



Forum Civique Européen
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2007 GENERAL ASSEMBLY
European civic forum
BRUSSELS, 20 FEBRUARY 2008

The general assembly of the European Civic Forum took place on 20 February 2008, in Brussels, in the premises of the European economic and social committee.

The following organizations were **represented** :

La Ligue de l'enseignement (France), ARCI (Italy), CIDEM (France), Animafac (France), Association des Etats Généraux des Etudiants d'Europe, FDO (Netherlands), Contact 2103, Forum permanent de la société civile, ANO pro Evropu (Czech republic), Pour la solidarité (Belgium), Cap Magellan (Portugal), Association Européenne de défense des Droits de l'Homme, Ligue des Droits de l'Homme (France), JTI (Estonia), European house of Budapest (Hungary).

The following organizations were **excused**:

Youth Work Ireland (Ireland), Citizens Union Paremvasi (Greece), Maison d'Anne Frank (Netherlands), CSV (United kingdom), IRI Europe (Germany), Documenta (Spain), GSI Italia (Italy), Kesalukioseura (Finland).

(1) [Adoption of the conclusions of the General constitutive assembly on 20 December 2006](#)

The conclusions of the General constitutive assembly of the European Civic Forum, that took place on 20 December 2006, was unanimously adopted.

(2) [2007 Annual report](#)

Jean - Marc Roirant (Ligue de l'enseignement) presented the annual report of the European Civic Forum (cf. appendix) in which are presented the main actions of the year.

The annual report was unanimously adopted.



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(3) Financial report 2007

Cédric Bloquet (Civisme et démocratie - CIDEM) presented the 2007 financial report of the FCE which corresponds to the period of July, 2007 - December, 2007 as the FCE was officially created in July, 2007.

No expenses and no recipes are to be posted for the 2007 fiscal year. However, an estimation of the financial cost supported by La Ligue de l'enseignement and Civisme et démocratie – CIDEM shows an estimated total cost of 50 000 euro. This is without counting on the financial effort realized by every member organization notably during the various meetings organised.

The 2008 financial year, which will concern a complete year, will be presented during the next General assembly that will probably take place in March, 2009. It is reminded that the vote that will take place during the 2008 general assembly will be opened to organizations having paid their 2008 membership fee. The amount of the fee is 20 euro. A call in order to collect the membership fees will soon be made.

The 2007 financial report was unanimously adopted.

(4) Election of the Board of directors and the Steering committee

According to the statutes of the European Civic Forum, the Board of directors is composed of 21 members. A third of the Board of directors is renewed every year for a mandate of three years.

In 2008, the outgoing associations and NGOs were the following ones :

Ligue de l'enseignement (France)
IRI-Europe (Germany)
Cap Magellan (Portugal)
Ligue des droits de l'Homme (France)
AEDH (Belgium)
ARCI (Italy)
European House of Budapest (Hungary)

The Anne Frank House of Amsterdam (Netherlands) has resigned.



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Therefore, there were eight places available at the Board.

The NGOs that have applied for this election, in the required deadline, were the following ones :

Ligue de l'enseignement (France)
IRI-Europe (Germany)
Cap Magellan (Portugal)
Ligue des droits de l'Homme (France)
AEDH (Belgium)
ARCI (Italy)
European House of Budapest (Hungary)
FDO (Netherlands)

It was unanimously decided that the 7 outgoing organizations were seen out for a new mandate of three years and that FDO integrates the Board for a mandate of one year.

The new Board of directors of the FCE is presented in appendix.

The new Board of directors unanimously elected Jean - Marc Roirant, representing La Ligue de l'éducation, as new President of the FCE.

The following Steering committee was unanimously elected:

Vice - presidents: ANO pro Evropu (represented by Monika Pajerova), ARCI (represented by Rafaella Bolini), Ligue des Droits de l'Homme (represented by Jan Robert Suesser);

Secretary : AEGEE-Europe (represented by Laure Onidi);

Treasurer :CapMagellan (represented by Hermano Sanches).

(5) 2008 Perspectives - Presentation of the « Plan C for Europe »

During the Board of directors of 16 November 2007, it was decided to set up a new 2008 – 2009 campaign : a « **Plan C for Europe** » (« c » as citizenship, civics, communication, civil dialogue). This new campaign is based on structuring civil society to promote participatory democracy at the European level. Participatory democracy is understood as being complementary of representative democracy.



The campaign leans on two main actions :

- [Action 1: support structuring the associative life in Europe](#)

It is said that the vitality of a democracy can be compared to the vitality of its associative sector. Associations and NGOs are a mean to rehabilitate politics and to promote commitment and active citizenship. So, it is the responsibility of FCE's members to facilitate, stimulate and support the creation of associations and NGOs especially in the new EU countries.

In order to do so, the FCE will inform about the necessity and the interest of associations and NGOs from the local to the European level and will encourage the implementation of « associative sponsoring / associative twinning ». An association in need of help or a particular support (furniture, computers, exchanges of practices, coaching in order to think and do a project, etc.) could be sponsored by another association. The FCE will foster this sponsoring by proposing, on its web site, descriptive sheets presenting the associations and NGO wishing to be a sponsor or to be sponsored.

- [Action 2 : institutionnalization of European civil dialogue](#)

According to its objectives, the FCE will continue to work towards bringing out a real European civil dialogue through reflection, exchange of ideas, proposals and by organizing public meetings allowing the debate to go deeper. More than ever, it is necessary to acknowledge the legitimacy of the « associative word ». One of the key elements of this process is the creation of a statute of a European association, for which the FCE fights since its creation.

According to the spirit of the « Plan C for Europe », public meetings have been and will be organized by the FCE in member states welcoming the presidency of the European Union. The FCE had already organized, in Lisbon, in November 2007, a meeting entitled « Civil society and the democratic process ». Another meeting was foreseen in Slovenia, in May 2008. Having had knowledge of the organisation on 2 April of a meeting dealing with civil dialogue and in order to concentrate all the efforts in the organization of the special event of La Rochelle, it was decided not to organize this meeting in Slovenia.



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The special event, the « **Forum of citizens for Europe** », will take place on 4, 5, 6 September 2008 in La Rochelle. It is organized in partnership with the European Commission and within the framework of the future French presidency of the Union. It is a gathering of citizens, associative and NGO leaders and key actors (representatives of national and regional government and from the European institutions, etc.) from the 27 members states of the European Union acting in favour of an active and participatory European citizenship.

The objectives and the participatory methodology which will be implemented as well as a pre-program of the event were presented to all the members. They were also presented during the public meeting that took place on the afternoon.

As regards the financial perspectives of the network, it is clear that it is necessary to discuss the question of the economic structuration of the FCE. CIDEM and La Ligue de l'enseignement will not be able to financially carry the network for ever.

For 2008, the FCE has obtained a financial support from the French presidency of the Union allowing the network to have a permanent employee. The European commission financially supports the organisation of the event of La Rochelle.

Afterward, it will be necessary to study other possibilities of financing. A particular attention will be paid so that the FCE does not interfere in the calls for proposals accessible to its members.

(6) [Public meeting of presentation of the « Plan C for Europe »](#)

In the afternoon, the FCE organized a public meeting, opened to non - member associations and NGOs, in order to present its « Plan C for Europe ».

Staffan Nilsson, President of the group III of the European economic and social committee pronounced a welcoming word. He asserted the will of the EESS and the group III to exchange with European associations and NGOs on the subjects that will be discussed during the event of La Rochelle.

The general objectives of the campaign a « Plan C for Europe » as well as its main actions were presented by Jean - Marc Roirant to all the participants.



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A detailed presentation of the special event organized by the European Civic Forum in partnership with the European Commission and the future French presidency of the Union, on 4, 5, 6 September 2008 in La Rochelle, was also realized in the presence of a representative of the European Commission. The representative of the future French Presidency of the European Union apologized for not being able to participate in the meeting.

This special event will be a gathering of citizens, associative and NGO leaders and key actors (representatives of national and regional governments and from the European institutions, etc.) from the 27 members states of the European Union acting in favour of an active and participatory European citizenship.

The main objective of this big European gathering is to propose a strong time of exchange and debate so citizens can be closer to Europe:

- by exchanging on themes with an active European citizenship dimension such as mobility, intercultural dialogue and the participation of EU citizens in local life;
- by encouraging a reflection on civil dialogue at the local and the European level and the role that associations and NGOs have to play on it;
- by informing and discussing about European current events such as the treaty of Lisbon and the elections of the European parliament;
- by informing about the existing European programmes which encourage a strong participation of citizens and civil society organisations in the European integration process.

The European Civic Forum will encourage the following methodology :

- an approach more concrete and turned to the action : throughout these three days of gathering, thematic workshops will be organized allowing a deep exchange on the treated questions, the exchange of practices and the development of concrete actions ;



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- an approach based on experiences : examples of concrete initiatives and successful projects encouraging an active European citizenship will be presented throughout the gathering. Besides, the organization of a « European associative village » where the participants, the organizations and the institutions could present their projects, their structures, the various possibilities of European financing, will encourage the emergence of new partnerships and actions for a Europe closer to citizens;
- a strong transversality and a dynamic of “regards croisés” at different levels : first of all, plenary sessions will be punctuated by thematic workshops. Times of a more general reflection will be followed by times of concrete proposals. A local and European approach will be privileged. During the exchanges in workshops, the European Civic Forum will stress the action of nearness of associations and NGO and the one of town twinning in the treated themes. Finally, local actors will be exchanging with other personalities proposing a more general lighting of the question;
- a participatory organization : the European Civic Forum will associate a large number of national and European associations and NGO in the organization of this event in particular by encouraging them to be strongly involved in the workshops;
- a time of exchange and training : in order to facilitate deep exchanges deepened between participants coming from very diverse horizons, every workshop will start with a first part of training. One of the speakers will present, in a clear and adapted way, the most relevant and most necessary notions for a full understanding of the treated theme;
- a greater local mobilization : the European Civic Forum will invite all its members to develop, before coming to the gathering, reflections, debates and local, regional or national animations around the key subjects of the gathering in order to enrich the debates;
- a big variety of actors : 800 participants are expected : European associative and NGO leaders, representatives of local, regional and national authorities and other key actors of the European citizenship. At least 300 coming from the EU countries.



The following pre - programme was presented :

Thursday 4 September 2008 - Encan in La Rochelle (plenary session)

14h–15h Official opening : A European citizenship to own : citizens for Europe.

15h15–15h45 Introduction: European citizenship today.

15h45-17h30 Round Table: presentation of the results of the « Barometer of the European citizenship »

17h40-18h30 Presentation of the event and official visit of the European associative village

20h-21h Official reception in the City hall of La Rochelle.

Friday 5 September 2008 – Encan in La Rochelle (workshops)

Exchanges and reflections in groups (max : 18 workshops)

Saturday 6 September 2008 – Encan in La Rochelle (plenary session)

Morning Conclusions of the workshops

14h-14h30 Round Table: Acting as an European citizen

17h- 17h30 General conclusion by the European Civic Forum

17h30-18h30 Closing ceremony

The debate with the participants highlighted the following points:

- The necessity of thinking about the number and the organization of the workshops in order to find a fine position between detailed exchanges and the possibility of presenting the conclusions of the workshops in a relatively short time;
- The importance to develop a participatory methodology allowing to mix local actors and « European experts » in the workshops;
- The utility to create a collaborative space on Internet allowing the exchange of information and proposals upstream to the event;
- The interest to give a real European dimension to this event by encouraging speakers and participants coming from the 27 member states.

To make out of this moment a strong European moment, media partnerships will be set up.



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EUROPEAN CIVIC FORUM

2007 Annual report

2007 has been the year of the official creation of the European Civic Forum (ECF). It was originally constituted in 2005 as an informal network of exchange and sharing. In 2006, several meetings of the Animation committee were organised in various European Union countries, that made ECF members sought to deepen their exchanges and to formalise their network. Therefore, on the **20th of December 2006**, the Centre International de Séjour de Paris held the **General constitutive assembly** of the ECF.

In the presence of around forty associations and NGOs, a Constitution was adopted and an Board of directors composed of 21 organisations from 14 countries of the European Union was elected. Pending the creation of a statute of European Association, the ECF will exist as an association under French law (1901 law).

Six meetings of the Board of directors took place in 2007.

The first meeting, on the **2nd of February**, was held at the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) in Brussels. A Steering committee was elected as well as a President, Nadia Bellaoui, representing La Ligue de l'éducation. During this meeting, the European Citizen Initiative (ECI) was debated, since the initiators of this action had asked the ECF to support their campaign. More particularly, an animated debate took place around the necessity to integrate into the ECI leaflet the fundamental values of the European Union and especially those inscribed in the European Convention of Human Rights and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. These values define the frame into which any citizens' initiative should take place. The members of the Board decided to join and support this action.

The ECI campaign aimed at collecting one million signatures from European citizens in order to ask the European Commission to introduce this initiative into European legislation with reference to article I-47 of the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe. Through this tool

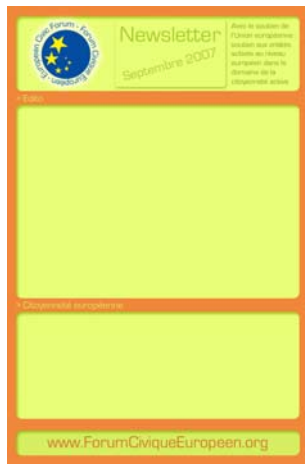
of participatory democracy at a European level, a million European citizens could ask the Commission to prepare a legislative proposal on subjects that concern them directly.

The meetings of the Board of directors of the ECF should be a time for information, training and exchange in order to build up a common culture for their members. They will thus be open to associations and NGOs leaders, to representatives of institutions or public figures, in order to enlighten Board members on issues of their interests. A first meeting was organised that day with M. Van Wassenhove, Chairman of the APEF, who came to present the "Plan A+" by M. Onesta, European Parliament vice-president, which is a proposal for reactivation of the Constitutional Treaty.

On the **1st of March 2007**, the ECF **integrated the liaison group of the European Economic and Social Committee** as a representative of the citizenship sector. The EESC is, at the European level, the institutional space for consultation, representation and information of organised civil society. It is composed of representatives of economic, social and civic organisations from the Member States. In February 2004, the Committee adopted an important proposals for a reinforced and more structured cooperation with European organisations and networks of civil society. In particular, it decided on the setup of a Liaison Group with European civil society organisations aiming to be both a liaison committee and a structure for political dialogue with these organisations and networks. It is composed of 15 European topic platforms.

The European Civic Forum is represented by Jan Robert Suesser (Ligue des droits de l'Homme), with Daniel Spoel (Civil Society Permanent Forum) as a substitute. The first mission of the ECF within this group was to make proposals on how to reactivate the institutional process at the European level in order to promote a Europe that would be closer to citizens. To that end, the members of the ECF have been associated to the development of those proposals, in particular by carrying out an assessment of how the EU is perceived in their countries and what the expectations of the population and civil society organisations are in this respect.

On the **11th of May 2007**, the Board of directors met in Rome in the ARCI premises. A new logo and a new website (www.civic-forum.eu) were presented to the Board members as well as new information tools for members such as the Flash Info newsletters.



Furthermore, it was decided that two types of meetings of the Board be organised. Firstly, meetings will be organised in Brussels in which the Board will decide in particular on projects or campaigns to implement and will adopt statements in relation to certain topics of European current events. But also, meetings will be organised in countries holding the EU presidency in direct link with local members of the ECF, and if possible with others civil society organisations.

On the **25th of June 2007**, the European Civic Forum is officially created (published in the 14th of July 2007 Official Journal).

On the **5th of September 2007**, the members of the Board met again in the EESC premises. After some intense thinking since the beginning of the year, the members of the Board and the Steering committee decided to revive the resolution voted on the 17th of December 2005 during the founding meeting of the European Civic Forum in Strasbourg, while taking into account recent European events (rejection of the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe, new Treaty of Lisbon, etc...). Indeed, associations and NGOs that work for the general interest must be heard. They also should reaffirm their commitment to participatory democracy and to the institutionalisation of civil dialogue in Europe of which the statute of European Association is a fundamental element. Thus, a new resolution was adopted.

In the afternoon, a public meeting was organised with members of the European Civic Forum (non administrators) and guest public figures. Three introductory speeches were programmed:

- *European civil dialogue : a state of affairs*, by Jean-Marc ROIRANT, co-chairman of the Liaison Group of the European Social and Economic Committee,
- *The representativity of associations and NGO in civil dialogue*, by Patrick FEVE (head of the "Relationship with Civil Society Organisations " unit at the EESC),
- *Structuring the "associative voice" and the various European platforms*, by Conny REUTER, Secretary General of Solidar, member of the management committee of the social platform and the Civil Society contact group.

The exchanges and debate that followed illustrated well the various elements of the resolution voted on the same morning. They also enabled refinement of the frame of the meeting on the 17th of November that will be dedicated to this topic.

On the **18th of September 2007**, the European Civic Forum took part to the conference on the European citizenship "Searching for Cinderella". It was organised by ECAS, a think tank set in Brussels.

On the **8th and 9th of November**, the European Parliament and its vice-president Gérard Onesta organised the first **Citizen Agora on the Institutional Reform of the European Union**. The ECF took part in the preparatory works for the Agora. As an original tool for debate and proposition within European civil society, the Agora included periods for exchange in plenary sessions and in workshops. In particular, the members of the ECF took part in Workshop B on "new rights". This dealt with the enforcement of the Charter of Fundamental Rights, the right of citizen initiative and the concrete effects of the British opting out on the Charter. They also took part in Workshop E on "new horizons" whose objective was to envisage future steps in the development of the European project following the future adoption of an institutional compromise (consultation, information and decision modes of European citizens, structuring and means of action of European civil society, new power of amendment proposal of the Treaties attributed to the European Parliament, simplification and transparency of the European institutional mechanisms).

On the **16th of November**, the Board of the ECF met in the Mario Soares Foundation in Lisbon. Exchanges were concerned with the new Treaty. In this respect, the Board members decided that the role of the network was to support and help its members to better inform citizens by bringing substance, thinking, and information to European issues. Each member should then be responsible to choose on which points to draw attention, according to the national context. In order to do this, the network had to build a common culture. The creation of "Plan C for Europe" ("c" as in citizenship, civics) is one of the solutions. This new campaign is based on a structuring of civil society in order to promote and give life to

participatory democracy at a European level. This approach is understood as being complementary to representative democracy and enabling to feed democracy and debate at the European level.

Several organisations members of the ECF took part in the citizens AGORA organised by the European Parliament in Brussels on the 8th and 9th of November. After a long and intense debate, the Board decided to write a letter to M. Onesta. They wanted to thank him for organising this event and to express the thoughts of the network concerning the strong and weak points of the meeting as well as the follow-up actions of the AGORA.

On the occasion of the Portuguese Presidency of the European Union, the European Civic Forum organised a meeting in Lisbon on the **17th of November 2007** in partnership with DECO, a Portuguese NGO in charge of consumer protection. It was held at the Representation of the European Commission in Portugal. The debates focused upon European current events and the European democratic process. This meeting was entitled "Civil Society and the Democratic Process". It gathered more than 80 heads of associations, representatives of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) as well as representatives of the Portuguese Presidency of the European Union and European institutions.

During the opening session, M. Jorge Lacão, Secretary of state of the Presidency of Council of Ministers and Ms Margarida Marques, Director of the Representation of the European Commission in Portugal, underlined the importance for the building of Europe to have a strong and structured civil society, feeding by its reflections the European public space, still to create. They both also presented the various actions carried out by the Portuguese Presidency of the EU and the Representation of the Commission to make the Portuguese Presidency a time for European citizenship with a strong implication for citizens, associations and NGOs.

Jean-Claude Boual (Permanent Forum of Civil Society / CELSIG) made an introductory speech on the existing dynamics within civil society since the beginnings of the European project up until today. The day's exchanges and debate focused on three key highlights: "The Civil Dialogue in Europe, State of arts and Perspectives", "Civil Dialogue in the Member States" and "The Associative voice in the Institutionalisation of the Civil Dialogue in Europe". Various NGOs and associations, among them the Ligue des droits de l'Homme, ANO pro Evropu, AEGEE-Europe, NCVO, Animafac, Solidar, and representatives of the City Council of Lisbon and the EESC, took part in these discussions.

M. Guillaume Klossa, Adviser to the French Secretary of State for European Affairs, delivered the closing speech of the meeting. He encouraged the attending associations to

continue with their work of awareness and information aiming at building a more civic and close-to-citizens Europe. He finally presented the priorities of the French Presidency of the European Union and the various actions that will be set in order to promote a citizen presidency.



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Membres du Conseil d'administration 2008 du Forum Civique Européen Members of the 2008 Board of Directors of the European Civic Forum

21 associations et ONG – 14 pays de l'UE
21 associations and NGOs – 14 EU countries

ASSOCIATION - NGO	PAYS - COUNTRY	DUREE DU MANDAT - MANDATE
GSI Italia	Italie -Italy	1 an
Animafac	France	1 an
ANO pro Evropu	République tchèque – Czech Republic	1 an
CIDEM	France	1 an
AEGEE	Belgique - Belgium	1 an
DOCUMENTA	Espagne - Spain	1 an
FDO	Pays – Bas -Netherlands	1 an
Contact 2103	Belgique - Belgium	2 ans
CSV	Royaume Uni – United Kingdom	2 ans
Jaan Tonissoni Institute	Estonie - Estonia	2 ans
Youth Work Ireland	Ireland - Ireland	2 ans
Kesalukioseura	Finlande - Finland	2 ans
Citizens Union PAREMVASSI	Grèce - Greece	2 ans
Forum permanent de la société civile	Belgique - Belgium	2 ans
La Ligue des Droits de l'Homme	France	3 ans
CapMagellan	Portugal	3 ans
European House	Hongrie - Hungary	3 ans
AEDH	Belgique - Belgium	3 ans
ARCI	Italie - Italy	3 ans
La Ligue de l'enseignement	France	3 ans
IRI-Europe	Allemagne - Germany	3 ans