

Newsletter: PARALYSED EU INSTITUTIONS

29 November 2005

Content:

- o) EDITORIAL: FORWARD ME
 - 1) INSIDE BRUSSELS - PARALYSED EU INSTITUTIONS
 - 2) OUTSIDE BRUSSELS - SOFIA AND BERLIN
 - 3) NEW CONVENTION
 - 4) BOOK ABOUT DIRECT DEMOCRACY
 - 5) EVALUATION: REFERENDUMS IN FRANCE AND THE NETHERLANDS
 - 6) POPULAR INITIATIVE IN AMSTERDAM
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o) EDITORIAL: FORWARD ME

by Ronald Pabst

On several occasions I have talked to Belgian activists about a book written by Jos Verhulst. His words inspired them to start working for direct democracy. Now we are translating and publishing this book in six languages. We are happy to present it from the beginning of 2006 on. I am currently proofreading the German version - and I can already understand the enthusiasm of our Belgians friends.

This month's newsletter covers interesting events inside and outside Brussels as well as our proposal how to proceed with the European integration. Furthermore, we have expanded our series of monitor reports. You find two new papers evaluating the referendums in France and the Netherlands.

We finish with a report about the introduction of the Popular Initiative in Amsterdam.

This is the tenth newsletter of democracy international.

Please help us to get more readers. Simply forward this mail to people who are interested in questions of (European) democracy, write a few lines about your connection to us and ask them to subscribe at:

www.democracy-international.org/newsletter.html

Thank you

1) INSIDE BRUSSELS - PARALYSED EU INSTITUTIONS

This time Lars Bosselmann writes about a meeting held in the European Economic and Social Committee: The European Citizens' Initiative got a lot of support.

www.democracy-international.org/insidebrussels-nr2.html

2) OUTSIDE BRUSSELS - SOFIA AND BERLIN

In cooperation with other partners we are organising a series of meetings about direct democracy in Europe.

We are preparing a conference in Berlin on January 27 & 28, 2006:

“Democratising Europe - the role of direct democracy”

Subsequent to it we will organize the next meeting of democracy international on January 29.

You will get soon more information...

report about the first conference in Sofia

democracy-international.org/sofia-conference.html

3) NEW CONVENTION

We propose a democratic procedure that should lead to a result accepted by a majority of the Europeans. We will spread an appeal to parliamentarians all over Europe.

Please join this discussion. Send us your feedback, sign it and

spread the idea in your country. It is currently available in three languages.

www.democracy-international.org/new-convention.html

4) BOOK ABOUT DIRECT DEMOCRACY

Around a century ago, most countries in the Western world introduced universal voting rights. Since then, the opportunities for citizens to take part in the political decision-making process have basically never been further extended. But society has definitely evolved considerably during that time.

Our new up-to-date book pleads for a major democratic step forward. It will be available from beginning of 2006 on. We will sell the paper edition for 10 Euro (including post an package to anywhere in Europe) and offer a free online edition.

www.democracy-international.org/book.html

5) EVALUATION: REFERENDUMS IN FRANCE AND THE NETHERLANDS

Our monitoring reports evaluate the fairness of the process in Spain, France and the Netherlands using internationally recognized standards for such referendums.

www.democracy-international.org/papers.html

6) POPULAR INITIATIVE IN AMSTERDAM

In 2001 a group of 7 young inhabitants of Amsterdam decided to start a campaign under the banner "Amsterdams Initiatief" (AI) to improve the possibilities for citizens to have a direct say in local politics.

They succeeded: the improved law went into effect in October 2004.

Now, one year later, one of the initiators tells us the story.

Arjen Nijeboer draws a disenchanting conclusion.

www.democracy-international.org/amsterdamsinitatief.html

Ronald Pabst / Carsten Berg

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