

Newropeans initial 16 Proposals for rendering the European Union more democratic and for meeting the challenges of the XXIst^o Century

These first proposals are the result of a unique debate in Europe, which directly associated over 10000 citizens in 100 towns and 25 countries in the development of Newropeans programme for the 2009 elections. In the coming four years, Newropeans will continue the process of conversing with citizens in order to build a complete programme covering all the major questions which touch all 500 million Europeans, in a way that systematically associates citizens and the actors involved in the development, application and evaluation of EU policies that touch them.

A new beginning for the EU on a democratic foundation

1. Ensure that the principle of equality of all European citizens before the law is maintained by eliminating the legal immunity of European officials.

- In order to respect the fundamental principle of democracy in Europe
- To avoid creating a caste of « untouchables » who run the EU

The life-long legal immunity of officials of the European institutions ([cf. Protocol on the privileges and immunities of the European Communities of 8 April 1965, Art.12a](#)) constitutes a flagrant example of inequality before the law for a category of European citizens. There is no reason for it given that the EU groups 27 democracies where the independence of the legal system is guaranteed. On the contrary, it should be abolished as it maintains a disconnect between the officials running the EU and other citizens.

Linking words and deeds, Newropeans will not accept any European officials among its active members as long as this immunity is not eliminated.

2. Ratify systematically the main changes of community treaties, and in particular enlargements by trans-European referenda.

- To allow citizens to decide the main future orientations of the EU
- to avoid having an elite, disconnected from the citizens and peoples, impose its choices.

These trans-European referenda will use a double majority in order to ensure democratic respect of minorities: more than 50% of the votes cast across the whole of the EU and more than 50% of the Member States voting in favour would be necessary to secure passage of a proposal.

3. Bring the European institutions closer to the citizens geographically, by decentralising them

- To move the EU closer to its citizens and ground the European project in the political and historical reality of our continent, as well as to make the community system more comprehensible
- To avoid a centralised Europe, incompatible with democracy

It is not possible to make 500 millions citizens feel closer to Brussels, Luxembourg and Strasbourg. To reduce the growing gap between the European institutions and the people, and notably using the technologies of the XXIst Century (Internet, High-Speed trains, low-cost airlines, ...), over the next two decades it will be necessary to change radically the system of capitals that was inherited from the 1950s to help citizens take ownership of the project. Each country having chosen its "European town" (often the capital) the new European institutional network will gather a first "Euroring" of institutions in a circumference of 500km around Brussels, taking account of the specificity and advantages of each selected town : Parliament (Brussels), Court of Justice (The Hague), European Government (London), Joint European Administration (Paris), Central Bank (Frankfurt), Court of Accounts (Luxembourg). A second "Euroring" will gather together all the other institutions and community agencies in the town retained by each member State. This veritable decentralization will also offer the European institutions access to a wider source of qualified human resources than are available in their current locations.

4. Respect linguistic diversity of the EU, a fundamental condition for democracy in the EU, whilst ensuring the efficiency of its functioning by the creation of a clear linguistic regime

- To ensure that each person in the EU can speak their language, whilst at the same time preparing the European Union for multilingualism, so as to permit the EU to operate effectively.
- To avoid monolingualism, an enemy of European diversity, and also linguistic chaos, an obstacle to the effective functioning of the EU.

The question of language is central to ensure both the respect of European diversity, which is a precondition for democracy in the EU, and the effective functioning of the community's institutions, a precondition for EU efficiency. This debate should be public, as it concerns the cultural heart of our collective future. Newropeans proposes a pragmatic solution integrating the two constraints of democracy and efficiency in the so-called « 2-5-25 » system: two internal working languages for the institutions (English and French), five languages for political debate which can also serve as relay languages for further translation, with at least one language per large linguistic family (e.g. English, French German, Polish and Spanish), and all EU languages for communications with the citizen.

Making the functioning of the EU more efficient and democratic

5. Create a genuine European Government

1. The institutional system of the European Union has evolved over decades. But courageous reforms to adapt the system to today's challenges still need to be undertaken. For instance, the European Parliament gained more competences with recent Treaty revisions, (...)

6. Ground the European budget on real own resources for the EU, raised in a transparent manner and being subject to regular control

- To increase the political efficiency, democratic control, and citizens buy-in of the community budget
- To finish with the obsessive process of seeing how much money each and every nation paid in and received back from the budget, which renders impossible any legitimate and efficient decision on the contributions and expenditures, and which is in any case against the very spirit of the European project.

A European company and income tax should replace the system of national contributions to the European budget. Based on the democratic principle of "no taxation without representation", European financial and budgetary perspectives will be voted on by each new European legislature, with the necessary agreement of the European Government. This implies the need to change the time frame of financial and budgetary perspectives from 7 to 5 years so as to synchronise it with European Parliament elections. The current redistributive objectives are maintained, with the addition of a new element destined to stimulate growth, notably in the areas of research, innovation and education. All budgetary and financial decisions must be taken with respect for the principles of democracy and transparency, notably by means of public debates in the European Parliament. The European Court of Accounts and the network of national Courts of Account have to be reinforced to ensure an efficient control of the use of European Funds.

7. Ensure that the European Parliament is 50% composed of representatives of national (or regional lists), and 50% from trans-European lists; Offer each citizen two votes in the European elections

- To reinforce the democratic legitimacy of the European Parliament and to allow the expression of the double identity of each European citizen: European and national/regional
- To invert the trend of growing abstention in European elections, even though citizens seem ever more interested in Europe, as shown in the referenda.

In order to play an important political role, the European Parliament must manage to integrate within itself the many different components of Europeans citizens' identity. Each citizen has a vote to elect 50% of the Parliament on a trans-European list, and another vote to elect 50% of the Parliament on a national (or regional) list.

8. Create a procedure for evaluating the political system and community administration every decade, independent of the executive, legislative and judicial institutions.

- To ensure the regular adaptation of the EU's institutions to an environment that is in constant evolution, and to ensure a democratic and transparent process
- To avoid "institutional sclerosis", which leads to crises like the one of 2005. As of the next European election, and every ten years, a "convention" should be organised of national and European elected representatives as well as of experts coming from all parts of the EU. This should include at least 30% of under-40s. It is intended that the convention evaluate the state of the European Union and propose to the institutions the necessary structural adaptations of the treaties and functioning of the EU.

9. Promote internal mobility within the European Institutions

- To provide the EU institutions with public servants who are just as mobile and open as the European society they have to serve.
- To avoid the creation of closed "castes" which are unable to comprehend the society which surrounds them.

Careers in any single institution should be limited to a maximum of 10 years, and a vast programme to promote mobility between regional, national and European administrations should be organised, as well as encouraging exchange between the public and private sectors. It is important to give preference to recruitment of European officials having at least 5 years of prior professional experience, so as to ensure they can provide a maximum value added.

Define the place of Europe in the world, and of common European projects

10. Promote a Neighbourhood Policy of the European Union (Privileged Neighbour Status)

- To strengthen political and economic partnerships with the concerned countries
- To prevent widening social and economic inequalities within the EU and chaos on its borders. Economic prosperity and social cohesion is one of the central tenets of the European project.

The European Union has to be able to deliver them to its citizens to guarantee their well-being and prevent extremist and populist uprisings. Only through a Privileged Neighbour Status policy in the years to come, will the EU be able to promote a strong and healthy political and economic relationship with its neighbour countries such as Russia, Ukraine, Byelorussia, Turkey, Lebanon, Israel, Palestine, Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco.

11. Increasing the efficacy of the EU's action in the world by reinforcing the role of the ministry of foreign affairs and structuring a clear and objective European foreign policy

- To increase the EU's influence and efficacy in the world, while preserving the diversity and richness of its member states' bilateral relations
- To prevent an incoherent action and image of the EU in world system. During the last decade, European citizens have clearly demonstrated they want a coherent, strong and influent Europe, capable of contributing to a more balanced and multilateral system, namely during the Iraqi crisis.

The definition of the European role in the world should be structured around three key principles: a key role for a reformed United Nations system, adapted to the XXIst century reality; primacy of the international law over the national interests; refusal of the destabilising concept of «preventive war». For the sake of coherence and internal coordination, the roles of its Ministry of Common Foreign Affairs and of its President of the European Government should be clearly defined.

12. Develop a common immigration policy, pursued at national level and aiming at the immigrants' full integration in the European society

Europeans have emigrated over the whole planet during the last few centuries. Europe has received external contributions from countless cultures and people during its history. Therefore, migratory processes are part of Europe's common history. They do not constitute a historical exception but a natural phenomenon of interchanges and relations between human communities. (...)

13. Elaborate a common European policy against organised crime and trans-national criminality, namely a specialised European police and judicial network

- To develop internal and external credibility of the EU through the promotion of transparency
- To stop the spreading belief that directly relates increasing criminality with the new members of the European Union

A common market without frontiers in an enlarged Union, terrorism and new information and communication technologies, such as the internet, demand from the EU an ever more efficient strategy for fighting against an organised trans-national criminality, increasingly expert and professionalised. The EU needs to create specialised police and judicial forces, based on the wide national and already existing ones to face the associated growing risks and build internal and external confidence.

14. Develop profound and wide initiatives in the domain of education and life-long training.

Newropeans supports a pro-active 'European Policy in the field of Education', but opposes anything which could resemble a 'European Education Policy'.

1. The EU is facing a crisis today, because its citizens are not trained to control the European dimension of our society (...)

15. Elaborate an annual social report for the President of the EU, destined to evaluate the social status of the Union (health, education, employment, poverty), based on pre-defined and objective indicators

- To promote the feeling of inclusiveness and belonging towards the EU by all citizens
- To prevent an European construction with no social criteria

The EU already has a number of convergence criteria in the economic, monetary, fiscal and juridical domains. In parallel, the Euro has an enormous effect in all areas of the social sphere; thus, it is of prime importance to integrate a social dimension to this attempt of continental convergence. Each year, the executive should present to the European Parliament a very objective study of the State of the Union in social matters, together with proposals directed to economic convergence and social progress.

16. Mutual reinforcement of political integration, research and competitiveness: common dreams, decisions and entrepreneurship

- To reinforce the economic and technological capabilities of the Union and preparing it to the 21st century challenges
- To prevent the EU from becoming a non-influential and weak actor in the global system
Political integration and prosperity in the long-term go hand in hand with the vision and ambition citizens have of their own society.

Common projects are an essential part of that future. Europe needs a set of initiatives that mutually promote political integration, research and competitiveness at the Union's level: a) common dreams and technology - launching an European space programme for a human permanent occupation of the moon, preferably in collaboration with other regions of the world; b) mobility, economic growth and technology - building wide-ranging transport networks (Fast-trains, cheap aerial routes, motorways); c) common democracy and technology - automatic translation programmes (to make accessible translation hardware/software) and European wide electronic vote and electronic access to public services (e-government); d) joint European entrepreneurship - put in place a call for trans-european applications (minimum of three countries) for the joint organisation of Olympic Games, World Cups or International/Universal Exhibitions.