Network:

Amnesty International amnesty-eu@aieu.be

FIDH fidh.bruxelles@skynet.be

Open Society Institute osi-brussels@osi-eu.org

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT ELECTIONS 2004: WHAT DO SOCIAL NGOS WANT FROM MEPS?

The Platform of European Social NGOs (Social Platform) was established in 1995 and brings together nearly 40 European non-governmental organisations, federations and networks which are working to build an inclusive society and promote the social dimension of the European Union.

The members of the Social Platform represent thousands of organisations, associations and voluntary groups at local, regional, national and European level representing the interests of a wide range of civil society. These include organisations of women, older people, people with disabilities, people who are unemployed, people affected by poverty, gay and lesbian people, young people, children and families. Member organisations also include those campaigning on issues such as social justice, homelessness, life-long learning, health and reproductive rights and racism.

More information is available at www.socialplatform.org

2004 – 2009: What are the main political challenges?

The next 5 years are a decisive time for the future of Europe, when one of the key challenges is showing to citizens how the European Union can work for them. MEPs have a key role to play as citizens' representatives in ensuring that we build a Union which puts the interests of its people first.

Here are some ideas from social NGOs working at the EU level for how you could test candidates' commitment to a socially just and inclusive Europe – what sort of policies or issues could you ask questions about, and what kind of replies might you expect.

These are just a few ideas – some Social Platform members have written their own priorities for the EU elections, which will give you more detailed information on particular areas of concern.

Building a 'Social Europe'

The Social Platform asks MEPs to promote a vision of a Europe, which is about more than just economic growth. Economic growth alone does not automatically lead to a healthy society, and the EU should balance its economic policies with policies to fight social exclusion and discrimination.

Whether or not you feel that social policies as such should be primarily dealt with at national level, it is important to engage with what is going on in EU policy-making. EU policies in all areas (for example competition and internal market policies) have effects on the social field. EU governments also often come to informal agreement about the best type of policies in different areas, such as social protection. NGOs

need to be aware of what is being said and done at EU level, and push for their MEPs to promote an EU which works to ensure that its policies have positive social effects.

Q: What kind of Europe will you promote?

Q: Do you support the European Social Model – combining a strong economy with a high level of social rights and social protection?

Q: Are you committed to the EU achieving the Lisbon goals?

In terms of policies over the next 5 years, particular issues you could ask questions on include:

- Promoting the **social elements of the Lisbon strategy**. In 2000, EU leaders agreed in Lisbon on an EU strategy for 2000 - 2010 *“to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion”*. This includes policies to fight social exclusion. However, 4 years on, it is clear that many leaders are shying away from their responsibility to implement the social parts of the strategy. The Lisbon Strategy will have its mid-term review in Spring 2005, and MEPs have a key role to play in holding governments to account for their action to **ensure that Europe does not push for economic growth which comes at any cost**, but rather growth which is inclusive and is accompanied by policies to ensure that all benefit from economic growth.
- MEPs should promote headline **EU-wide targets for the reduction of poverty and social exclusion** and appropriate sub-targets.
- The EU has made significant progress over the last 5 years on agreeing binding legislation prohibiting discrimination in employment on the basis of age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, or disability, and prohibiting racial discrimination both in employment and other areas of life including education, social protection and so on. However, there is still much work to be done on this and **MEPs should promote further anti-discrimination legislation** for all areas of life.
- MEPs should actively support further moves to progress **strong gender equality policies**. The newly elected European Parliament should also adopt rules for an **equal representation of women and men as chairpersons of its own parliamentary committees** and in the Parliament’s internal governing bodies.
- MEPs should work for a strong political stance of the Parliament regarding issues of **migration and integration to promote rights-based policies**, which support the full integration of migrants. In a climate where governments increasingly take a security-based approach to migration, the Parliament has a key role to play in speaking out for the respect of human rights.
- MEPs should promote a **fair reform of social protection systems** (pension reform; health care and long-term care for the elderly; social inclusion) that will guarantee adequate protection.
- MEPs should promote **policies, which support sustainable development**, based on the three pillars of mutually-reinforcing social, environmental and eco-

conomic policies. This includes that governments should make a commitment to investing in sustainable public goods and services.

- Private companies have a key role to play in achieving a socially just society. MEPs should take the lead by promoting binding EU rules on **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)**, in particular rules for companies to declare their CSR policy/principles and report annually on how they integrate them across the company
- MEPs should engage with the debate on Services of General Interest and **re-mind policy-makers that social services should be taken into account** when designing rules. Competition and internal market rules should be designed to be compatible with the tasks of social services.

MEPs can work to promote policies which have a positive impact on the social field even if they do not sit on the Committee, which deals directly with employment and social policies. For example, MEPs who sit on the Committee dealing with economic and financial affairs can insist that impact of economic policies on social inclusion must be taken into account. As social exclusion is a multi-dimensional problem, many policy areas affect it – promoting social inclusion is also about quality health care, lifelong learning opportunities, culture opportunities and access to essential services (for example, transport, electricity etc..). Anti-discrimination must also be promoted in these fields.

MEPs can also support issues by joining cross-party Intergroups working on different issues, asking targeted questions to the European Commission and European Council about areas of policy or procedure, promoting resolutions, providing quality information to constituents and so on.

Money

- MEPs should work to ensure that the future **Structural Funds programmes** 2007 – 2012 are driven by the EU's social inclusion strategy, and are accessible to non-governmental organizations involved in the fight against poverty and exclusion.
- Pushing for a significant proportion of the **EU budget to be allocated to achieving social goals**, including to social inclusion and anti-discrimination action programmes, and to promoting solidarity between poorer and richer parts of the European Union. This is especially crucial during the first year of the new MEPs' term in 2005, when the EU will agree its budgetary priorities for the period 2007 – 2013, the so-called "financial perspectives". The Parliament has equal budgetary power with the Council so can make a real impact on the EU financial planning as well as the annual budgets.

Q: Will you promote the allocation of significant budgets for social goals in the agreement of the financial perspectives?

Democracy and Participation

- **Ensuring citizens have a say in EU policy-making**
MEPs have a key role to play in promoting openness and transparency in decision-making, and demanding that citizens have access to information which allows them to participate in decision-making.
- **Giving a voice to civil society**
MEPs can do a lot to especially ensure that civil society (representing millions of citizens all over Europe) is able to have its voice heard in European policy-making. MEPs can agree to meet with civil society organisations, take seriously what NGOs and other civil society organisations are saying, host meetings organised by NGOs, and promote the views of NGOs in Committee meetings and other meetings. They can also ensure support for NGOs in budgetary decisions.

Q: How will you make Europe more democratic?

Q: Will you support the participation of representative groups including NGOs in policy-making, through listening to NGOs and supporting funding for NGOs?

Processes

- Ensuring that different EU policies promote the same goals. The Social Platform argues for more **'joined-up policy-making'** in the EU, which means especially ensuring that economic policies are consistent with social and environmental goals. MEPs should push for more political commitment from the European Council to joined-up policy-making, and ask the European Commission to work on developing better processes to ensure this. The European Parliament should also consider how to ensure good **policy coordination between its different committees**.

Q: What will you do to improve coherence in policy-making?

Nb: Please see individual Social Platform members' election briefings/manifestos for more detailed demands in different areas.

The Civil Society Contact Group

Web Site: www.act4europe.org

1. The Social Platform

The Social Platform (Platform of European Social NGOs) is an association of 39 European nongovernmental organizations, federations and networks working in the social sector and promoting the interests of a wide spectrum of European civil society. The Platform includes associations of organizations representing women, elderly people, people with disabilities, the unemployed, people living in poverty, gays, lesbians, young people, children and families. The member organizations also include NGOs providing social services, and those working on social issues such as social justice, homelessness, life-long learning, health and racism.

Contact www.socialplatform.org

2. The Green 8

The informal platform of environmental NGOs, called the Green Eight, is composed of the European Environmental Bureau, Birdlife International (European Community Office), Climate Network Europe, European Federation for Transport and Environment, Friends of the Earth Europe, Greenpeace Europe, International Friends of Nature, and WWF (European Policy Office). The Green 8 are represented in the Contact Group by the European Environmental Bureau, the largest federation of environmental citizens organizations in Europe.

Contact: www.eeb.org

3. The Human Rights and Democracy NGO network

The human rights network includes, amongst others, the following organizations: Amnesty International, Christian Solidarity Worldwide, Coalition for the International Criminal Court, Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network, Human Rights Watch, Humanist Committee on Human Rights, International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), International Federation of Christian Associations for the Abolition of Torture (FIACAT), International Federation Terre des Hommes, International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT), Open Society Institute, Search for Common Ground, World Organization against Torture (OMCT), and World Vision.

Contact: www.aieu.be

4. CONCORD

CONCORD is the European NGO confederation for Relief and Development. It consists of 10 international networks and 18 national associations from the European Member States and the candidate countries representing together about 1200 NGOs. It aims to co-ordinate the political actions of NGOs for Relief and Development at European level and to stimulate exchanges of information among NGOs but also with the European institutions. Its members are the 15 National Platforms of the European Member States, the National platforms from Malta, Slovakia and the Czech Republic and 10 Networks: ActionAid Alliance, Aprovev, Caritas Europa, CIDSE, Eurodad, EuronAid, Eurostep, IPPF, Solidar, Terre des Hommes.

Contact: www.concordeurope.org

5. The European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC)

At present, the ETUC has in its membership 74 National Trade Union Confederations from a total of 34 European countries, as well as 11 European industry federations, making a total of 60 million members. Other trade union structures such as Eurocadres (the Council of European Professional and Managerial Staff) and EFREP/FERPA (European Federation of Retired and Elderly Persons) operate under the auspices of the ETUC. In addition, the ETUC coordinates the activities of the 39 ITUCs (Interregional Trade Union Councils), which organize trade union cooperation at a cross-border level. The ETUC is recognized by the European Union, by the Council of Europe and by EFTA as the only representative cross-sectoral trade union organization at European level.

Contact: www.etuc.org

IV. Party Contacts in Europe

see Appendix

<http://act4europe.horus.be/module/FileLib/ElectionsPartIV-Partycontacts.pdf>