

# EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

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*Committee on Regional Development*

**2008/2224(INI)**

13.2.2009

## **OPINION**

of the Committee on Regional Development

for the Committee on Culture and Education

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

Rapporteur: Emmanouil Angelakas

PA\_NonLeg

## SUGGESTIONS

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

1. Considers the regions to be the most appropriate centres for promoting the European ideal and local and regional authorities to be the most competent bodies for promoting dialogue with citizens since they observe their daily lives at close range; expresses its satisfaction in that regard that the EU has taken measures to decentralise communication policy;
2. Calls for local authorities to provide better information about aid received from the European Union; stresses also that commitment on the part of local and regional elected representatives is essential for developing information provision and training; welcomes in this regard the creation of an Erasmus programme for local and regional elected representatives;
3. Stresses that the EU's cohesion policy is a basis for European integration and social solidarity; considers, therefore, that citizens should be made aware of the endeavours of Community policy and its specific effects on their daily lives, highlighting the contribution of the EU and the benefits of the common European project;
4. Underlines that the involvement of partners in the preparation and implementation of operational programmes, according to Article 11 of the General Regulation on Structural Funds 2007-2013, contributes significantly to promoting EU cohesion policy and bringing it closer to the citizens; stresses that these partners have a unique opportunity to see on a first-hand basis the real issues that are of core concern to citizens; calls, therefore, on the Commission to ensure that the partnership principle is correctly implemented at a national, regional and local level; highlights the importance for national and regional authorities to make use of the existing financial possibilities provided by the ESF, in order to improve the skills of these partners, especially as regards training;
5. Supports the efforts of the Committee of the Regions to strengthen consultation at regional level and to include regional networks and key local and regional players in that process in order to encourage debate at grass-roots level that takes into account their opinions and interests;
6. Proposes the creation of a permanent, interactive communication system between European institutions and citizens with frequent campaigns of a local and regional nature by the EU, with the assistance of the regional media and the active participation of civil society, NGOs, chambers of commerce, trade union and professional organisations;
7. Stresses the need, in the context of the forthcoming European elections, for information at local and regional level for citizens, and particularly for young people and first-time voters; in a more general context, stresses the importance of the involvement of MEPs, in cooperation with local and regional elected officials, in the consultation process with citizens in their regions, given that they are the voice of the public in the EU;

8. Stresses the importance and value of the consultation process as an effective tool in empowering citizens by enabling them to directly input into the policy process at EU level, calls on the Commission to take further steps to disseminate information in time on future EU consultations via the media and other appropriate forums at national, regional and local levels;
9. Hopes that in parallel with the political party campaigns, the MEPs will be closely involved on the ground in the Union's institutional campaign;
10. Stresses the particular importance of creating cohesive communication links with targeted content both between the EU and the regions with particular characteristics and between the EU and particular social groups;
11. Notes that a European Year on Volunteering would be an ideal opportunity for the EU Institutions to connect with citizens, points out that there are over 100 million volunteers across the EU, calls on the Commission to prepare the ground for 2011 to be declared as the European Year by submitting an appropriate legislative proposal to this effect as soon as possible;
12. Notes the significant role structural funds has played in fostering cross border co-operation through community projects and programmes, highlights that this has encouraged the development of active citizenship and participatory democracy, calls on the Commission to continue to support and work in partnership with such projects and programmes;
13. Endorses the idea of creating a European Open University (EOU), provided that it has strong ties with the regions of the Member States, with the aim of facilitating training for, and information, communication, interactivity and links between all citizens, particularly young people across the regions.
14. Points out that the European Parliament intergroups are playing their full part as a citizens' intermediary, an instrument which genuinely links the political sphere and civil society.

## RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

<b>Date adopted</b>	12.2.2009
<b>Result of final vote</b>	+: 40 -: 0 0: 4
<b>Members present for the final vote</b>	Emmanouil Angelakas, Stavros Arnaoutakis, Elspeth Attwooll, Rolf Berend, Victor Boştinaru, Wolfgang Bulfon, Giorgio Carollo, Bairbre de Brún, Gerardo Galeote, Iratxe García Pérez, Monica Giuntini, Ambroise Guellec, Pedro Guerreiro, Gábor Harangozó, Mieczysław Edmund Janowski, Gisela Kallenbach, Evgeni Kirilov, Miloš Koterec, Constanze Angela Krehl, Florencio Luque Aguilar, Jamila Madeira, Iosif Matula, Miroslav Mikolášik, Jan Olbrycht, Maria Petre, Markus Pieper, Giovanni Robusti, Wojciech Roszkowski, Bernard Soulage, Catherine Stihler, Margie Sudre, Lambert van Nistelrooij, Oldřich Vlasák
<b>Substitute(s) present for the final vote</b>	Emanuel Jardim Fernandes, Stanisław Jałowiecki, Zita Pleštinská, Samuli Pohjamo, Christa Prets, Flaviu Călin Rus, Richard Seeber, László Surján, Iuliu Winkler
<b>Substitute(s) under Rule 178(2) present for the final vote</b>	Sepp Kusstatscher, Toine Manders