

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

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Committee on Foreign Affairs

2008/2224(INI)

12.2.2009

OPINION

of the Committee on Foreign Affairs

for the Committee on Culture and Education

on active dialogue with citizens on Europe
(2008/2224(INI))

Rapporteur: Maria Badia i Cutchet

PA_NonLeg

SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Foreign Affairs calls on the Committee on Culture and Education, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions in its motion for a resolution:

1. Welcomes the Joint Declaration entitled “Communicating Europe in Partnership”, signed on 22 October 2008, with its clear objectives for reaching out to the citizens of Europe through an improvement of EU communication on the part of the European Parliament, the Council, the Commission and the Member States;
2. Notes that, according to recent polls, a large majority of Europeans are in favour of Europe speaking with one voice on matters of foreign policy; highlights the fact that a statement to that effect was included at the request of European citizens in the open letter/recommendations from the participants at the concluding conference of the six "Plan D" citizens' projects on 9 December 2007¹;
3. Stresses the importance of considering citizens' opinions on Europe as a global player, taking into account in particular the increasingly prominent role of the European Parliament in this issue; therefore encourages the involvement of MEPs and members of the Council in the "Plan D" visits by Members of the Commission, as they play an important role in reaching out to national parliaments, civil society, business and union leaders and regional and local authorities in Member States; calls on the Commission and European Parliament representations in Member States to improve cooperation when it comes to consulting citizens, sharing information, knowledge and ideas about the EU, and providing opportunities for voters to meet MEPs elected in different countries and EU officials;
4. Encourages the Commission, therefore to examine the possibility of introducing, within a time-frame of four to six years, a mechanism for the general consultation of EU citizens, organised on a regular basis, on essential issues pertaining to the EU's activities, as a way of bringing Europe closer to its citizens;
5. Is pleased that the world at large is showing an ever greater interest in the European project, and that the EU and its citizens are also becoming more aware of the advantages of sharing their supranational experience with other countries and regions, especially with the EU's neighbours; therefore calls on the Commission to develop, through its Delegations in third countries, ways of reaching out to those countries' citizens and informing them about opportunities in the European Union, e.g. about media and other forms of culture, education, language learning and mobility or exchange programmes such as Erasmus Mundus;
6. Stresses the importance of introducing European politics and history into the school curricula of each Member State so as to strengthen European values, and of developing the European Studies departments within university programmes; calls on the

¹ See Point 17: "In a global world, it makes sense for the EU to take greater responsibility than today in the fields of **military action, foreign aid and diplomatic relations**. The EU should be able to speak with one voice on a global level to defend its values."

Commission to provide financial support for the promotion of these projects;

7. Calls on the Commission to provide financial support for projects aimed at the promotion of EU ideas; considers that these programmes should be tailored towards students in secondary and tertiary education who can engage local communities (villages and municipalities) and increase locals' familiarity with the values of the European Communities;
8. Notes that, particularly in the context of the increase in the number of third-country nationals in the EU and the emergence of multicultural societies, to which they have also contributed, greater efforts should be made to provide for the integration of immigrants into the EU, giving them concrete access to information about what EU citizenship entails by, for example, strengthening partnerships between different levels of government (local, regional and national) and non-governmental actors (e.g. employers, civil society, migrants' associations, the media and non-governmental organisations supporting migrants); considers that successful integration will support the further development of a multicultural European consciousness based on tolerance, dialogue and equality;
9. Calls on the Commission to launch local, small-scale communication campaigns with the involvement of local actors, and to promote activities enabling citizens to be better informed about immigrants' countries of origin and, equally, to better inform immigrants of their rights and duties as European citizens, as the most effective and meaningful ways of achieving these communication goals, and also to continue with the efforts made in the context of the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	11.2.2009
Result of final vote	+: 64 -: 7 0: 0
Members present for the final vote	Sir Robert Atkins, Angelika Beer, Bastiaan Belder, André Brie, Colm Burke, Véronique De Keyser, Giorgos Dimitrakopoulos, Michael Gahler, Jas Gawronski, Georgios Georgiou, Alfred Gomolka, Richard Howitt, Jana Hybášková, Anna Ibrisagic, Ioannis Kasoulides, Metin Kazak, Maria Eleni Koppa, Helmut Kuhne, Joost Lagendijk, Willy Meyer Pleite, Francisco José Millán Mon, Pasqualina Napoletano, Annemie Neyts-Uyttebroeck, Raimon Obiols i Germà, Vural Öger, Janusz Onyszkiewicz, Ria Oomen-Ruijten, Ioan Mircea Paşcu, João de Deus Pinheiro, Hubert Pirker, Samuli Pohjamo, Pierre Pribetich, Raül Romeva i Rueda, Libor Rouček, Christian Rovsing, Flaviu Călin Rus, José Ignacio Salafranca Sánchez-Neyra, Jacek Saryusz-Wolski, György Schöpflin, Marek Siwiec, Hannes Swoboda, Konrad Szymański, Charles Tannock, Inese Vaidere, Kristian Vigenin, Andrzej Wielowieyski, Jan Marinus Wiersma, Zbigniew Zaleski, Josef Zieleniec
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	Alexandra Dobolyi, Árpád Duka-Zólyomi, James Elles, Martí Grau i Segú, Milan Horáček, Aurelio Juri, Evgeni Kirilov, Alexander Graf Lambsdorff, Marios Matsakis, Yiannakis Matsis, Erik Meijer, Nickolay Mladenov, Alexandru Nazare, Doris Pack, Athanasios Pafilis, Rihards Pīks, Jean Spautz
Substitute(s) under Rule 178(2) present for the final vote	Emine Bozkurt, Ioannis Gklavakis, José Albino Silva Peneda, Antonios Trakatellis, Nikolaos Vakalis