



Campaign: More Democracy in Europe!

Why: European citizens feel increasingly powerless about European politics; their sense of identification with Europe and their trust in the European institutions have reached a new low (a majority of people in the largest member states no longer trust the EU institutions¹). At the same time, politicians are afflicted with a paralysing distrust of the citizens and a growing sense of aimlessness - not knowing what to do next and having no vision for the future. European politics is currently a dividing force rather than a uniting one. This only serves to strengthen nationalistic tendencies. If Europe is to have a future, there needs to be a wide public debate about European politics and policies in relation to economics, finance, culture, sustainability and democracy. This is the only way we can make Europe *our Europe* - a Europe of the citizens.

That is why we are launching a campaign for a more democratic Europe. Its aims are as follows:

- * to have an open debate on the future of the EU, on its aims and values, its powers, its institutions and procedures; and
- * to establish the right of citizens to decide for themselves democratically on the future of the EU - and in general on important European matters.

In order to achieve these goals we propose that a new European Convention be held, as is required by Art. 48 of the Lisbon Treaty for any proposed revision of the treaty. Our campaign for a more democratic Europe is aimed at a new European Convention consisting of elected representatives from all Member States and given sufficient time (2-3 years) to develop a proposal for a new European Constitution. The final proposal would then be put to the people of Europe in a Europe-wide referendum. This would ensure that the Convention works on behalf of the citizens and that civil society gets involved in the process at an early stage. Ultimately, the final decision lies with the people. This is the only way in which a wide public debate can about our shared Europe and its future policies and development can arise. This is the only way for citizens to become shapers rather than spectators of the European project. Only if the citizens are directly involved in the decisions that determine the future shape of Europe will a more democratic Europe arise that is closer to its citizens.

Campaign goal: The campaign aims to reach the largest possible number of citizens and decision-makers in Europe. The central message of the campaign is: Europe depends on us! We need a new debate about the future of Europe, which can only be instigated, organised, and taken to legally binding outcomes (through approval by the citizens in referendums) by a democratic European Convention. The campaign also need to convey enthusiasm and the conviction that *we are the ones who can and must shape the future of Europe*.

How: for this campaign Democracy International will serve as platform, initiator and coordinator. However, the actual roll-out will will not be possible without the collaboration of our partners across Europe. We will set the theme and make it easily communicable

¹ <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/apr/24/trust-eu-falls-record-low>

through print, online and video materials as well as regular public relations and media work. We will direct the campaign together with our partner organisations and finally present the results in an effective way so as to influence the political decision-making process. We will aim throughout to employ a style of communication that will enable all parties that are interested in a more democratic Europe to connect to and agree with our campaign, regardless of whether they are individuals or organisations, Eurosceptics or Europhiles.

Operational goals (still being discussed): in collaboration with a widespread alliance of supporters we wish to convince a majority of the candidates for the new European Parliament - which will be elected in May 2014 - of the necessity of a new Convention. The new Parliament can then call for a Convention. We also want to collect signatures and draw attention to the campaign - for both the public and the media - by staging a variety of public "guerilla" events timed to take place simultaneously in a large number of European capitals.

We will naturally also make use of the potential and the trustworthiness of our partner organisations. Some ideas, for example, are to organise a "March of Young Europeans" to Brussels, to get certain groups - such as academics, youth organisations, artists etc. - to issue demands and declarations.

Current status:

We are currently developing the campaign strategy together with partners who are experienced in politics and campaigning, and with a professional and experienced marketing agency. We are working on finding the best qualified partners who can take the campaign with us onto the European stage and into each of the Member States. At the same time, we are engaged in discussions on fundraising to ensure that the campaign is adequately financed.

Time frame:

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| Campaign launch: | December 2013 |
| Intensive phase: | March-June 2014 |
| Campaign close: | Beginning of 2015 |

We call upon ...

the European Parliament, the Council, the Commission and the governments of the Member States, according to Article 48 of the Lisbon Treaty, to convene a Convention to review and revise the existing Treaty. It would be charged with drafting the best possible proposals for securing stability and solidarity and for improving democracy and citizen's participation in Europe.

This Convention must

- have the greatest possible democratic legitimacy

- reach its decisions in plenum according to democratic rules
- have adequate time for serious and thorough deliberation
- operate in a transparent manner, with its meetings open to the public, and incorporate proposals from civil society
- present its proposals not only to the heads of state and government, but also to all the citizens of Europe and its Member States for final approval by referendum.

All European citizens shall be able to decide directly on the Convention's proposals for the reshaping of our common Europe.