



COMMISSIE VAN DE EUROPESE GEMEENSCHAPPEN

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**MEDEDELING VAN DE COMMISSIE HET EUROPEES PARLEMENT, AAN DE
RAAD, HET EUROPEES ECONOMISCH EN SOCIAAL COMITÉ EN HET COMITÉ
VAN DE REGIO'S**

**Debate Europe: voortbouwen op de ervaringen van Plan D voor
Democratie, Dialoog en Debat**

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INLEIDING

In juni 2005 riep de Europese Raad op tot een periode van bezinning over de wijze waarop de hervorming van de instellingen moest worden voortgezet¹. Naar aanleiding van deze oproep heeft de Europese Commissie op 13 oktober 2005 “Plan D voor Dialoog, Democratie en Debat”² goedgekeurd. Dit was bedoeld om de lidstaten aan te moedigen met steun van de EU-instellingen een breed openbaar debat over de toekomst van de Europese Unie te organiseren waarbij burgers, maatschappelijke organisaties, sociale partners, nationale parlementen en de politieke partijen zouden worden betrokken.

Het belangrijkste doel van Plan D was “beter luisteren”, “beter uitleggen” en “going local” om te zorgen voor betrokkenheid van de burgers. Gestreefd werd naar een soort raadpleging over de toekomst van Europa die complementair was aan de raadplegingen van belanghebbenden en het grote publiek over specifieke beleidsvoorstellen.

De ruggengraat van Plan D werd gevormd door zes transnationale projecten met Europese burgers, die door maatschappelijke organisaties werden beheerd (bijlage 1). Deze projecten dienden om innovatieve manieren van raadpleging uit te proberen en mensen uit de verschillende nationale publieke ruimten in staat te stellen als Europese burgers met elkaar in contact te komen en over de toekomst van de EU te debatteren.

In juni 2006 erkende de Europese Raad de bijdrage van de Commissie aan de periode van bezinning en merkte op dat het vaste voornemen van de EU om democratischer, transparanter en doeltreffender te worden verder reikte dan de bezinningsperiode. Ook merkte hij op dat “een intensievere dialoog met de burger [...] passende middelen en inzet [vereist]”³ en deed de aanbeveling de periode van bezinning tot in 2007 te verlengen.

De Commissie heeft deze oproep in november 2006 beantwoord door in de informatieve nota “Plan D — Wider and Deeper Debate on Europe”⁴ lering uit het eerste jaar te trekken. De Commissie bevestigde haar verbintenissen ten aanzien van de acties in het kader van Plan D en besloot medefinanciering te verlenen aan een nieuwe reeks projecten van maatschappelijke organisaties, waarbij bijzondere nadruk werd gelegd op jongeren en vrouwen, en op “going local”.

De periode van bezinning liep af in juni 2007, toen de Europese Raad overeenstemming bereikte over een mandaat voor een nieuwe intergouvernementele conferentie (IGC) om het institutionele kader van de Unie te hervormen. De IGC werd in oktober afgesloten en in december 2007 werd in Lissabon het “Hervormingsverdrag” ondertekend. Deze gebeurtenissen luidden een nieuwe fase in en het nieuwe verdrag zou vóór de Europese verkiezingen in juni 2009 moeten worden geratificeerd. De Europese Raad benadrukte het cruciale belang van meer en betere communicatie met de burgers door alomvattende

¹ Verklaring van de staatshoofden en regeringsleiders van de lidstaten van de Europese Unie over de ratificatie van het Verdrag tot vaststelling van een grondwet voor Europa, Europese Raad 16-17 juni 2005, vierde alinea.

² COM(2005) 494 van 13.10.2005.

³ Conclusies van het voorzitterschap, Europese Raad, 15-16 juni 2005, punt 3.

⁴ SEC(2006) 1553.

informatie over de Europese Unie te verschaffen en hen in een permanente dialoog te betrekken⁵.

In oktober 2007 heeft de Commissie de mededeling “Communiceren over Europa in partnerschap”⁶ goedgekeurd. De algemene doelstelling van die mededeling was de samenhang en de synergieën tussen de activiteiten van de verschillende EU-instellingen en de lidstaten te versterken en zo de burgers betere toegang tot het EU-beleid op Europees, nationaal en lokaal niveau te verlenen en een beter begrip van het effect ervan te verschaffen.

In deze mededeling wordt ingegaan op de toekomst van de aanpak van Plan D, die van 2005 tot 2007 is gevolgd en gebaseerd was op beter luisteren, beter uitleggen en “going local”. Deze aanpak wordt in 2008 en 2009 tijdens het ratificatieproces van het Verdrag van Lissabon in licht gewijzigde vorm voortgezet. Daarbij wordt terdege rekening gehouden met de komende Europese verkiezingen.

Hiermee wordt beoogd bij te dragen tot een van de centrale doelstellingen van het communicatiebeleid van de Commissie: burgers mondiger maken door hun toegang tot informatie te geven, zodat zij met kennis van zaken over EU-aangelegenheden kunnen debatteren.

1. BEOORDELING VAN PLAN D: RESULTATEN EN ERVARINGEN

Om de ontwikkeling van een Europese publieke ruimte te bevorderen probeerde Plan D bij te dragen tot een tweerichtingsdialoog tussen de EU-instellingen en de burgers van de Unie, waarbij er zowel rechtstreeks als virtueel contact was. Deze aanpak bleek bijzonder nuttig om de discussie over de toekomst van Europa op gang te brengen nadat de Fransen en de Nederlanders het Verdrag tot vaststelling van een grondwet voor Europa hadden verworpen.

Plan D heeft, naast andere door de Commissie en andere EU-instellingen en -organen beheerde programma's, een belangrijke rol gespeeld bij het verkennen van de innovatieve mogelijkheden voor maatschappelijke organisaties om burgers uit alle lagen van de bevolking bij het debat over de toekomst van Europa te betrekken door een combinatie van:

- virtuele en rechtstreekse communicatie,
- raadplegingen en opiniepeilingen in de vorm van debatten,
- nationale, grensoverschrijdende en pan-Europese raadplegingen.

Op de website “Debate Europe”⁷ werden internetdebatten gevoerd. Er werd intensief gebruikgemaakt van de vertegenwoordigingen van de Commissie en de Europa Direct-centra. Bezoeken van leden van de Commissie in het kader van Plan D speelden een belangrijke rol bij het contact met nationale parlementen, maatschappelijke organisaties, bestuurders van ondernemingen en vakbonden, en regionale en lokale autoriteiten in de lidstaten. Hiermee werd het belang van persoonlijke contacten en van een EU “met een menselijk gezicht” bevestigd.

⁵ SI(2007) 500.

⁶ COM(2007) 568 van 3.10.2007.

⁷ http://ec.europa.eu/commission_barroso/wallstrom/communicating/conference/dialogue/index_en.htm.

De Commissie verleende in het kader van Plan D in het bijzonder medefinanciering aan projecten van maatschappelijke organisaties. Er werden willekeurige burgers gekozen, die elkaar in nationaal en grensoverschrijdend verband ontmoetten. Zij kregen de beschikking over relevante informatie (bv. documentatie over de te bespreken onderwerpen, die door een representatief panel van leden van het Europees Parlement werd gescreend) en over middelen om de taalbarrière te overwinnen, zodat zij tijdens de raadpleging hun eigen taal konden spreken. Hierdoor konden zij wezenlijke discussies met besluitvormers voeren en suggesties voor de toekomst van de EU aandragen. In totaal hebben zo'n 40 000 mensen fysiek deelgenomen aan de zes transnationale projecten van Plan D, terwijl het aantal deelnemers aan de internetdebatten naar schatting in de honderdduizenden loopt. De maatschappelijke organisaties die de projecten beheerden, fungeerden als doorgeefluik en verspreidden, in verschillende stadia van de projecten, de standpunten van de burgers via hun netwerken naar de politiek en de media.

De projecten van maatschappelijke organisaties in het kader van plan D toonden aan dat participerende democratie een nuttige aanvulling kan vormen op de representatieve democratie. Zij bevestigden de reactie van deelnemers aan andersoortige programma's voor burgers dat raadplegingsevenementen voor hen zowel een persoonlijke als een politieke ervaring inhouden. De standpunten van de burgers bleken, ongeacht hun mening over de EU, in de loop van de raadplegingen aanzienlijk te veranderen. Aan het eind van het proces wilden zij graag een reactie krijgen van de besluitvormers, in het bijzonder de EU-instellingen en -organen.

Daarom heeft de Commissie in december 2007 een slotconferentie voor de zes Plan D-projecten voor burgers gehouden, onder de naam "De toekomst van Europa – een agenda voor de burger". Voor het eerst kregen burgers die in het kader van participerende democratie aan uiteenlopende transnationale projecten hadden deelgenomen, op pan-Europees niveau de kans hun wensen samen te voegen en rechtstreeks aan besluitvormers voor te leggen.

De hieruit voortvloeiende aanbevelingen werden opgenomen in een open brief aan de staatshoofden en regeringsleiders van de EU, de nationale parlementen, de EU-instellingen en de Europese politieke partijen, die voorafgaand aan de Europese Raad van december werd gepubliceerd (bijlage 2). Hierin werden de Europese politieke partijen ertoe opgeroepen de aanbevelingen in hun programma's op te nemen en in de aanloop van de verkiezingen voor het Europees Parlement in 2009 met de burgers te bespreken. Bovendien werden de staatshoofden en regeringsleiders van de EU verzocht de ontwikkeling van actief Europees burgerschap op alle bestuursniveaus aan te moedigen.

Uit de burgerprojecten bleek dat dit op verschillende manieren kan gebeuren. De volgende mogelijkheden werden uitgetoetst:

- een Europese debatwebsite, gekoppeld aan een netwerk van nationale subsites en gecombineerd met lokale, nationale en Europese debatevenementen;
- een meertalige, bijzonder interactieve website waarvan de inhoud door focusgroepen in verschillende EU-lidstaten wordt bepaald en aan de hand van de reacties tijdens workshops met de doelgroep wordt aangepast;
- nationale raadplegingen over dezelfde onderwerpen in alle lidstaten, die ongeveer gelijktijdig plaatsvinden en een Europese synthese opleveren;
- een pan-Europese opiniepeiling in debatvorm, waarbij een aselechte steekproef van de bevolking drie dagen bijeenkwam en een rechtstreeks debat voerde;

- lokale debatevenementen in verschillende EU-lidstaten, gecombineerd met opiniepeilingen en video-opnamen van standpunten van burgers.

Deze projecten toonden aan dat de ontwikkeling van participerende democratie op het gebied van EU-vraagstukken op lokaal, regionaal, nationaal en grensoverschrijdend niveau niet alleen logistiek haalbaar is, maar dat hierbij ook de kwaliteit kan worden gewaarborgd.

Inhoudelijk bleek er soms, bijvoorbeeld op het gebied van sociale zaken, onderwijs en diplomatie/defensie, een kloof te zijn tussen de verwachtingen van burgers en de feitelijke bevoegdheden van de EU. Door aan de raadplegingen deel te nemen raakten mensen vertrouwer met het besluitvormingsproces van de EU. Aan het eind van de raadpleging hadden zij er een beter beeld van hoe besluitvormers kunnen worden beïnvloed en hoe de kloof tussen beleidsmakers en burgers in de toekomst kan worden verkleind.

Uit de projecten kunnen ook interessante lessen worden getrokken wat betreft planning, selectie van deelnemers, opleiding van gespreksleiders, de logistiek van een grensoverschrijdend en meertalig debat en het soort informatie en deskundigheid dat vereist is om burgers uit alle lagen van de bevolking in staat te stellen met kennis van zaken een debat over Europese aangelegenheden te voeren. Met name bij raadplegingen waaraan belanghebbende leken en beleidsmakers deelnemen, moet ook worden gezorgd voor eenvoudige toegang tot wetenschappelijk advies en expertise.

2. HET VERVOLG: “DEBATE EUROPE”

De eerste fase van Plan D was vooral gericht op “debat en dialoog”. Bij het vervolg op Plan D zal een volgende stap in het proces worden gezet en zal de nadruk komen te liggen op de D van “democratie”. Burgers zullen beter in staat worden gesteld hun wensen rechtstreeks aan besluitvormers voor te leggen en tijdens het proces beter gebruik te maken van de media. Daarom wordt deze nieuwe fase “Debate Europe” genoemd, naar de speciale Plan D-website van de Commissie.

Debate Europe omvat de volgende stappen:

1. de uitkomsten van de door maatschappelijke organisaties gehouden burgerraadplegingen aan politieke besluitvormers overbrengen. De conclusies die de burgers hebben getrokken, zullen door henzelf worden gebundeld en worden aan gekozen volksvertegenwoordigers, politieke partijen en stichtingen gezonden. Hoogtepunt wordt een debat tussen burgers en politici over de in de burgerplatforms gedane voorstellen. Bij dit proces zal Debate Europe profiteren van de nieuwe Europese politieke en institutionele context, waaronder de nieuwe verordening betreffende politieke partijen en stichtingen op Europees niveau⁸;
2. zorgen voor nauwe samenwerking en, waar mogelijk, gezamenlijk optreden van de EU-instellingen en -organen teneinde het effect van hun inspanningen om actief Europees burgerschap te bevorderen zo groot mogelijk te maken (burgerfora; communicatiestrategieën van het Europees Parlement in de aanloop naar de verkiezingen van 2009 en Agora-debatten met maatschappelijke organisaties; en

⁸ Verordening (EG) nr. 1524/2007 van het Europees Parlement en de Raad van 18 december 2007.

initiatieven van het Comité van de Regio's en het Europees Economisch en Sociaal Comité);

3. zorgen voor een hefboomwerking voor bestaande EU-initiatieven, waaronder programma's van de Commissie ter bevordering van actief burgerschap, zoals het programma "Europa voor de burger", het Europees Fonds voor de integratie van onderdanen van derde landen, programma's voor sociale cohesie en armoedebestrijding, andere eenmalige initiatieven in verband met het Europees Jaar van de interculturele dialoog (2008) en het Europees Jaar van creativiteit en innovatie, de voorbereidende actie eParticipation en bijbehorende activiteiten en het initiatief e-insluiting. Hierdoor zal Debate Europe een impuls geven aan de pogingen van de Commissie om de toegevoegde waarde van EU-beleid aan burgers uit te leggen (bv. succesverhalen over de interne markt, roamingtarieven, goedkope vliegreizen, overbrugging van de kloof in regionale ontwikkeling, milieubescherming en strijd tegen klimaatverandering);
4. doorgaan met andere succesvolle Plan D-acties (internetdebatten, waarmee EU-ambtenaren en burgers nader tot elkaar worden gebracht; samenwerking tussen voorlichtingsbureaus van de Commissie en het Europees Parlement, gebruik van EU-informatienetwerken in het kader van "going local").

2.1. Debatten van burgers koppelen aan politieke vertegenwoordigende instanties

Alom bestaat de wens om de kloof tussen de politiek op nationaal en Europees niveau te overbruggen. De Europese politieke partijen moeten worden gesteund in hun pogingen deel te nemen aan de debatten in de nationale publieke ruimte van de verschillende lidstaten. In het bijzonder moeten tijdens de Europese verkiezingscampagnes Europese vraagstukken voor het voetlicht worden gebracht en moeten de burgers worden gewezen op de gevolgen voor hun dagelijks leven van de politieke keuzes die zij op Europees niveau maken.

Debate Europe zal als katalysator fungeren en de lopende initiatieven van de Commissie ter overbrugging van genoemde kloof versterken. Het zal medefinanciering verlenen aan een pan-Europees burgersraadplegingsproject dat wordt beheerd door maatschappelijke organisaties in samenwerking met denktanks, onderzoeksorganisaties en universiteiten, politieke partijen en stichtingen. Ook zal het acties op nationaal en regionaal niveau bevorderen die burgers uit alle lagen van de bevolking in staat stellen te debatteren, hun standpunten te bundelen en met besluitvormers te bespreken, en de media in te schakelen.

Het zal profiteren van de nieuwe EU-verordening betreffende politieke partijen en stichtingen, een van de praktische resultaten van de eerste fase van Plan D. De verordening vergroot het werkkterrein van Europese politieke partijen en steunt de ontwikkeling van Europese politieke stichtingen, waarvoor een belangrijke rol is weggelegd omdat zij burgers bij een echte, permanente politieke dialoog met kennis van zaken zullen betrekken.

In 2007 hebben deze stichtingen bij de Commissie actieplannen ingediend voor de ontwikkeling van een reeks proefprojecten in 2008: voorlichting van burgers over de komende Europese verkiezingen door opleidingssessies, gerichte communicatieacties, websites, brochures en de vorming van netwerken met nationale stichtingen en denktanks. Vanaf september 2008 zullen de politieke stichtingen op permanente basis subsidie ontvangen.

Debate Europe zal deze inspanningen aanvullen door de politieke stichtingen uit te nodigen aan de burgerraadplegingen van maatschappelijke organisatie bij te dragen.

2.2. Verbetering van de samenwerking met het Europees Parlement

Bij de Plan D-conferentie “De toekomst van Europa — een agenda voor de burger” in december 2007 bleek dat de EU-instellingen meer kunnen bereiken wanneer zij hun *krachten bundelen* en *samen* aan dialoogevenementen met burgers deelnemen. Hierdoor kunnen zij het hele spectrum van de EU-democratie laten zien en kunnen burgers meer inzicht krijgen in het besluitvormingsproces van de EU. Deze vorm van interinstitutionele samenwerking wordt verwerkt in de projecten van Debate Europe op Europees, nationaal en regionaal niveau.

In zijn communicatiestrategie voor de verkiezingen roept het Europees Parlement op tot nauwe samenwerking tussen de EU-instellingen. Debate Europe zal hieraan een bijdrage leveren. Om actief Europees burgerschap te kunnen bevorderen, is samenwerking - niet alleen met het Europees Parlement maar ook met het Comité van de Regio's en het Europees Economisch en Sociaal Comité - namelijk cruciaal. Alle instellingen en organen hebben aanzienlijke ervaring opgedaan met de organisatie van burgerfora.

De Commissie staat klaar om samen te werken met aanstaande EU-voorzitters die burgertoppen willen organiseren waaraan verschillende EU-instellingen en -organen deelnemen, en zo een platform creëren waar Europese besluitvormers kunnen vernemen hoe burgers tegen concrete vraagstukken aankijken.

2.3. Synergie tussen programma's van de Commissie creëren

Debate Europe vormt een aanvulling op andere programma's van de Commissie ter bevordering van actief Europees burgerschap en streeft naar synergie met deze programma's. De programma's van Debate Europe zullen zich onderscheiden door hun interinstitutionele, politieke en mediadimensie: de raadplegingsevenementen op regionaal, nationaal en pan-Europees niveau zullen leiden tot een openbaar debat met kennis van zaken tussen burgers en besluitvormers van de lidstaten en alle EU-instellingen.

Een van de voorwaarden van de oproepen tot het indienen van voorstellen voor Debate Europe zal zijn dat de geselecteerde projecten rekening moeten houden met de algemene beleidsinspanningen van de Commissie om actief Europees burgerschap te bevorderen, in het bijzonder:

- het programma “Europa voor de burger”, dat actief Europees burgerschap propageert door steun te verlenen aan zeer uiteenlopende partijen (plaatselijke autoriteiten, maatschappelijke organisaties, bedrijfsorganisaties, consumentenverenigingen, burgers), zodat zij op uiteenlopende manieren samen kunnen optreden, debatteren, discussiëren en netwerken kunnen vormen. De vorm van deze samenwerking kan zowel traditioneel (jumelageactiviteiten, transnationale projecten van maatschappelijke organisaties) als innovatief (bv. burgerpanels) zijn;
- het Europees Jaar van de interculturele dialoog in 2008, waarbij alle EU-instellingen en -organen betrokken zijn, en het Europees Jaar van creativiteit en innovatie in 2009;
- de Europese politieke stichtingen en partijen, die met steun van de Gemeenschap proberen de komende Europese verkiezingen bij de burgers onder de aandacht te brengen;

- het Europees Fonds voor de integratie van onderdanen van derde landen. Voor het integratieproces van immigranten bestaan er hechte partnerschappen tussen verschillende overheidsniveaus en niet-gouvernementele spelers als werkgevers, vakbonden, religieuze organisaties, maatschappelijke organisaties, migrantenverenigingen, media en ngo's die migranten ondersteunen;
- de voorbereidende actie eParticipation, gericht op vergroting van de betrokkenheid van burgers bij het wetgevings- en besluitvormingsproces op EU-niveau met behulp van nieuwe technologie. Er wordt al een aantal proeven gedaan met nieuwe vormen van interactie tussen burgers en de Europese instellingen;
- de onderzoeksactiviteiten en flankerende initiatieven op het gebied van bestuur en burgerschap (werkprogramma sociale en menswetenschappen) en publieke betrokkenheid bij wetenschap (werkprogramma wetenschap in de maatschappij) die uit het zevende kaderprogramma voor onderzoek worden gefinancierd⁹.

2.4. Verder ontwikkelen van andere initiatieven van Plan D

De acties van Debate Europe zullen worden afgestemd op lopende initiatieven in de lidstaten, die veelal nuttige aanknopingspunten voor interinstitutionele samenwerking bieden. Het betreft onder meer:

- proefinformatienetwerken (PIN's): de contracten voor deze netwerken, waarin Europese, nationale en regionale parlementariërs, journalisten en andere Europese opinieleiders informatie, kennis en ideeën over de EU kunnen uitwisselen, zijn al gesloten. De PIN's zullen het Europese debat dichterbij de nationale parlementen brengen. Met behulp van internet, andere onlinehulpmiddelen en vergaderingen zullen zij "ideeënnetwerken" opzetten en politici en media in contact brengen met innovatieve projecten van maatschappelijke organisaties;
- Europese publieke ruimten: de vertegenwoordigingen van de Commissie en de voorlichtingsbureaus van het Europees Parlement in Madrid, Tallinn en Dublin hebben samen Europese publieke ruimten opgezet waar tentoonstellingen, debatten, conferenties en opleidingssessies over EU-aangelegenheden kunnen worden gehouden. Overwogen wordt om dit proefproject uit te breiden tot andere hoofdsteden, te beginnen met Rome, Londen, Kopenhagen en Berlijn;
- burgerfora: het Europees Parlement, het Europees Economisch en Sociaal Comité en het Comité van de Regio's organiseren burgerfora in de lidstaten. Debate Europe zal leden van de verschillende EU-instellingen en -organen aanmoedigen met elkaar te overleggen en gezamenlijk aan dergelijke fora deel te nemen volgens de Plan D-methode van "Europese rondetafels voor democratie"¹⁰;

⁹ Besluit nr. 1982/2006/EG van het Europees Parlement en de Raad; Beschikkingen 2006/971/EG en 2006/974/EG van de Raad.

¹⁰ COM(2005) 494, punt 4.1.5.

- bezoeken aan de lidstaten: de bezoeken van commissarissen aan de lidstaten in het kader van Plan D hebben hen in contact gebracht met de nationale parlementen, regionale en lokale autoriteiten, de media en maatschappelijke organisaties. Ambtenaren van de Commissie zijn aangemoedigd een bezoek te brengen aan hun oude scholen. Debate Europe zal dergelijke persoonlijke contacten verder uitbouwen. Dit strookt met de strategie voor actieve betrokkenheid van het personeel van de Commissie¹¹, die ambtenaren aanmoedigt als ambassadeurs van de instelling een actieve rol te spelen op het gebied van communicatie, bijvoorbeeld in het kader van de actie “Terug naar school” en het Enterprise Europe Network. Ook leden en ambtenaren van de andere EU-instellingen en -organen zullen worden uitgenodigd hieraan mee te doen;
- zich nog meer ter plaatse begeven: de Europa Direct-centra hebben in samenwerking met de vertegenwoordigingen van de Commissie buiten de hoofdsteden van de lidstaten debatten, evenementen en conferenties met burgers georganiseerd. Debate Europe zal deze activiteiten voortzetten, waarbij profijt kan worden getrokken van de oprichting van een “tweede generatie” Europa Direct-centra in 2009;
- verfijning van de Eurobarometer-opiniepeilingen: in deze opiniepeilingen van de Commissie zal rekening worden gehouden met de ervaringen van de eerste lichter Plan D-projecten, waarin op pan-Europese schaal is geëxperimenteerd met overlegtechnieken bij het peilen van de meningen over de toekomst van de EU;
- internetdebatten: de Plan D-website “Debate Europe” is in januari 2008 in een nieuw jasje gestoken om meer mogelijkheden te krijgen om interactieve debatten over actuele EU-vraagstukken met internetgebruikers te voeren. Ook de vertegenwoordigingen van de Commissie worden daarbij betrokken. Onlangs zijn nieuwe discussies via internet gestart en in 2008 en 2009 zullen soortgelijke onlinediscussies op gang worden gebracht.

3. OPROEP TOT HET INDIENEN VAN VOORSTELLEN EN GEDECENTRALISEERDE ACTIES

Debate Europe zal ervoor zorgen dat het algemene streven van de Commissie om actief Europees burgerschap te bevorderen, wordt opgenomen in een geïntegreerde interinstitutionele inspanning, die besluitvormers op alle overheidsniveaus zal bereiken.

Er wordt een tweesporenstrategie voorgesteld met een budget van 7,2 miljoen euro:

- pan-Europees niveau: een centrale oproep tot het indienen van voorstellen, die moet leiden tot subsidiëring van een overkoepelend transnationaal project in de 27 lidstaten, met een budget van 2 miljoen euro;
- nationaal en regionaal niveau: gedecentraliseerde oproepen en acties ter ondersteuning van lokale projecten, met een budget van 5,2 miljoen euro¹².

In de voorwaarden van de pan-Europese oproep wordt aangegeven dat Debate Europe, gezien de ervaringen van de eerste reeks transnationale participatieprojecten:

- in alle lidstaten burgerraadplegingen zal houden;

¹¹ SEC(2007) 912.

¹² Besluit C(2008) 924 van de Commissie betreffende het jaarlijkse werkprogramma inzake subsidies en contracten op het gebied van communicatie voor 2008, dat de Commissie op 12 maart 2008 heeft goedgekeurd (tabel 2.6.2).

- een reeks gemeenschappelijke conclusies op Europees niveau zal vaststellen, die naar Europese politieke organisaties worden gezonden;
- burgers, in nauw overleg met het Europees Parlement, het Europees Economisch en Sociaal Comité en het Comité van de Regio's, zal betrekken in een dialoog met gekozen vertegenwoordigers en Europese politieke organisaties.

Op nationaal of regionaal niveau zullen de vertegenwoordigingen van de Commissie:

- in 2008 zo'n 140 acties plannen om het publieke debat over de EU aan te zwengelen;
- met lokale oproepen tot het indienen van voorstellen acties medefinancieren die op specifieke behoeften zijn afgestemd (bv. op scholen en jongerencentra gerichte acties, tentoonstellingen, beurzen en festivals, conferenties, seminars, evenementen met ngo's enz.);
- bij deze acties met andere EU-instellingen en -organen samenwerken, bijvoorbeeld in het kader van Europese publieke ruimten, het Europees Jaar van de interculturele dialoog, het geplande Europees Jaar van creativiteit en innovatie en de nationale cultuurinstituten van de EU.

Afhankelijk van de nationale context kan zelfs een geringe subsidie aan nationale ngo's een vruchtbare dialoog over EU-kwesties opleveren. De vertegenwoordigingen van de Commissie zullen, in samenwerking met de voorlichtingsbureaus van het Europees Parlement, het effect van dergelijke dialoogevenementen vergroten door er regionale en lokale autoriteiten bij te betrekken.

Deze initiatieven kunnen bestaande en nieuwe regionale en lokale netwerken een impuls geven en helpen bij de verspreiding van goede praktijken met behulp van eParticipation-hulpmiddelen¹³. Zij kunnen ook van belang zijn voor kandidaten voor de Europese verkiezingen, die deze discussies als basis voor een dialoog met de kiezers kunnen gebruiken.

4. CONCLUSIE

De burgers bij Europa betrekken

Publieke steun voor de EU kan alleen worden gewonnen met een levendig en open debat en door de burgers actief bij Europese kwesties te betrekken. Naast de vele raadplegingen van belanghebbenden en het grote publiek die de Commissie houdt over specifieke beleidskwesties, heeft de EU meer politiek debat en een groter politiek bewustzijn nodig om haar doelstellingen te verwezenlijken en het juiste beleid te voeren. Dit is een van de centrale doelstellingen van het communicatiebeleid van de Commissie¹⁴: *burgers inspraak geven door actief Europees burgerschap te bevorderen.*

¹³ Zoals de hulpmiddelen die de eParticipation-gemeenschap op www.epractice.eu heeft beschreven.

¹⁴ COM(2007) 568 van 3.10.2007.

Contact met beleidsmakers

Politieke partijen en hun gekozen vertegenwoordigers verkeren bij uitstek in een positie om Europese kwesties in het nationale debat aan de orde te stellen en de aanzet te geven tot een grensoverschrijdend openbaar debat in heel Europa. Er zijn grensoverschrijdende communicatiekanalen nodig om het debat en de dialoog over vraagstukken van gemeenschappelijk belang op de Europese agenda te bevorderen. De Commissie heeft de ontwikkeling van dergelijke kanalen bevorderd door wetgeving voor te stellen om de ontwikkeling van Europese politieke partijen te vergemakkelijken, door een reeks burgerprogramma's en uitwisselingsactiviteiten voor ngo's uit te voeren en door middel van Plan D.

De resultaten van de reeks proefprojecten moeten nu in de politieke besluitvormingsprocessen worden verwerkt. De eerste fase van Plan D heeft bevestigd dat er duidelijk behoefte is aan maatregelen om de politieke dialoog over Europese vraagstukken te versterken en uit te breiden en dat participerende democratie een nuttige aanvulling kan vormen op de representatieve democratie.

In de volgende fase, die 2008 en 2009 beslaat, en dus ook de aanloop naar de Europese verkiezingen, zal "Debate Europe" een operationeel kader bieden om contacten en koppelingen te leggen en als partners op te treden. Maar "Debate Europe" is ook op de lange termijn gericht: er wordt naar gestreefd dat EU-aangelegenheden niet meer worden gezien als te abstract en te ver afstaand van de nationale publieke ruimte om voor de burgers van belang te zijn, en er wordt een mogelijkheid geboden om de vaak kunstmatige scheidslijn tussen nationale en Europese vraagstukken te overbruggen.

- Bijlage 1: Projectbeschrijvingen Plan D
- Bijlage 2: Open brief / aanbevelingen van de deelnemers aan de slotconferentie van de zes burgerprojecten van Plan D
- Bijlage 3: Ontwerp voor de centrale oproep tot het indienen van voorstellen
- Bijlage 4: Ontwerp voor een gedecentraliseerde oproep tot het indienen van voorstellen

BIJLAGE 1

Citizens' consultations projects co-funded by the Commission in the framework of Plan D in 2006-2007 projects

Speak Up Europe

- Co-ordinator: European Movement International
- Amount of the project: EUR 1,039,310.63
- Grant from the EU budget: EUR 719,375.70
- Pan-European
- An integrated approach combining virtual and face to face communication, both on a European level and on a national level.
- Virtual: each partner created a national web site. Web animation (e.g. cartoon "What has Europe ever done for us?").
- Face to face: a series of local, national and European events.
- 27 000 people had taken part physically in the project by the end of September 2007.
- Specific multimedia site targeting youth, called "European Vibes".
- Specific site launched by one of the partners, Euractiv, called "EU debates and opinions" to promote the outcome of Speak Up Europe had received 110 000 viewers by end of September 2007.

European Citizens' Consultations

- Co-ordinator: King Baudouin Foundation
- Amount of the project: EUR 2.715.376,60
- Grant from the EU budget: EUR 1.895.751,95
- Pan-European.
- Deliberative consultation of citizens on a national level, on the basis of an agenda set at European level by a sample of citizens.
- European synthesis of the outcome of the national consultations and a European web site.
- 1 800 citizens participated in the project altogether.
- Feedback from 1 000 out of the 1 800 citizens involved via an evaluation survey.

Tomorrow's Europe

- Co-ordinator: Notre Europe
- Amount of the project: EUR 1.352.500
- Grant from the EU budget: EUR 849.500
- Pan-European
- Europe-wide deliberative poll.
- 3 550 citizens polled on the future of the EU.
- 362 of them were randomly selected to deliberate for three days in Brussels, with the help of experts.

- They filled in a questionnaire at the beginning of the deliberative phase and were polled at the end to measure the evolution of their views.

Our message to Europe

- Co-ordinator: Deutsche Gesellschaft e.V.
- Amount of the project: EUR 358.000,00
- Grant from the EU budget: EUR 250.000,00
- Germany, Austria, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Poland.
- 4 000 participants altogether.
- 70 intensive dialogue events (54 in Germany, 4 in Austria, 4 in Slovakia, 4 in Czech Republic, 4 in Poland) with panel discussions.
- Opinion polls carried out during those events: 2600 people polled altogether, under 21 and over 21.
- In 20 of the events people had the opportunity to have their individual "message to Europe" recorded on video - 300 audiovisual messages collected altogether.

Radio Web Europe

- Co-ordinator: CENASCA-CISL
- Amount of the project: EUR 794.475,03
- Grant from the EU budget: EUR, 556.132,50
- Italy, Lithuania, Austria, UK, Spain, Portugal, Malta.
- Creation of a multimedia and interactive website targeting 18-35 years old. Content determined by face to face meetings with target audience through focus groups (two per country). At a second stage, workshops to collect feedback.
- National reports served as a basis for a synthesis report.
- Users can view and download audiovisual products and post their own (comments, videos, interviews, games, cartoons...). At the end of the project, website hosted 200 multimedia products. Average number of monthly visits: 5 000.

Our Europe-Our Debate-Our Contribution

- Co-ordinator: European House Budapest
- Amount of the project: EUR 364.000
- Grant from the EU budget: EUR 254.500
- Hungary, Austria, Italy, Slovakia and Slovenia.
- Fostering debate at grass-root level by meeting people in the streets and public transport, asking them to reply to a questionnaire (also posted on the project's English-language website).
- A "regional events" dimension (face to face meetings).
- A European bus touring the five countries, displaying a "European labyrinth" at every stop which people were invited to enter with a "European passport". People's views were recorded on video at every stop.
- The aim was to collect 2 500 people's views on Europe either through the questionnaire or by video.

Projects co-funded by the Commission Representations in the framework of Plan D in 2007-2008

Representation	Project
Bulgaria	Regional Dialog Open Forum: Women for Social Inclusion
	The Tender Europe: targeting more marginalised social groups – meetings and debates in schools, youth organisations, municipalities, chambers of commerce etc.
	An Investment for Creating Qualified and Internationally Educated Young People Corresponding to the Requirements of the European Single Market: Advertise the possibilities provided through European funding under the ERASMUS Program.
	No to Discrimination in United Europe: Let us Talk about the Different! Civic debate on issues related to discrimination and dissemination of EU best practices in the field of anti-discrimination measures in the cross-border region Svishtov (BG) - Zimnitch (RO).
Czech Republic	Gender Studies OPS: Flexicurity/labour market/ professional-private life - survey, video, discussions, leaflets, audit of pre-school establishments.
	Klub mladých Evropanu, o.s.: Generation EU: Target group - young people 15-19years. Workshops on labour market, education, security, freedom, future, European social model, European identity/values, 1 national conference.
Denmark	Your Europe
	Food Safety in the Consumers' EU
	Gender Divided Labour Market and Violence against Women
	Global Citizen and EU
	The Model Parliament
Estonia	Federation of Estonian student unions - Estonia in the EU's higher educational system (seminars, conference, articles in student press, discussions on internet forums, publication).
	Junior Achievement Estonia - Youth Entrepreneurship Conference on gender equality Project activities.
	NGO umbrella organisation in Viljandi - promotion of equal opportunities of local level citizens in the EU (conference, seminars, youth forum, study visit to Finnish rural areas).

France Paris	Europe , the future and citizenship in the Aquitaine region.
	Brittany youth's contribution to a European strategy to limit the scale of climate change.
	Know more about Europe to understand it better.
	Young European prize.
	Les Eurois, citizens of Europe.
	Europe for and by the young.
	A silent majority: women in the EU. Awareness raising among women, a major stake for the future of Europe.
	Etats généraux de l'Europe.
	Etats généraux de l'Europe.
	Deedale – Vendée region.
Hungary	Launch of the Hungarian chapter of the European Youth Parliament (Pillar Foundation)
	National consultation of women (Partners Hungary Foundation)
	Climate Change Youth Campaign (WWF Hungary)
Ireland	Institute of European Affairs (Future of Europe including immigration; crime and terror; climate change; Reform Treaty; Citizens Europe; EU@50; What has Europe done for citizens; use of overall theme "Europe 2.0". Use of web based products to widen and deepen the debate; meetings and debates across colleges, and other centres; production and dissemination of publications; explaining the new Treaty to different groups and especially the target groups; specifically target young professionals. Virtual tools and meetings, debates, high visibility events; dedicated Europe 2.0 website; podcasts; production of "6 Pack" information items for use with the target groups; production of a book "What the Reform Treaty Means", pamphlets; Young Professional network; high profile discussions and debates.
	Irish Countrywomen's Association (ICA) : legal rights in Europe; Irish farm Families; Quality of Life in Europe; Migration; Social Reality. Regional Seminars; training of co-ordinators; use of co-ordinators for training and organisation of seminars; use of expert speakers. Focus is on 16,000 families.
Latvia	Regional debates on social reality
	Youth observers in local and district authorities on cohesion and regional policy
	Training of multipliers - schoolchildren and teachers - on corruption and transparency issues

Malta	Fondazzjoni Temi Zammit
Portugal	Porto, Coimbra, Santarém, Évora and Faro Environment protection / Energy- Youth
	National: Future of Europe; Europe in the world; Migrations; Security - Youth
	All islands of the archipelago of Azores European integration; Future of Europe; Europe in the world
	Vila Real district Prosperity; Solidarity; Security and Freedom e Liberdade; Future of Europe; Europe in the world
	Beira Interior Solidarity – European Year Equality; European Year of Intercultural Dialogue; Cohesion and Rural Development Sept.2007 to August 2008
Spain Madrid - Barcelona	Fundación Ciudadanía Euro activos. ex:talleres para jóvenes que quieren darle la vuelta a Europa
	Europa Action and Lobby Development of a multilingual forum.
	Infocentro de Zaragoza Europa Joven, 50 años de logros
	Casal d'Europa de Sabadell Euroaptive,T
The Netherlands	Communicado Foundation Le Camping: Development of a pilot episode for six broadcastings for NL school TV. EU is visualised as a campsite; Member States are tents with their habitants. EU cooperation issues (enlargement, environment etc..) are explained through interaction of the actors in a comprehensible and educational way.
	ETV NL Europe is Fun! : Production of an educational project for secondary education scholars. A competition for digital EU stories, study materials and teachers training.
	Stichting Eggietalk (io) Eggietalk. Communication translation programme: pupils can communicate in their own language with pupils in other EU languages.
	Click on Europe. "Debatainment" with website and educational material for lower secondary education. Organisation aims at stimulating hard-to-reach target group to debate Europe in a competitive way.
	Nationaal oorlogsmuseum/ CHO Consultants Freedom and Democracy: Fundamental rights in Europe. Creating awareness and stimulating debate among youth in the national war museum. Electronic info pillars will be placed in the museum (including a voting system), and a website will be launched with small clips on 4 basic rights.

	<p>Passage Christelijk-Maatschappelijke Vrouwenbeweging Living together in Europe: Project proposed by the 4 largest woman movements in NL combined. The target group is approximately 120.000 female members, including many housewives. Newsletter, symposium, study days and an EU crafts contest. spin-off through family, friends etc. Create awareness of European issues among the members and to promote woman participation (use of voting right) in the 2009 European Parliament elections.</p>
	<p>Nationale Jeugdraad All about Europe.nl: website aiming at providing youth with a complete overview of the EU, to facilitate a structured dialogue. Bundle all relevant info for youth in one website. Nationale Jeugdraad (National Youthcouncil) portal website: Allesovereuropa.nl. This portal will bundle all relevant EU information for youth and youngsters in an understandable manner. Advertising campaign.</p>
	<p>CED Groep Europe in the news: 8 special topics on the EU. Communication with pupils in other EU countries. EU section added to existing website. Website is part of "learning by discussing/debating" teaching method.</p>
<p>United Kingdom London</p>	<p>Women in Northern Ireland – Connecting to Europe. Northern Ireland Women's European Platform. The platform aims to promote any charitable purpose for the benefit of women in Northern Ireland including the advancement of their education and development.</p>
	<p>My Voice in Europe The Community Development Foundation is a leading source of intelligence, guidance and delivery on community development in England and across the UK. The overall aim of the European and International Unit of CDF is to link and feed into practice and policy within the European and International arena by acting as a bridge between the UK and relevant international mechanisms.</p>
	<p>Voicing young people's views on climate change Inspire, support and celebrate young people as agents for change in society. Their aim is to create a generation of young, active citizens, drawn from all sectors of the UK population who will be a force for change in achieving global social and environmental justice.</p>
	<p>Flexicurity: young workers' views in a cohesion region Bevan Foundation, at the forefront of new thinking about achieving a fair and just Wales by carrying out research, organising conferences and debates, and by publishing articles and reports.</p>
	<p>Fem e-U Link, FATIMA Women's Network Innovation Centre. Fatima is a socially responsible minority ethnic-led organisation supporting the social and economic empowerment of all women through inter alia personal development, education and training, networking and engagement, as well as research and consultation.</p>
	<p>Forward Ladies Limited Non-profit business support network for women -networking opportunities, inspirational speakers, training, mentoring, coaching, business support and facilitates international trade missions.</p>

People and Politics Day-Europe: promoting democracy and active citizenship. Research, conferences, reports, promotion of democratic change.

Decentralised communication actions planned by Commission Representations in 2008

Plan D decentralised actions planned for 2008					
<i>Action type</i>		<i>Member State</i>	<i>Associated communication priority</i>	<i>€</i>	
1. Local calls	Programmed	UK	Energy & CC	150 000	
		Italy	Intercultural Dialogue	150 000	
		Netherlands	None	142 000	
		Austria		203 000	
		Germany		200 000	
		Sub-total			845 000
	To be programmed	Amounts confirmed	Netherlands	None	258 000
			Malta		150 000
			Germany		100 000
			Slovakia		50 000
			Czech Rep.		50 000
			Lithuania		20 000
		Sub-total			628 000
		Amounts TBC	Latvia	None	TBC
			Slovenia	Reform Treaty	TBC
Total				1 473 000	
2. Other actions				3 429 867	
Total Plan D	Allocated			5 200 000	
	Requested			4 902 867	

BIJLAGE 2

Open letter / recommendations from the participants at the concluding conference of the six Plan D citizens' projects

The future of Europe-the citizens' agenda

Open letter to the EU Heads of State and Government, the National Parliaments, the European Union Institutions and European political parties

Brussels, 9 December 2007

Next week, the Heads of State and Government of the European Union will sign the Lisbon Treaty. The EU celebrated its 50th Anniversary this year. Since 1957, the European Union has progressed from economic cooperation to a political union that affects the lives of almost 500 million citizens. This evolution also brings responsibilities for the political leaders of Europe. The permissive consensus that existed at the beginning has to be turned into an actively earned consensus in dialogue with the European citizens.

Associating citizens to the European construction is more than ever a fundamental issue. If we do not want the citizens to desert once more the European elections in 2009, political leaders need to regain the citizens' trust and confidence in the European project and show they care about citizens' involvement in the decision-making machine.

Plan D launched by Commission Vice-President Margot Wallström responded to this challenge in a novel manner. It co-financed a series of projects to learn how ordinary citizens can be involved in the EU decision-making and how they view the EU's future. This exercise responds to a basic value of the EU in the 21st century: active citizenship.

The European Movement International, the King Baudouin Foundation, Notre Europe, Deutsche Gesellschaft, European House Budapest and CENASCA-CISL, with a large network of partners across Europe have engaged actively in Plan D. A series of grass roots debates, consultations, polls and events aimed at consulting citizens on their visions of Europe have been carried out in a number of Member States, while deliberative polling and consultation has taken place on a pan-European scale.

Thousands of citizens took part in those projects throughout the European Union in 2007. Over 250 of them have assembled in Brussels on 8 and 9 December to debate on the major concerns which have emerged through Plan D. There was a clear consensus among participants that more opportunities of this kind should be provided to involve citizens in the debate over Europe's future.

They have structured these concerns into three themes:

1. The human aspects of globalisation
2. Enlargement, political integration and EU citizenship
3. The EU's role on the world stage.

They have consolidated their conclusions into a single set of recommendations (annexed to this letter).

They have debated those recommendations with decision-makers representing the EU institutions as well as the present Portuguese and future Slovenian Presidencies of the EU:

- Mrs. Margot Wallström, Vice-President, European Commission.
- Mrs Jillian van Turnhout, Vice-President, European Economic and Social Committee.
- Mr. Ivo Opstelten, Mayor of Rotterdam, Member of the Committee of Regions,

- Mr. Pierre Jonckheer, Member of the European Parliament
- Mr. Valter Lemos, Portuguese Secretary of State for Education,
- Ambassador Igor Sencar, Permanent Representative of Slovenia.

They call on the European political parties to address those recommendations in their programmes and to discuss them with citizens in view of the elections to European Parliament in 2009.

They call upon the EU Heads of State and Government, both in their capacity as European but also as national leaders, to heed those recommendations and thereby encourage the development of active European citizenship, without which there cannot be a truly political Union.

They call for the dialogue with citizens on European issues to be continued and deepened in the future.

The participants to the conference on "The future of Europe-the citizens' agenda

Twenty–seven recommendations

1.

As work is considered a crucial dimension for individual emancipation, the **welfare systems** should protect citizens' life conditions during periods of transition for example by providing people with an unemployment indemnity when changing jobs.

2.

Citizens expect more action from the EU in the area of **social policy and social cohesion** in order to fight the black market, reduce salary gaps, promote gender-equality, ease unemployment and to make it attractive to work longer before retiring.

3.

The EU should promote **equal rights, comparable standard of living** in all EU member states and foster equal opportunities through harmonised social and economic policies and a welfare model for all member states.

4.

*The Member States and the EU should make sure that **migrants** enjoy equal rights and opportunities and have access to education and work if they observe the laws, rules and values of the host country and commit to learning the language.*

5.

The **European migration policy**, so far based only on restrictive measures, should adopt a more sophisticated approach aiming at the social and economic development of the involved countries. The EU needs to clarify its approach to economic refugee status.

6.

Migration needs to be acknowledged as one of today's most pressing issues, and cannot be tackled without a coherent development aid strategy.

7.

*The EU should ensure that part of each country's national curriculum, in both **schools and universities**, requires a section on Democracy and European Citizenship, to ensure a greater understanding of the EU, its history, and its opportunities.*

8.

The EU should show more commitment to educational promotion in general but also specifically regarding European issues, e.g. through the expansion of existing educational EU programmes or the establishment of new EU programmes as well as the incorporation of the European integration process as a central topic in the national school curricula.

9.

Exchange projects need further support to encourage young people to recognise the importance of their EU citizenship in the global context.

10.

The EU should help preserving, appreciating and respecting the **diversity** of peoples, knowledge, customs and languages identities - while recognising common and shared European values.

11.

Integration strategies such as the **educational policy** incorporating the EU into school curricula will favour the development of a European identity.

12.

The EU should prioritise creating and communicating a **new ‘memory’ about Europe**, to move away from the stereotypes associated with certain countries and history, so that all citizens can be valued and we can understand each other better.

13.

*The EU should increase opportunities for a more active, **direct participation of European citizens** from all walks of life in policy-making through regular citizen Plan D-type participatory projects, debates, public hearings, etc. at EU but also at regional and national levels. More transparency-more influence for European citizens!*

14.

*The EU should make sure that the **current citizen recommendations** are considered and discussed not only by the EU but also national policy-makers or become part of existing policy-making processes (e.g. impact assessments, public consultations). The EU should not only listen but also learn.*

15.

The EU should become more interactive, citizen friendly and inclusive, recognising the growing significance of regional approach and identity. New and innovative information technique should be used to improve communication with citizens especially young people. Specific attention has to be paid to the frequently neglected gender issues.

16.

***Climate change and energy security** cannot successfully be dealt with at the national level alone. The EU should be given stronger powers to develop a common energy policy and ensure that Member States live up to the commitments they have made at European level.*

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.

18.

The EU can be more efficient than national governments in **security, police and struggle against drugs traffic and cartels**.

19.

The EU should lead the world in **protecting the environment** and promoting clean energy.

20.

Europe should develop a strong voice on the global stage with **common foreign and security policies that promote peace**, security in regional conflicts democracy and the respect for human rights providing for a strong role model across the world, whilst recognizing the importance of the nation state.

21.

The EU should show **a united front in international affairs**; the current practice is influenced too much by national short-term interests and considerations.

22.

The EU should tackle the impact of Europe's energy use on both the economy and the environment and foster the transition to environmentally clean, safe and sustainable energy sources.

23.

European citizens want the EU to **take the lead when it comes to social, energy and environmental standards** on a global level.

24.

The EU should develop **specific educational and action-oriented programmes for citizens on global issues** such as trade, energy and the environment.

25.

The EU should **coordinate its aid programmes with NGOs** engaged in humanitarian work to bring timely and efficient relief to crisis regions or to promote sustainable development.

26.

The EU should **lower barriers to international trade** as, overall, freer trade benefits developed and developing countries.

27.

The EU should show **more commitment in the fields of international peacekeeping** as well as humanitarian aid during catastrophes.

BIJLAGE 3

CENTRAL CALL FOR PROPOSALS - DG COMM No < A2-1/2008 >

Financial support for an initiative emanating from organisations with a significant trans-national dimension as provided by the European Commission's Debate Europe Communication

1. INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

On 13 October 2005 the Commission approved its Communication to the Council, to the European Parliament, to the European Economic and Social Committee and to the Committee of the Regions: Plan D for Democracy, Dialogue and Debate.

This was a listening exercise so that the European Union can act on the concerns expressed by its citizens. The Commission aimed to stimulate debate and widen recognition for the added value that the E U provides.

It was a two-way process which:

- informed the public about the EU's role, with examples of its projects and achievements,
- identified their expectations for the future in return.

On 29 November 2006 Vice President Wallström presented an information note to the College of Commissioners on Plan D – Widen & deepen the debate. The purpose of this was to take stock and further widen and deepen the debate in the period of reflection.

On 2 April 2008, the Commission adopted a Communication to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions entitled "Debate Europe-building on the experience of Plan D for Democracy, Dialogue and Debate". It noted that the first phase Plan D focused on the "debate and dialogue" part of the process. The next phase of Plan D will take this process one step further and focus on "D for democracy", further enabling citizens to articulate their wishes directly to decision-makers and making better use of the media in the process. This new phase has been named "Debate Europe".

In October 2005 the Commission launched a series of Europe-wide civil society projects for 2006, which it co-financed. In 2007, it promoted a further series of initiatives, targeting young people and women in particular.

2. OBJECTIVES

One of the key lessons from this first round of projects and the concluding conference of Plan D is that the interface between citizens and EU decision-makers needs to be strengthened to ensure that issues of interest and concern Europe-wide are debated and addressed at a European level. There is a need to communicate those Europe-wide issues and concerns which affect to a large degree all of Europe's citizens identified from consulting on a pan-

European basis and to communicate these to European political decision-makers and media especially in view of the June 2009 European elections.

As a result, the Commission wishes to strengthen the existing debate about the future of Europe and its impact on citizens' daily lives by launching one or more pan-European projects with the following objectives:

In a first phase;

- Carry out a Europe-wide dialogue between citizens, political decision-makers and other key opinion formers through a series of debates/conferences/consultations and other events, with a view to ascertaining citizens' principal issues and concerns at a European level which touch their daily lives. This dialogue will ensure a close involvement of the other EU institutions (EP, EESC, COR) and European political parties' foundations.
- The conclusions arising from these events would be synthesised and made public . At a concluding event they should be presented to European decision makers to give them the opportunity to react and take into account the concerns of the European electorate. This phase of the project should be completed ideally before the June 2009 European elections.

In a second phase, the contractor could continue with a series of meetings with newly-elected MEPs and representatives from the principal European media (television, radio, press).

In carrying out both phases, the contractor will take into account the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue and on-going Commission programmes such as Europe for Citizens and e-Participation.

The resulting projects will involve consortia of civil society organisations with a view to replying to these objectives on a Europe-wide scale. These consultations will complement those planned to be held at local level designed to address concerns focused on European issues with a more local impact.

3. TIMETABLE

3.1. Submission of applications

Publication of call beginning April 2008.

Applications must be submitted by end June 2008 at the latest.

Contracts will be signed September 2008.

Please read carefully section 10 of this call for proposals concerning the procedures for submitting applications.

3.2. Duration of projects

The project should begin between 1 September and 1 October 2008 and will be in two phases as described above.

The first phase will be completed by mid-May 2009 (before the European elections) and the second phase by 1 November 2009.

Applications must clearly state the project's starting and finishing dates (dd/mm/yy).

The maximum duration of projects is 14 months.

However, if, after the signing of the agreement and the start of the project, the beneficiary observes that, for fully justified reasons beyond his control, it becomes impossible to complete the project within the scheduled period, an extension to the eligibility period may be granted. A maximum extension of 3 months will be granted, provided that this is requested before the deadline specified in the grant agreement. The maximum duration will then be 18 months.

The period of eligibility of expenditure resulting from implementation of a project will begin on the day of signature of the grant contract by the last of the parties. If the nature of the project requires the project to start before the contract is signed, expenditure may be considered eligible before the signature of the contract. Under no circumstances can the eligibility period start before the date of submission of the grant application.

3.3. Information on the results of the selection

It is planned that applicants will be informed of the outcome of the selection procedure in July 2008.

The lists of selected projects will be published on the following website:
http://europa.eu.int/comm/dgs/communication/grants/index_en.htm

Applicants whose applications have not been selected will be informed in writing.

4. FINANCING

The budget initially available for part-financing projects is estimated at € 2 000 000.

If during the 2008 budget year, additional amounts are allocated to boost the initial budget for this call for proposals, they might be allocated to co-financing projects which were adopted at the selection phase but not given priority for co-financing in the overall budget initially available. The Commission therefore reserves the right to set up a "reserve list" of proposals evaluated positively in order to take account of the resources actually available in the 2008 budget.

The grant awarded may not exceed 70% of the total eligible project costs.

Community contributions are meant to facilitate the implementation of a project which could not otherwise be implemented easily without the support of the European Union. They are based on the co-financing principle.

Consequently, a minimum of 30% of the total estimated eligible expenditure of the project must come from sources other than the European Union budget. Applicants must include evidence that co-financing is available (secured) for the remainder of the total cost of the project.

The Commission intends to finance 1 to 2 projects for a budget of € 1 or € 2 million in total..

The European Commission reserves the right not to distribute all the funds available.

The amount allocated by the Commission may not in any circumstances exceed the amount requested. Moreover, the Commission reserves the right to award a grant lower than the amount requested by the applicant.

An organisation is not entitled to receive more than one grant from the Commission for the action covered by the selected project.

After approval by the Commission, a “grant contract”, a draft of which is reproduced at Annex VI, expressed in euros and specifying the conditions and the financing level, will be concluded between the Commission and the beneficiary. The originals of the finance contract must be signed and returned to the Commission immediately for signature. The Commission will be the last party to sign.

The payment methods are detailed in the draft contract (Article I.4), with a list of eligible and ineligible costs (Article II.14 of the general conditions and Article I.3 of the special conditions of the grant contract).

5. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Applications which comply with the following criteria will be the subject of an in-depth evaluation.

5.1 Eligible countries

Grant applications are eligible if they are presented by organisations having a legal status and established in one of the 27 Member States.

Organisations established in countries other than the countries listed above are not eligible.

5.2 Types of cooperation eligible

The types of cooperation eligible include partnerships. The term partnership/partners implies full or partial active intellectual collaboration in the execution of the project. In no case will financial support alone (sponsorship) be deemed to constitute a partnership. However, any financial support accompanied by active intellectual collaboration in the execution of the project will be accepted as a partnership. In all cases, the purpose of partnership is to add value to the project.

6. EXCLUSION CRITERIA

Applicants must certify on their honour, by signing the application form, that they are not in one of the situations mentioned in Articles 93 and 94 of the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities (Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 of 25 June 2002), which are listed below.

Applicants will be excluded from participating in this call for proposals if they are in one of the following situations:

- a) they are bankrupt or being wound up, are having their affairs administered by the courts, have entered into an arrangement with creditors, have suspended business activities, are the subject of proceedings concerning those matters, or are in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for in national legislation or regulations;
- b) they have been convicted of an offence concerning their professional conduct by a judgement which has the force of res judicata;
- c) they have committed serious professional misconduct recorded by any means that awarding authorities can justify;
- d) they have not fulfilled obligations relating to the payment of social security contributions or the payment of taxes in accordance with the legal provisions of the country in which they are established or with those of the country of the contracting authority or those of the country where the contract is to be performed;
- e) they have been the subject of a judgment which has the force of res judicata for fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organisation or any other illegal activity detrimental to the Communities' financial interests;
- f) following another procurement procedure or grant award procedure financed by the Community budget, they have been declared to be in serious breach of contract for failure to comply with their contractual obligations.

Applicants will not receive financial support if, during the grant allocation procedure:

- a) they are subject to a conflict of interests;
- b) they are guilty of misrepresentation in supplying the information required by the European Commission as a condition of participation in the grant award procedure, or fail to supply this information.

In accordance with Articles 93 to 96 of the Financial Regulation, administrative and financial penalties may be imposed on applicants who are guilty of misrepresentation or are found to have seriously failed to meet their contractual obligations under a previous contract award procedure.

To respect these provisions, the applicant and his partners must provide evidence that they are in none of the situations listed in Articles 93 and 94 of the Financial Regulation.

7. SELECTION CRITERIA

The selection criteria are designed to demonstrate the applicant's capacity to see the project through to a successful conclusion.

Applicants must provide evidence of stable and sufficient sources of funding to maintain the activity throughout the period during which the project is being carried out and/or grant-aided, as well as evidence of their financial participation. The applicant must also provide evidence of professional competencies, qualifications and/or experience relevant to the proposed project.

7.1 Technical capacity

Candidates must show that they have the operational (technical and management) capacity needed to complete the proposed action and provide evidence of their capacity to direct a large-scale activity corresponding to the dimension of the project for which the grant is requested. Particular attention will be devoted to the capacity for integration in society in the Member States, to the mobilisation of the public and to the analysis of their contributions. The capacity to operate in a large number of Member States (ideally in all of them) would be an advantage.

Applicants must attach to the grant application a curriculum vitae for the project leader and for the personnel of their organisation who will actually do the work. They must also enclose a recent activity report .

7.2 Financial resources

In order to permit assessment of this criterion, applicants must submit with their application the following documents:

- annual accounts for the last complete financial year;
- the “financial identification” form (bank details) (Annex III), completed by the beneficiary and certified by the bank (with original signatures).

If, on the basis of the submitted documents, the Commission assesses that the financial capacity of the applicant is not sufficient, it may:

- reject the request for a Community grant;
- ask for further information;
- ask for the deposit of a guarantee;
- propose a grant agreement without a pre-financing payment.

7.3 Audit

Where the cost of the project to be financed exceeds €300 000, the grant application must be accompanied by an external audit report produced by an approved auditor.

This report must certify the accounts for the last year available and give an assessment of the applicant’s financial viability.

8. AWARD CRITERIA

Account will also be taken of other Commission programmes such as the European Year for Intercultural Dialogue in 2008, Europe for Citizens and INTI (Integration of Third-Country Nationals).

Eligible projects will be evaluated on the basis of:

- a) the consistency of the overall concept of the project with the objectives of Debate Europe, as described at point 2 of the call for proposals;
- b) the quality of the work programme and the *modus operandi*;
- c) the dynamics of networking and the establishment of pan-European cooperation;
- d) the capacity of the project to:
 - act in the largest number of Member States as possible, and ideally in all 27;
 - involve the largest number of citizens as possible;
 - ensure their diversity of origin and their representativeness;
 - provide for the use of the largest number of national languages possible;
 - generate transnational results;
- e) the likely multiplier effect through the media and civil society networks, as calculated on the basis of the measures proposed to give visibility to the project and its outcomes;
- f) the system of feedback to European political decision-makers and citizens involved, as recommended by Debate Europe;
- g) the mechanism for evaluation of the objectives pursued by the project.

9. PUBLICITY

Provided the successful tenderer agrees (unless the publication of information is likely to endanger the successful tenderer's safety or harm his interests), the Commission will publish the following information in whatever form and on whatever medium it wishes, including the Internet:

- the name and address of each beneficiary;
- the subject of the grant;
- amount awarded and rate of funding.

10. PROCEDURE FOR THE SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS

10.1 Publication

The text of the call for proposals, the annexes and, for information purposes, a copy of the standard agreement can be obtained from the Europa website at the following address:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/dgs/communication/grants/index_en.htm

10.2 Application form

Applications must be presented in one of the official languages of the EU.

Since the call is addressed first of all to organisations operating in several Member States, DG Communication would, however, appreciate it if grant applications (which must be made out on the 2006 form devised for the purpose) are accompanied by a version in one of the European Commission's working languages (French, English or German).

This form can be downloaded from the above Internet address.

Only grant applications submitted on the application forms attached to this call for proposals and comprising all the necessary documents mentioned in Annex D will be considered.

Applications must be:

- typed; hand-written applications will not be accepted;
- duly dated, filled in and signed by the legal representative of the organisation;
- sent in quadruplicate (the original, which must be identified as such, plus three copies).

10.3 Submission of the application

Deadline for the submission of applications: end May/early June 2008

Applications submitted after will not be considered.

Applications may be submitted in one of the following ways:

Proposals must be submitted on paper:

- by registered post to the following address, for which purposes the relevant date is to be the date of dispatch by post, as evidenced by the postmark or the registered delivery receipt issued by the postal services:

European Commission
Directorate-General COMMUNICATION
Unit A2 (Communication: planning and priorities)
Debate EuropeOffice BERL 5/234
B-1049 Brussels
Belgium

- by hand delivery or courier service.

For security reasons, applications submitted personally or conveyed by a courier service can be presented only to the Commission's Central Mail Department (Rue de Genève 1, 1140 Evere, Belgium), and envelopes must be marked " DG COMMUNICATION, Unit A2

(Communication: planning and priorities), BERL 05/234 – Debate Europe Project”. In the event of hand delivery, the submission date is the date of receipt. In the event of delivery by a courier service, the submission date is the date of receipt by the mail department.

Applications submitted by fax or e-mail will not be considered.

No modification of the application will be authorised after the submission of the application and its annexes. However, the Commission reserves the right to request any additional information needed for it to take a final decision on the award of financial support.

Applicants will be informed in writing when their application is received.

Only applications complying with the eligibility and exclusion criteria will be considered for the possible award of a grant.

Applicants whose applications are judged to be ineligible will be notified by mail, with an explanation as to why they were judged ineligible.

Tenderers will be informed, as soon as possible, of the decision taken by

the Commission on their grant application. No information will be released until the Commission's decision on project selection has been taken.

All selected applications will be subject to technical and financial analysis. In this connection the Commission may ask the applicant organisation for supplementary information, or possibly for guarantees.

Any applicant whose application for a Community grant is not accepted will be informed in writing.

10.4 Legal framework

- European commission Communication datedMarch 2008 (Comm): "Debate Europe-building on the experience of Plan D for Democracy, Dialogue and Debate".
- European Commission Communication dated 13 October 2005 (COM(2005) 494 final): The Commission's contribution to the period of reflection and beyond: Plan D for Democracy, Dialogue and Debate
- European Commission Communication dated 03 October 2007 (COM(2007) XXX final): Communicating Europe in Partnership
- OJ L 248, 16.9.2002 (Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 of 25 June 2002 on the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities)
- OJ L 357, 31.12.2002 (Commission Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 2342/2002 of 23 December 2002 laying down detailed rules for the implementation of Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 on the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities)

10.5 Contacts

The Commission department responsible for the implementation and management of call for proposals DG COMM No A2-1/2006 is Unit A2 (Communication: planning and priorities) of Directorate-General Communication (COMM).

Additional information can be obtained by electronic mail or by fax, either at the electronic address COMM-A2@cec.eu.int , or by fax number from ++ 32 2 295 24 69 , indicating clearly the reference of this call for proposals.

Annexes:

Annex A: Daily allowance scale

Annex B: Contractual obligations

Annex C: Text of the banking guarantee to be completed (only on request)

Annex D: Application checklist

Annex I: Application form (parts A and B)

Annex II: Budget form

Annex III: Financial identification form

Annex IV: Financial capacity form

Annex V: Legal entity form

Annex VI: Draft contract (for information)

Annex VII: Acknowledgement of receipt of the application

BIJLAGE 4

CALL FOR PROPOSALS MANAGED BY EUROPEAN COMMISSION REPRESENTATIONS IN EU MEMBER STATES (LOCAL CALL)

- DG COMM No xxxxxx, EC Representation xxxxxxxx

**Grants for local and national civil society initiatives
to promote public debate about European issues
- part of the European Commission's "Debate Europe" initiative**

1. BACKGROUND

On 13 October 2005 the Commission approved its Communication to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions entitled "Plan D for Democracy, Dialogue and Debate".

This was a listening exercise to enable the European Union (EU) to act on citizens' concerns. The Commission aimed to stimulate debate and widen recognition for the added value that the EU provides.

It was to be a two-way process which:

- informed the public about the EU's role, with examples of its projects and achievements,
- identified their expectations for the future in return.

On 29 November 2006 Vice President Wallström presented a note to the Commissioners entitled, "Plan D – Widen & Deepen the Debate". Its purpose was to take stock and further widen and deepen the debate in the period of reflection. The note is publicly available and has been sent to Member States and other EU institutions.

On 2 April 2008, the Commission adopted a Communication to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions entitled "Debate Europe - Building on the Experience of Plan D for Democracy, Dialogue and Debate". It noted that the first phase of Plan D focused on the "debate and dialogue" part of the process. The next phase of Plan D will take this process one step further and focus on "D for democracy", further enabling citizens to articulate their wishes directly to decision-makers and making better use of the media in the process. This new phase has been named "Debate Europe".

In October 2005 the Commission launched a series of Europe-wide civil society projects¹⁵ for 2006, which it co-financed. In 2007, it promoted a further series of initiatives, targeting young people and women in particular.

¹⁵ "Tomorrow's Europe" introduced by the foundation "Notre Europe" (Paris)
<http://www.notre-europe.eu/>
"European Citizens' Consultations" introduced by the "King Baudouin Foundation" (Brussels)
<http://www.european-citizens-consultations.eu>
"Speak up Europe" introduced by the "European Movement International" (Brussels)
http://www.europeanmovement.org/emailing/newsletter/speakupeurope_briefing_nonote.pdf

Drawing on this experience, the Commission, through its Representations in EU Member States, will offer grants in each Member State for civil society initiatives focusing on "Debate Europe" priority issues¹⁶. These are:

- Priority issue 1: involvement of citizens with political decision-makers;
- Priority issue 2: joint action between EU institutions and bodies to promote active citizenship.

Differences in economic, social and other aspects of national life greatly affect the public's attitudes to the EU and to particular European issues. So the new round of local calls will therefore be **tailored to each Member State's needs**.

The Commission's Representations will help define the content, and manage and follow up the calls. Depending on the national context, even limited funding for country-level NGOs could result in a fruitful debate **on EU issues**.

2. OBJECTIVES

2.1. General

The Commission wishes to help fund national and regional initiatives by civil society organisations to:

- solicit citizens' views on European issues which have a direct impact, locally and nationally, on their daily lives; and
- encourage citizens to become more informed about these issues, and to discuss and debate them with local opinion-formers.

"Our message to Europe" introduced by the Deutsche Gesellschaft (Berlin)

http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/communication/grants/index_fr.htm

"Radio Web Europe" introduced by CENASCA (Rome)

<http://www.cenasca.cisl.it/entra.htm>

"Our Europe – Our Debate – Our Contributions" introduced by the European House (Budapest)

<http://www.europeanhouse.hu/>

All data on the 6 Plan D projects are summarized at the following address:

http://europa.eu/debateeurope/paneurope_en.htm

¹⁶ Priorities specified in the Commission's communication entitled "Debate Europe - Building on the Experience of Plan D for Democracy, Dialogue and Debate"(2 April 2008) and in its 2008 annual work programme.

These initiatives will:

- facilitate dialogue between citizens, national and/or local political decision-makers and opinion-formers through debates, conferences, consultations and/or other events;
- closely involve local members of:
 - the European Parliament, European Economic and Social Committee, and Committee of the Regions, and
 - European political parties, and those parties' foundations
- collate and publish these events' conclusions to:
 - identify specific European issues which matter to people in their particular local/national environment;
 - raise local media and politicians' interest in the debate on Europe;
 - increase understanding of the EU's impact on citizens' everyday life;
- create networks of participatory democracy which integrate the European dimension of local/regional/national debates;
- complement:
 - Commission Representations' other initiatives to target local constituencies;
 - current EU programmes with similar goals, including:
 - the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue (EYID) 2008
 - Europe for Citizens
 - e-Participation
 - Integration of Third Country Nationals (INTI).
- be tailored to meet each Member State's specific needs.

2.2. Detailed

2.2.1. Form

Projects can:

- take many different forms – from public debates to online fora.
- be combined with events targeting the public
 - schools and youth centres,
 - exhibitions,
 - fairs and festivals,
 - conferences and seminars

2.2.2. Content

They should:

- define specific issues to be addressed around the overarching topic of debating the relevance of the EU to ordinary citizens lives;
- be accessible to the public and provoke their interest;
- link in with current issues:
 - of local/regional/national interest
 - at EU level.

- allow a variety of opinions to be expressed, without excluding any opinions
- include:
 - dialogue with local, national or EU political authorities;
 - participation by members of the European Parliament, European Economic and Social Committee and Committee of the Regions;
- use the internet to promote the project and facilitate debate.

2.2.3. Impact

As a result, projects should:

- make a lasting contribution to the debate on the EU;
- promote genuine local and national participation in debates on the EU;
- lead to the creation of regional and local networks or strengthen existing ones with a view to continuing and deepening the involvement of citizens in the debate on Europe;
- identify those issues at EU level of greatest local concern and how best they can be addressed on an ongoing basis.

2.2.4. Action plan

To allow the Commission to assess whether proposals meet these criteria, the applicant will need to present an action plan setting out:

- the issues which the project will address;
- the project's overall concept and the tools it will use;
- measures to attract the awareness and involvement of the:
 - media - through partnerships and press relations activities;
 - target audience
- actions to follow up the debate including the preparation of a structured summary of citizens' concerns and describe how these will be brought to the attention of local decision-makers including Members of the European Parliament;
- a detailed schedule which respects the deadlines in section 3.1 below.

3. TIMETABLE

3.1. Submission of applications

Applications must be submitted by end June 2008.

Please read carefully section 12 of this call for proposals concerning the procedures for submitting applications.

3.2. Duration of projects

The project should begin before 1 September 2008.

The project must finish no later than 01 November 2009.

Applications must clearly state the project's starting and finishing dates (dd/mm/yy).

The maximum duration of projects is 14 months.

The period of eligibility of expenditure resulting from implementation of a project will begin on the day of signature of the grant contract by the last of the parties. If the nature of the project requires the project to start before the contract is signed, expenditure may be considered eligible before the signature of the contract. Under no circumstances can the eligibility period start before the date of submission of the grant application.

3.3. Information on the results of the selection

It is planned that applicants will be informed of the outcome of the selection procedure [deadline needs to be no later than Jul. 2008]

The lists of selected projects will be published on the following website:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/dgs/communication/grants/index_en.htm &

<http://xxxxxxxxx>

Applicants whose applications have not been selected will be informed in writing.

4. FINANCING

The budget available for this call for proposal is € [to be filled by each Representation].

The grant awarded may not exceed 70% of the total eligible project costs.

Community contributions are meant to facilitate the implementation of a project which could not otherwise be implemented easily without the support of the European Union. They are based on the co-financing principle.

Consequently, a minimum of 30% of the total estimated eligible and final expenditure of the project must come from sources other than the European Union budget. Applicants must include evidence that co-financing is available (secured) for the remainder of the total cost of the project.

Indicatively, the amount of the grant from the EU will be between 50 000 and 100 000 EUR per project.

The European Commission reserves the right not to distribute all the funds available.

The amount allocated by the Commission may not in any circumstances exceed the amount requested. Moreover, the Commission reserves the right to award a grant lower than the amount requested by the applicant.

An organisation is not entitled to receive more than one grant from the Commission for the action covered by the selected project.

After approval by the Commission, a “grant contract”, a draft of which is reproduced at Annex VI, expressed in euros and specifying the conditions and the financing level, will be concluded between the Commission and the beneficiary. The originals of the finance contract must be signed and returned to the Commission immediately for signature. The Commission will be the last party to sign.

The payment methods are detailed in the draft contract (Article I.4), with a list of eligible and ineligible costs (Article II.14 of the general conditions and Article I.3 of the special conditions of the grant contract).

5. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Applications which comply with the following criteria will be the subject of an in-depth evaluation.

5.1. Eligible organisations

Grant applications are eligible if they are presented by organisations having a legal status and established in one of the 27 Member States¹⁷.

6. EXCLUSION CRITERIA

Applicants must certify on their honour, by signing the application form, that they are not in one of the situations mentioned in Articles 93 and 94 of the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities (Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 of 25 June 2002), which are listed below.

Applicants will be excluded from participating in this call for proposals if they are in one of the following situations:

- a) they are bankrupt or being wound up, are having their affairs administered by the courts, have entered into an arrangement with creditors, have suspended business activities, are the subject of proceedings concerning those matters, or are in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for in national legislation or regulations;
- b) they have been convicted of an offence concerning their professional conduct by a judgement which has the force of *res judicata*;

¹⁷ Based on the organisation's registered place of business or its place of main activity.

- c) they have committed serious professional misconduct recorded by any means that awarding authorities can justify;
- d) they have not fulfilled obligations relating to the payment of social security contributions or the payment of taxes in accordance with the legal provisions of the country in which they are established or with those of the country of the contracting authority or those of the country where the contract is to be performed;
- e) they have been the subject of a judgment which has the force of *res judicata* for fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organisation or any other illegal activity detrimental to the Communities' financial interests;
- f) following another procurement procedure or grant award procedure financed by the Community budget, they have been declared to be in serious breach of contract for failure to comply with their contractual obligations.

Applicants will not receive financial support if, during the grant allocation procedure:

- a) they are subject to a conflict of interests;
- b) they are guilty of misrepresentation in supplying the information required by the European Commission as a condition of participation in the grant award procedure, or fail to supply this information.

In accordance with Articles 93 to 96 of the Financial Regulation, administrative and financial penalties may be imposed on applicants who are guilty of misrepresentation or are found to have seriously failed to meet their contractual obligations under a previous contract award procedure.

To respect these provisions, the applicant and his partners must provide evidence that they are in none of the situations listed in Articles 93 and 94 of the Financial Regulation.

7. SELECTION CRITERIA

The selection criteria are designed to demonstrate the applicant's capacity to see the project through to a successful conclusion.

Applicants must provide evidence of stable and sufficient sources of funding to maintain the activity throughout the period during which the project is being carried out and/or grant-aided, as well as evidence of their financial participation. The applicant must also provide evidence of professional competencies, qualifications and/or experience relevant to the proposed project.

7.1. Technical capacity

Candidates must show that they have the operational (technical and management) capacity needed to complete the proposed action and provide evidence of their capacity to direct an activity corresponding to the dimension of the project for which the grant is requested. Particular attention will be devoted to the capacity for mobilising the public and to analyse of their contributions. The capacity to involve organisations from other EU countries would be an advantage.

Applicants must attach to the grant application a curriculum vitae for the project leader and for the personnel of their organisation who will actually do the work. They must also enclose a recent activity report.

7.2. Financial resources

In order to permit assessment of this criterion, applicants must submit with their application the following documents:

- annual accounts for the last complete financial year;
- the “financial identification” form (bank details) (Annex III), completed by the beneficiary and certified by the bank (with original signatures).

If, on the basis of the submitted documents, the Commission assesses that the financial capacity of the applicant is not sufficient, it may:

- reject the request for a Community grant;
- ask for further information;
- ask for the deposit of a guarantee;
- propose a grant agreement without a pre-financing payment.

8. AWARD CRITERIA

Commission Representations will evaluate eligible projects against four criteria:

- a) consistency – is the project's overall concept consistent with the:
 - i. objectives of Plan D?
 - ii. general and detailed objectives of the call (see point 2 above)
- b) quality – are the work programme and working methods of sufficient quality?
- c) feasibility – is the project feasible, based on the action plan?
- d) visibility – what is the likely effect of the project's actions to raise awareness?

9. ELIGIBLE COSTS

For all projects, the eligibility period for expenditure relating to the implementation of a project will be stipulated in the grant agreement and will, except as described in the next point, be no earlier than the signature of the agreement by the Commission.

A grant may be awarded for a project which has already begun only where the applicant can demonstrate the need to start the project before the agreement is signed. In such cases, expenditure eligible for financing may not have been incurred before responding to the call for proposals.

The eligibility period for expenditure will not exceed the time allowed under each type of action, and **may not go beyond**.

Only the categories of expenditure listed below are eligible, provided that they are properly accounted for and evaluated in accordance with the market conditions, and that they are identifiable and verifiable. **They must be direct costs** (i.e. generated directly by the project and indispensable for its implementation, having regard to the cost/benefit principle):

- **personnel costs** incurred exclusively for the purpose of implementing the project are eligible only where the accounting systems of the applicants in question can clearly isolate and demonstrate the percentage of staff time devoted to the implementation of the project within the period of expenditure eligibility, and therefore the percentage of personnel costs which can be attributed to the project;
- **travel / accommodation / subsistence costs** associated with the project. Organisations must use their own daily scales to calculate these costs. However, these may not exceed the maximum amounts set by the Commission¹⁸;
- **the cost of organising and running conferences and seminars** (rental of rooms, welcoming and reception services, interpretation, speaker fees);
- cost of **hire or depreciation of technical equipment and services** (only the depreciable element of durable goods can be considered);
- **information dissemination** costs (production, translation, distribution and dissemination costs, etc.);
- cost of **consumables and supplies**
- costs entailed by **other contracts awarded** by the beneficiary for the purposes of the project (also see Section 10);
- costs arising from **requirements imposed by the agreement**;
- **general costs** (or "**eligible indirect costs**": office supplies, sundry consumables, depreciation of computer equipment, etc.). These costs may be eligible if incurred by the beneficiary for the purpose of implementing the project, but **may not exceed 7% of total eligible direct expenditure**.

N.B.: indirect costs will not be eligible if the applicant already receives an operating grant from the Commission during the lifetime of the project.

10. NON-ELIGIBLE COSTS

Non-eligible expenditure

The following expenditure cannot be considered eligible **under any circumstances**:

- costs of invested capital;
- general provisions (e.g. for losses, possible future liabilities);
- debts;
- interest owed;
- doubtful debts;

¹⁸ Commission Decision C(2004) 1313 of 7 April 2004: General implementing provisions adopting the Guide to missions for officials and other servants of the European Commission.

- exchange losses;
- expenditure on luxuries;
- the production of material and publications for commercial purposes; however, monographs, books, journals, discs, CDs, CD ROMs and videos will be taken into consideration if they are an integral part of the project;
- VAT, unless the beneficiary proves that he cannot recover it;
- contributions in kind.

Contributions in kind

Part of the contribution from project sponsors to the project costs may be in kind. These contributions in kind must be included in the provisional budget under the "receipts" section, expressed as a financial equivalent of the services or materials provided, and for an identical amount in the "expenditure" section, but separately from the rest of the budget. In fact, they cannot be considered as eligible costs.

Contributions in kind refer in particular to the provision of durable capital goods, raw materials and unpaid voluntary work by a private individual or corporate body.

The amount declared by the beneficiary as contributions in kind must be valued either on the basis of objective factors or on the basis of official scales laid down by an independent authority or by an outside independent professional.

The cost of private charity work must be valued in accordance with the national rules regarding the calculation of hourly, daily or weekly labour costs.

Contributions in kind will not be accounted for as eligible costs but rather as an increase in the grant in terms of value or as a percentage of the eligible costs.

The Community contribution is subject to a ceiling relating to the total eligible cost (70% maximum of the total eligible cost), excluding the value of contributions in kind.

Subcontracting and calls for tender

Where the implementation of subsidised actions requires a subcontract or the launch of a call for tender, the beneficiaries of the grant must award this contract to the tender offering the best value for money, respecting the principles of transparency and equal treatment of potential contractors and ensuring there is no conflict of interests. None of the basic activities of the project may be subcontracted, et subcontracting must account for only a limited part of the project.

For all contracts, beneficiaries must keep evidence that the selection of subcontractors was competitive, involving at least three offers, unless it can be shown that only one supplier exists in a given market. Grants may only be awarded after a project's start date (given in the application) upon prior written approval from the Commission.

11. PUBLICITY

The Commission will publish the list of successful applicants (unless the publication of information is likely to endanger the successful applicant safety or harm his interests). The Commission will publish the following information in whatever form and on whatever medium it wishes, including the Internet:

- the name and address of each beneficiary;
- the subject of the grant;
- amount awarded and rate of funding.

12. PROCEDURE FOR THE SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS

12.1. Publication

The text of the call for proposals, the annexes and, for information purposes, a copy of the standard agreement can be obtained from the Europa website at the following address:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/dgs/communication/grants/index_en.htm &

<http://xxxxxxxxxx> (Website of the Representation)

12.2. Application form

Applications must be presented in one of the official languages of the EU.

This form can be downloaded from one of the above Internet addresses.

Only grant applications submitted on the application forms attached to this call for proposals and comprising all the necessary documents mentioned in Annex D will be considered.

Applications must be:

- typed; hand-written applications will not be accepted;
- duly dated, filled in and signed by the legal representative of the organisation;
- sent in quadruplicate (the original, which must be identified as such, plus three copies).

12.3. Submission of the application

Deadline for the submission of applications: 30 June 2007

Applications submitted after will not be considered.

Applications may be submitted in one of the following ways:

Proposals must be submitted on paper:

- by registered post to the following address, for which purposes the relevant date is to be the date of dispatch by post, as evidenced by the postmark or the registered delivery receipt issued by the postal services:

European Commission

EC Representation XXXXXXXX

- by hand delivery or courier service.

For security reasons, applications submitted personally or conveyed by a courier service can be presented only to the Commission's Representation xxxxxxx, and envelopes must be marked "DG COMMUNICATION, EC Representation xxxxxxx - Plan D Project". In the event of hand delivery, the submission date is the date of receipt. In the event of delivery by a courier service, the submission date is the date of receipt by the mail department.

Applications submitted by fax or e-mail will not be considered.

No modification of the application will be authorised after the submission of the application and its annexes. However, the Commission reserves the right to request any additional information needed for it to take a final decision on the award of financial support.

Applicants will be informed in writing when their application is received.

Only applications complying with the eligibility and exclusion criteria will be considered for the possible award of a grant.

Applicants whose applications are judged to be ineligible will be notified by mail, with an explanation as to why they were judged ineligible.

Tenderers will be informed, as soon as possible, of the decision taken by

the Commission on their grant application. No information will be released until the Commission's decision on project selection has been taken.

All selected applications will be subject to technical and financial analysis. In this connection the Commission may ask the applicant organisation for supplementary information, or possibly for guarantees.

Any applicant whose application for a Community grant is not accepted will be informed in writing.

12.4. Legal framework

- European Commission Communication dated 2 April 2008 - COM(2008) 158: "Debate Europe-building on the experience of Plan D for Democracy, Dialogue and Debate"
- European Commission Communication dated 13 October 2005 - COM(2005) 494: The Commission's contribution to the period of reflection and beyond: Plan D for Democracy, Dialogue and Debate
- **Information note from Vice President Wallström to the Commission – Plan D, Wider and deeper debate on Europe - SEC(2006) 1553, 24.11.2006.**
- OJ L 248, 16.9.2002 (Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 of 25 June 2002 on the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities)

- OJ L 357, 31.12.2002 (Commission Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 2342/2002 of 23 December 2002 laying down detailed rules for the implementation of Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 on the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities)

12.5. Contacts

The Commission department responsible for the implementation and management of the call for proposals is EC Representation XXXXXXXX

Additional information can be obtained by electronic mail or by fax, either at the electronic address xxxx@ec.europa.eu, or by fax number from ++ xx xx xx xx xx , indicating clearly the reference of this call for proposals.

Annexes:

Annex I: Application form (parts A and B)

Annex II: Budget form

Annex III: Financial identification form

Annex IV: Financial capacity form

Annex V: Legal entity form

Annex VI: Draft contract (for information)

Annex VII: Acknowledgement of receipt of the application

Annex VIII: Application checklist

FINANCIEEL MEMORANDUM

Mededeling van de Commissie:

Debate Europe: voortbouwen op de ervaringen van Plan D voor Democratie, Dialoog en Debat

BELEIDSTERREIN:	COMMUNICATIE
ACTIVITEIT:	SPECIFIEKE ACTIES MET BETREKKING TOT PRIORITAIRE THEMA'S, WAARONDER PRINCE

WERKPROGRAMMA VOOR: 2008

1. BEGROTINGSONDERDEEL EN TITEL

16.0304 - Specifieke acties met betrekking tot prioritaire thema's, waaronder Prince

2. RECHTSGRONDSLAG

Taken die voortvloeien uit de prerogatieven van de Commissie op institutioneel vlak als bedoeld in artikel 49, lid 6, van Verordening (EG, Euratom) nr. 1605/2002 van de Raad van 25 juni 2002 houdende het Financieel Reglement van toepassing op de algemene begroting van de Europese Gemeenschappen (PB L 248 van 16.9.2002, blz. 1), gewijzigd bij Verordening (EG) nr. 1995/2006 (PB L 390 van 30.12.2006, blz. 1).

3. ALGEMENE CIJFERS VOOR HET BEGROTINGSJAAR (IN EURO'S)

■ 3.a – Lopend jaar

	VK
Aanvankelijke kredieten voor het begrotingsjaar (budget)	12 830 000
Overschrijvingen	0
Aanvullend krediet	0
Totaal krediet	12 830 000
Reeds uit hoofde van een ander werkprogramma gereserveerde kredieten	0
Beschikbaar saldo	12 830 000
Bedrag van de voorgestelde actie	7 200 000 ¹⁹

¹⁹ Het bedrag van de actie (7 200 000 euro) maakt deel uit van de kredieten van de begroting van 2008 voor begrotingspost 16.0304 (Specifieke acties met betrekking tot prioritaire thema's, waaronder Prince). Er worden dan ook geen aanvullende middelen gevraagd.

De gedetailleerde uitsplitsing van dit bedrag is opgenomen in het besluit van de betreffende het

■ **3.b – Overgedragen kredieten**

N.v.t.

■ **3.c – Volgend begrotingsjaar**

N.v.t.

4. BESCHRIJVING VAN DE ACTIE

Debate Europe zal Plan D in 2008 en 2009 voortzetten. Het zal ervoor zorgen dat het algemene streven van de Commissie om actief Europees burgerschap te bevorderen, wordt opgenomen in een interinstitutionele inspanning, die besluitvormers op alle overheidsniveaus zal bereiken. Daarbij zal worden aangesloten bij de politieke prioriteiten van de EU-instellingen, alsook bij hun prioriteiten op het gebied van communicatie.

Er wordt een tweesporenstrategie voorgesteld, met een budget van 7,2 miljoen euro:

- een centrale oproep tot het indienen van voorstellen, die moet leiden tot subsidiëring van een overkoepelend transnationaal project, met een budget van 2 miljoen euro;
- gedecentraliseerde oproepen en acties ter ondersteuning van lokale projecten, met een budget van 5,2 miljoen euro.

In de voorwaarden van de pan-Europees oproep wordt expliciet vermeld dat Debate Europe, gezien de ervaringen van de eerste reeks transnationale participatieprojecten die in het kader van Plan D zijn medegefinancierd, steun zal verlenen aan een initiatief van een maatschappelijke organisatie waarbij burgerraadplegingen in alle lidstaten worden gehouden, een reeks gemeenschappelijke conclusies/voorstellen op Europees niveau wordt vastgesteld en, op basis van dit gemeenschappelijk platform, burgers worden betrokken in een dialoog met gekozen vertegenwoordigers en Europese politieke organisaties, in partnerschap met Europese politieke stichtingen.

Op nationaal niveau zal Debate Europe, gezien de ervaringen met de projecten van maatschappelijke organisaties die de vertegenwoordigingen van de Commissie in enkele lidstaten hebben gesubsidieerd, medefinanciering verlenen aan gedecentraliseerde acties die op specifieke behoeften zijn afgestemd (bv. op scholen en jongerencentra gerichte acties, tentoonstellingen, beurzen en festivals, conferenties, seminars, evenementen met ngo's enz.). Deze acties omvatten lokale oproepen tot het indienen van voorstellen en andere acties, zoals beschreven in het kader van Debate Europe (bv. internetdebatten, bezoeken van commissarissen, activiteiten in het kader van Europese publieke ruimten en proefinformatienetwerken, "going local" met behulp van de Europa Direct-centra, enz.).

jaarlijkse werkprogramma inzake subsidies en contracten op het gebied van communicatie voor 2008 (C/2008/924), dat de Commissie op 12 maart 2008 heeft goedgekeurd (tabel 2.6.2).

5. BEREKENINGSWIJZE

Het budget van 7,2 miljoen euro voor Debate Europe wordt als volgt verdeeld:

- zoals vermeld zal het hoofdkantoor van DG COMM één oproep tot het indienen van voorstellen doen waarmee naar schatting 2 miljoen euro gemoeid is en die moet leiden tot subsidiëring van een overkoepelend transnationaal project.

Daarnaast zullen de vertegenwoordigingen gedecentraliseerde oproepen tot het indienen van voorstellen doen, waarmee zo'n 3,1 miljoen euro gemoeid is. Er wordt waarschijnlijk één oproep per lidstaat gedaan, met een gemiddeld budget van tussen 100 000 en 200 000 euro.

Deze bedragen zijn schattingen op basis van de eerdere ervaring (de oproepen uit 2007 in het kader van Plan D betroffen een bedrag van 2,4 miljoen euro voor 13 lidstaten);

- voor de resterende 2,1 miljoen euro hebben de vertegenwoordigingen, naast de lopende contracten, zo'n 136 aanbestedingen gepland (131 met een waarde van maximaal 60 000 euro en 5 met een waarde van meer dan 60 000 euro).

6. WIJZE VAN BETALING (IN EURO'S)

Post 16.0304	2008	2009	2010	Totaal
Vastleggingen	7 200 000	0	0	7 200 000
Betalingen	3 600 000	1 800 000	1 800 000	7 200 000