



La Rochelle 4, 5, 6 September 2008

# EUROPEAN CIVIC DAYS

## "Mobility, Dialogue, Participation: towards an active European citizenship"

An event organized by the European Civic Forum



Education and Culture DG

'Europe for Citizens' Programme

High-visibility event





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"Mobility, Dialogue, Participation:  
towards an active European citizenship"



Our partners



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## I. INTRODUCTION

Created at the end of the Second World War as an economic and political integration model based on common values, the European project suffers nowadays from a democratic deficit and a lack of active support and engagement on the part of the citizens.

Confronted with this reality, and in response to the civil society actors, and particularly to the associative networks, the European institutions are in agreement on the need to introduce more participatory democratic mechanisms that will bring Europe closer to its citizens. The Treaty of Lisbon is, in this respect, the official consecration of “*an open, transparent and regular dialogue with representative associations and civil society*”, as stated in Article 11.



*Entrance of the participants*

working methods and build up a strong Europe-wide network. As privileged intermediary bodies between public institutions and citizens, associations fulfil an essential civic function, actively contribute to reinvigorate politics and help citizens identify more closely with the European perspective. We therefore consider it vital to give more credit and visibility to these organizations whose commitment brings a welcome democratic fillip to a European Union facing renovation.

In this context, the European Civic Forum, a transnational network of associations and NGOs involved in civic activities and citizenship education, organized on 4, 5, 6 September 2008 in La Rochelle the first *European Civic Days*, with the support of the European Commission, as a high-visibility event within the “*Europe for citizens*” program and as part of the “*Paroles d’européens*” public debate programme of the French Presidency of the European Union.

This event brought together some 1,000 representatives from more than 500 associations from across the European Union, from the Balkans, from Turkey, from Russia, from Ukraine and from Moldavia, to share their experience and



*Plenary session*

This three-day assembly covered several topics around the central theme of “*mobility, dialogue, participation*”, and their role as the vehicles of active European citizenship. These three elements form a virtuous circle that is a source of tolerance, integration, sharing and involvement. While *mobility* is synonymous with the process of meeting and engaging with other people and a source of wealth and learning, *dialogue* promotes closer social bonds. On the one hand, *civil dialogue* gets citizens involved in the policy making process while on the other, *intercultural dialogue* promotes integration and stimulates the community spirit. Finally, *participation* translates as involvement in civic life, exercising the right to vote and the right to be heard.

Therefore, promoting encounters, setting up an institutional framework for civil dialogue and organizing and optimising associative activities would be a step towards a new governance pattern based on a better articulation between the representative democracy and the participatory democracy.

The *plenary sessions*, *round tables* and *thematic workshops* have contributed to a deeper understanding of the concept of European active citizenship. A fair amount of time was also devoted to *workshops on specific topics*, giving participants the opportunity to share their own approaches to the dissemination of this sort of citizenship. These discussions resulted in specific proposals for promoting the emergence of a European perspective with greater relevance for citizens and their daily concerns.

## II. OPENING PLENARIES: DEFINING THE DEBATE

The *European Civic Days* were attended by various French and European political figures. **Ségolène Royal**, President of the Regional Council of Poitou-Charentes, **Maxime Bono**, Deputy-Mayor of La Rochelle and **Stéphane Villain**, Vice-president of the General Council of Charentes-Maritime expressed their gratitude for the organization of such an event in France outside of Paris, recognising the contribution of the local authorities and associations in the development of the European project.



*Ségolène Royal, Maxime Bono, Stéphane Villain*

Quoting the late European Parliament deputy, Bronislaw Geremek, Ségolène Royal highlighted right from the outset the role of civil society in the reform of the stalled European model, confronted with a “deficit of foresight and protection in a globalized environment perceived as highly threatening.” Ms. Royal also outlined the importance of building a social European project based on a better protection of fundamental rights in line economic freedom.

Regarding the participatory mechanisms that endow political action with legitimacy and meaningfulness, Maxime Bono drew attention to the need of organizing and developing the intermediate associative bodies right across the European territory to avoid the emergence of “a fragmentation of forms of European citizenship” that might hinder the policy making process.

The **official inauguration** was marked by a speech given by **John MacDonald**, spokesman of European Commissioner Jan Figel, responsible of Education, Training, Culture and Youth, in presence of **Edith Arnoult-Brill**, President of the French National Council of Associations (CNVA), **Jacques Henrard**, President of the French Standing Conference of Associations Organizations (CPCA), and **Conny Reuter**, President of the European Social Platform.



*John MacDonald*

As the European Commission is presently concerned with the development of an active European citizenship, Mr. MacDonald made public the recommendations of a recent report on European mobility<sup>1</sup> : eliminate linguistic, logistic and academic obstacles to mobility, encourage new forms of mobility such as cultural, associative and entertaining “summer sessions”, developing the professional mobility of young people by means of internships and volunteer programmes. This kind of initiative would provide a better interaction between the private sector, civil society and the public sector at all levels.

The current vision of the Commission is to build a Europe that is a real community of people, values and aspirations. Over the past 50 years, the integration process mainly concerned the borders, markets and institutions and made Europe become an important actor on the international scene. But Europe is a work in progress. Jan Figel’s message is an invitation to extend this integration process to the people. Based on a common set of values such as equality through providing equal opportunities, the promotion of the freedom of speech, respect and tolerance, Europe must involve its citizens more profoundly in the democratic process and equip them with the appropriate means. As citizens, we should, of course, continue to participate at local level; however, as members of a larger community, we must take a step towards our fellow citizens from other European countries and work together on taking Europe forward.

After having covered this institutional aspect, the representatives of civic organizations were invited to express their points of view. Édith Arnoult-Brill focused her intervention on the importance of adopting a statute of a Statute for a European association that will enable the recognition, at European level, of a fundamental right – the right to associate - along the same lines as the freedom of enterprise, since civil dialogue is, in her eyes, the best form of participative democracy and a vital element of modern society.

<sup>1</sup> Report on youth mobility by the High-level experts forum, “Mobility for All”, chaired by Maria João Rodrigues.

Jacques Henrard recalled the difficulties that the associative sector is facing in the area of mobility. In order to overcome these difficulties at a European level, Mr. Henrard expressed his desire to discuss, with the other associative actors, the drafting of a manifesto for the European elections, so that the political parties could reach agreement on common objectives such as the statute for a European association and the creation of a compact between public authorities and associations.

Finally, Conny Reuter gave a presentation of the European functioning of civil society organizations. He welcomed the French Presidency's initiative to support, for the first time within the framework of an EU presidency, the associations and their activities. Expressing his hope that this initiative would be ongoing, Conny Reuter also noted the importance of the communication of the positive effects of the European integration, whether on social issues or the fight against discrimination, in order to promote the image of the political project with the citizens.



Jacques Henrard, Edith Arnoult-Brill et Conny Reuter

### III. SPEECH ON THE EVOLUTION OF THE CONCEPT OF EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP



Yves Déloye

The official opening was followed, in the afternoon, by a speech on the evolution of the concept of European citizenship, given by Yves Déloye, professor of political science at the University of Paris I Panthéon-Sorbonne.

The Treaty of Rome put forward the idea of "*laying the foundations of an ever closer union between the peoples of Europe*". Originally, the European project was founded on the principles of economic integration and Europeans were "*common market citizens*". In the post-war environment, the idea of a single European market was to establish peace and revive economic competition between Europe and the United States.

The Treaty of Rome attempted, in its vision, to gradually remove all obstacles to free circulation not only of goods, but also of people, by prioritising certain human concerns.

So the past of the European citizenship is founded on this dual approach: the market dynamics and the bridge-building concept of establishing peace, civilization and promoting a whole series of values.

The term "European citizenship" came into being in 1992, in Article 8 B of the Maastricht Treaty. A supplement to national citizenship, "European citizenship" confers certain rights on EU nationals: the right to take part in European elections and local elections in the country of residence, even if different to the country of origin, the right of recourse to the European Ombudsman and the voting rights associated with the election by universal suffrage of European Members of parliament.

European citizenship partly dissociates citizenship and nationality, as all nationals of any of the member states are considered to be European citizens. It is an additional citizenship, directly related to the notion of residency. This definition of the European citizenship raises the problem of extra-community residents who are not granted with the same rights as the European citizens.

Yves Déloye concluded his speech setting out the first, true challenge faced by this European citizenship, which is the challenge of ensuring better integration for its foreign residents. Secondly, he stated his belief that European citizenship must lead to the emergence of a European identity that transcends national specificities, a highly complex process that will require mobility and dialogue.

## IV. ROUND TABLE: EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP AS SEEN BY EUROPEANS



The second part of the plenary session consisted in a round table chaired by **Jean-Michel Blier**, Chief Editor at France 3, with the participation of **Brice Teinturier**, Assistant Chief executive and Director of the department Strategies of Opinion of TNS Sofres, **Jillian Van Turnhout**, Vice-president of European Economic and Social Committee and Chief Executive of Children's Rights Alliance (Ireland), **Cristian Pirvulescu**, President of the association Asociatia pro Democratia (Romania) and Dean of the faculty of political sciences of Bucharest and **Raffaella Bolini**, Vice-president of the European Civic Forum and member of the National presidency of ARCI (Italy).

The discussion started with the presentation of the results of a survey conducted by TNS-Sofres Institute on the characteristics of European citizenship in France. On the occasion of the 9<sup>th</sup> "Barometer of citizenship", the association "Civisme et Démocratie" (CIDEM) and TNS-Sofres wished to focus on the issue of European citizenship and ask the question: What do the French think about their status as European citizens? This survey came up with some interesting results: first of all, 2 French out of 5 often think of themselves as European citizens. They also consider that it is the Euro that best symbolizes Europe (54%) and best brings the inhabitants of different EU countries together (69%). The interviewees seemed to be aware of their right to move freely within the European territory (75%), but only 58% knew that they could vote at the elections of the European Parliament and 48% knew they had the right to vote at local elections in the country where they reside at that time. Finally, out of some future European reforms that could contribute towards making people feel more European, French inhabitants chose the possibility of voting for the President of the European Union (54%), which clearly reflects the presidency's role within the French republic.



Raffaella Bolini



Brice Teinturier

To better understand these figures that reveal an underlying issue of European identity and commitment to the European project, we must refer to a larger context. In many other European countries, people are more and more dubious about the concrete benefits they get from belonging to the European Union.

According to a Eurobarometer survey, Romanians, and generally people from the Central Europe, perceive the European Union purely as a common market and not as a political structure. The great majority of Italians, about 90%, consider their financial difficulties to be related to the adoption of Euro as a common currency. So the real future challenge would be to bring this distanced Europe – 'the Europe of Elites' – closer to its people, setting this issue at the heart of the institutional debate. The time has come for an institutional reorientation, setting the issues that are important to the citizens at the centre of political debate and controversy, defining European citizenship not only legally, but also politically and culturally, on the basis of a common set of values and aspirations.



Jillian Van Turnhout et Cristian Pirvulescu

Ideologically speaking, we might notice the absence of « aspiration » in the European project, with the focus having been placed too often on purely economic issues at the expense of values and constructing a new European vision will be difficult without the support of active actors. The conclusions of this round table primarily centre around the need to investigate the issue of the mobility of young people in greater depth and the need for the creation of a common educational system at a European level. A major challenge in developing the sense of belonging to the European community would be to restructure the electoral system so that people actually vote for European candidates rather than for national candidates on national lists, reflecting the issues the national majorities are confronting.

## V. CLOSING SPEECH OF THE PLENARY SESSION



Jean-Pierre Jouyet

While addressing his speech to the audience, **Jean-Pierre Jouyet**, the French State Secretary for European Affairs, wished to thank the European Commission for their support of the European Civic Days: “This, I believe, is the first time that a Presidency of the Council has included in its agenda an event supported by the “Europe for Citizens” program set up by the Commission. The French Presidency wished to support this civic gathering, and the “European Civic Forum” clearly emerged as a logical partner for these three days of debate and reflection. This event also fits within the framework of the “*Paroles d’Européens*” programme, which I have launched in order to promote the dynamism and debate of European ideas during our presidency of the European Union.”

The French Minister also evoked the importance of the enlargement in constructing a powerful Europe on the international scene: “Enlargement is a concept that is close to my heart. (...) It’s worth noting that, whatever your opinion about the stance taken by Europe in the war between Russia and Georgia as regards the best approach to the resolution of the conflict, for the first time, a Europe of 27 member states presented itself as a global actor, and was able to play its part in settling a conflict at the very borders of Europe, and was able to bring an end to the hostilities between Russia and Georgia.”

Jean-Pierre Jouyet concluded his speech by expressing his interest in civil dialogue and the role of civil organizations within the construction of a Europe that would be closer to its citizens: “On this basis, we will be following the results of your work extremely closely, and we will be paying great attention to any specific proposals and guidelines that may emerge, which will be useful input for our own reflections. (...) Our real challenge lies in ensuring that all the citizens of the Union think of themselves as European citizens despite the fact that we know that public opinion in our various countries will continue to question the European project and its value. In a context shaped by the Irish ‘no’ vote and the economic crisis, the doubts expressed are perfectly legitimate and it is for just this reason that it is even more necessary for civil society play its role in the debate on Europe.”

*Jean-Pierre Jouyet, Jean-Michel Blier, Jean-Marc Roirant, Brice Teinturier*



## VI. SYNTHESIS OF WORKSHOP DEBATES



*Jan-Robert Suesser, Tamara Flanagan, Philippe Helson, Corinne Bord*

The workshop sessions held on Friday 5 September were an occasion to share showcases examples of concrete actions so as to better understand the way civil organizations work together with citizens for the development of mobility, dialogue and participation. A synthesis of these discussions was presented on Saturday 6 September in a plenary session moderated by par **Jan-Robert Suesser**, Vice-president of the European Civic Forum. Three reporters, **Philippe Helson**, General secretary of Contact-2103 association (Belgium), **Corinne Bord**, Vice-president of the French Standing Conference of Associations Organizations in charge of European affairs (France) and **Tamara Flanagan**, Director of European and Statutory Funding of Community Service Volunteers (England) resumed the discussions, the analyses and the propositions related to the role of civil society within the promotion of an active European citizenship.

### *Mobility workshops by Philippe Helson*

The debates on mobility issues mainly concerned the intercommunity dimension; nevertheless, the participants expressed the need to cooperate with the extra community countries. A lot of stakeholders underlined the importance of European programmes in developing the European citizenship. European programmes such as “Youth” with its “European Voluntary Service”, “Leonardo”, “Grundtvig”, “Erasmus” and especially “Europe for Citizens” with its “Town Twinning” activities were considered to be extremely useful tools for the development of civil society.



*Workshop*

Confronting ideas on mobility problems led to a common definition of major **challenges** for the future development of high quality cooperation actions:

- design programmes more accessible for young people, including those from most vulnerable groups;
- encourage young people to speak three languages: their mother tongue, an international auxiliary language and a personal adoptive language;
- stimulate the involvement of all categories of the population;
- reinforce the association’s capacity in countries where they are still weak.

The mobility reflection has illustrated the ways exchanges and encounters help to develop a feeling of belonging to a common European community and stimulate civic commitment. Various **recommendations** emerged from the debates:

1. develop long term operational programmes, provided with increasing financial means;
2. build up programmes at every level, both in the field of formal and non-formal education;
3. simplify the administrative procedures proportional to the amount of budget allowed in order to facilitate the access for all associations;
4. set up suitable financial instruments to support and to develop association twinning, following the example of Town Twinning.

In conclusion, the participants agreed on the necessity to provide access to such programmes to all categories of the population, regardless to their social background or educational level.

### *Dialogue workshops by Corinne Bord*

The dialogue workshops considered the topic out of two perspectives: the first, based on intercultural dialogue as a source of learning about diversity and otherness, the second, related to civil dialogue and its functioning at a national and European level.

#### **I. Intercultural Dialogue as Vector of Social Integration**



*Tamara Flanagan, Philippe Helson, Corinne Bord*

The European construction is based on the idea of unity within diversity. The major challenge consists in mutually respecting other's differences and trying to build a common project. The European Union is nowadays a multicultural entity with multiple identities. How should we distinguish between communitarian and extra communitarian identities on the European territory? Concerning the intercultural dialogue issues, the participants inquired the various ways to get to a better understanding, a better living together by accepting the others.

Some **propositions** have emerged from the debates:

1. make youth mobility policies compatible with the purposes of intercultural dialogue;
2. improve citizenship of residence through national and European educational, social or cultural programmes;
3. develop migrant reception and inclusion policies;

#### **II. Civil Dialogue as Governance Pattern**

Creating a public European sphere seems to be a major challenge in reducing the gaps between European citizens and the policy makers as well as the consequent civic delusion.

An important aspect of the debate concerned the diversity of national civil dialogue practices throughout Europe. Discussing with a great number of participants from different countries helped dressing up a general view of the evolution of this concept in Europe. While everybody agrees that the civil dialogue allows citizens to take part in the policy-making decisions, its concrete functioning differs from one country to another. So it is necessary to build up a European framework for civil dialogue in order to insure closer cooperation between institutions and civil organizations.

Some important **propositions** came out of these discussions:

1. move fast to set up a formalized dialogue framework with the organized civil society, following the example of charters (or « Compacts ») existing at national level;
2. enhance associations' practical involvement in European Union issues;
3. set up financial instruments to facilitate associations' participation within the civil dialogue both at national and European levels.

In conclusion, Jan Robert Suesser insisted upon the importance of taking into account the disparities of national forms of civil dialogue at a European level.



*Jan-Robert Suesser*

## *Participation workshops by Tamara Flanagan*

LNGOs and associations are essential intermediary bodies between citizens and public authorities. Major actors of the participatory democracy, civil organizations must communicate the civic vision of the European project.

The participation workshops contributed to define a series of important **challenges** related to citizen's commitment within the European project:

- reinforce the practice of an active citizenship through personal involvement in associative activities;
- consult with the associations at each stage of European policy development to make sure that the social dimension is been taken into account;
- having a legitimate civil society advocacy, recognised by the European institutions;
- ensure European civil dialogue reflects the diversity of national situations.

In this crisis context, the European construction must reflect to a greater extent the needs and the preoccupations of its citizens. The attendees advanced some important **recommendations** related to this matter:

1. support the development of active citizenship in the formal and non-formal education. Include this objective within the task of a lifelong learning institute;
2. promote the role of sport common practice as a tool for an active citizenship;
3. consult with the associations at each stage of European policy making;
4. be inspired, where appropriate by the tools of the social dialogue when developing the civil dialogue;
5. create a statute for the European association that would formalize the freedom of assembly;
6. reinforce the presence of associations within the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC);
7. acknowledge the associations' activities and volunteer practices by declaring 2011 the « European year of volunteering ».

## **VII. ROUND TABLE 'THE ROLE OF ASSOCIATIONS IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF AN ACTIVE EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP'**

Building on the progress made, the working session continued with a round table entitled "*The role of associations in the construction of an active European citizenship*". Drawing on the wealth of exchanges of these three days, this round table enabled speakers to debate on the role of the various associative actors in the construction of a more participatory European project.

Chaired by the journalist **Jean-Michel Dijan**, this round table gathered together **Odile Quintin**, General Director of the DGEAC (the General Directorate of Education and Culture) of the European Commission, **Gérard Onesta**, Vice-president of the European Parliament and **Jean-Marc Roirant**, President of the European Civic Forum, as part of the initiative of these initial *European Civic Days*.



*Jean-Michel Dijan*

The discussions started with a diagnosis of the breakdown of the civic bond and the crisis of governance apparent in a Europe the construction of which could almost be described as taking place 'behind closed doors'. In such a context of societal fracture, associations provide an ideal environment for debate and the formulation of projects, playing an important

role in generating enthusiasm in civil society. As spokespersons of the aspirations of the citizens, the associations can make a significant contribution to the construction of European public policy and ensure that the decisions made more closely reflect the citizens' concerns.

In the face of this situation of democratic deficit, the European institutional model must be restructured, introducing legislative proceedings that take more account of civil society. The idea, as Jean-Marc Roirant made very clear, is not to undermine representative democracy, but rather to re-orientate it with the inclusion of a participatory dimension.

The main idea to emerge from these three days of debate is that there is a need to establish a framework for this participatory democracy through the institutionalisation of civil dialogue and the adoption of a statute for a European association. This should consolidate and highlight the work of civil organizations, establish a structured and structuring dialogue and lend greater legitimacy to political decisions, objectives that constitute the guiding principles of the 'Plan C for Europe' campaign that the European Civic Forum intends to promote. During the ratification period of the Constitutional Treaty, there was talk of a "Plan B" for building a new Europe and the European Commission established a "Plan D" (D for dialogue, debate and democracy). On this special occasion, the European Civic Forum proposes a "Plan C" (C for citizenship, civic spirit, communication and civil dialogue).



*Jean-Marc Roirant, Odile Quintin, Gérard Onesta*

Civil dialogue is something that the European institutions incorporate in an unequal, and often insufficient, manner. Some effort has been made lately to take more account of the voice of the people, such as for example the initiative of Gerard Onesta, to organise a Citizen's Agora at the European Parliament, a sort of 'mass hearing' which was held for the first time in 2007, in the Chamber of the European Parliament, over a period of two days, with the attendance of nearly 500 representatives from every member country. As the Vice-President of the European Parliament explained, the aim of the Citizen's Agora was to build bridges at institutional, sectorial and national level, uniting and confronting different points of view from every country of Europe, articulated around transversal topics. Another proposal that received broad support from the participants was the creation of programmes for the twinning of associations. The workshop on the town twinning clearly demonstrated the important role this type of exchange can play in the construction of a European identity. This idea might be extended and adapted to the associational domain, as a means of promoting the circulation of European values and the development of lasting trans-national projects.

On behalf of the European Commission, Odile Quintin expressed her support for the introduction of a partnership with the associative sector, build on consultation and participation that would give the parties a sense of responsibility in terms of rights and obligations. Nevertheless, she insisted upon the need to maintain a large degree of flexibility in this regard, in view of the complex environment, characterised by the diversity of methods of civil dialogue in the different political domains, as well as by national sensibilities and traditions. In addition, Mrs. Quintin welcomed the organization of European Civic Days on the eve of the European elections, within a political context favourable to constructive debate on institutional renewal. She invited the participants to take part, from 2009 onwards, in the discussions on the 'post 2013' generation of DGEAC (General Directorate of Education and Culture) programmes, structured around three main axes: mobility, dialogue and participation.

## VIII. OFFICIAL CLOSING CEREMONY



*Roselyne Bachelot-Narquin*

**Roselyne Bachelot-Narquin**, the Minister for Health, Youth Affairs, Sports and Associative Life made the official closing address of the European Civic Days.

Expressing her delight at the opportunity to address, on behalf of the French government, representatives of civil society organizations from all over Europe, she reiterated the success of this meeting: “Your presence here today, in such numbers, is proof of the success of these first meetings.”

Speaking on behalf of the French government, and also as a member of the European Parliament, the French Minister affirmed the commitment of the French Presidency of the European Union to the issue of the mobility of young people in Europe.

She lent her specific support to the idea that the next European Youth Council should adopt a Recommendation on the mobility of young volunteers.

As regards the participation of civil society in European policy making, France will propose the project launched by the French Economic and Social Council to its partners and to the European Commission: the introduction of a procedure for the “certification” of European associations, acknowledged as representatives of the civil society, making them eligible to dialogue with the European institutions, in compliance with the new provisions of the Treaty of Lisbon: “The participation of civil society is clearly something that will foster greater involvement and the invigoration of our Union.”

As regards the statute for the “European association”, the Minister made the following comments: “The first step, to be taken by the Commission, will be the proposal of a new draft regulation, at the initiative of the Commission, following an impact study, to measure the value and scope of the proposed legislation. We therefore plan to undertake, during the French Presidency, the process of setting out the conditions for a consensus between member states, on the value of an optional statute. This should give European citizens a new platform for expression on social and economic issues of general interest.

This process for a statute should be carried on by the Czech and Swedish presidencies, according to the EU Troika mechanism, which you are all familiar with. You may be sure that your tenacity in promoting this statute will increase awareness of the issue among the Member States and their institutions.”

Finally, the Minister concluded as follows: “The Europe we all want, the Europe that is our shared ideal, will indeed be the result of dialogue between peoples. And the associative world is, by dint of its richness and diversity, one of the most fertile incubators of this dialogue in Europe.”

## IX. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Monika Pajeroва, Vice-president of the European Civic Forum and President of the Czech association "ANO pro Evropu" (YES to Europe) sent, by means of a video link, her special thanks to all the participants and political figures. She also took the opportunity to express her feelings about the Russian and Georgian conflict, which is a topic of concern for all Europeans.



*Monika Pajeroва*

Finally, Monika Pajeroва restated the importance of continuing the European Civic Days as they contribute to the development of an active and participatory European citizenship.

She invited the attendees to continue the exchanges in Prague, over the course of the coming six-month period, in which the Czech Republic will take over the presidency of the European Union.





## **EUROPEAN CIVIC FORUM: FOR A CIVIC AND POPULAR OWNERSHIP OF EUROPE**

The European Civic Forum (ECF) was created in December 2005 following a meeting of European associative leaders that took place at the Council of Europe in Strasbourg. This network gathers together a hundred of associations and NGOs within the 27 member States and beyond the European Union, involved in the development of an active European citizenship.

Information

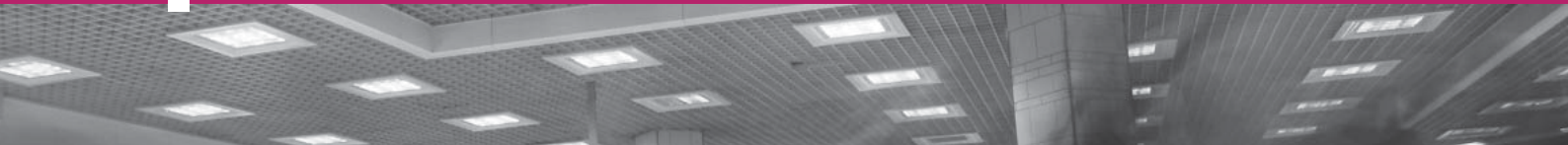
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