



One passport, one people?

The role of democratic citizenship in
building a new Europe

FutureLab Europe
the Council of Young European Citizens

March 2012

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ABOUT THIS REPORT

The following FutureLab Europe participants wrote the opening chapter as well as the blog posts quoted in chapter three. They also carried out the survey which is the subject of chapter two.

Estefanía Almenta López (Spain)
Milan Balaban (Bosnia and Herzegovina)
Thomas Baumgartner (Austria)
Lukas Brück (Germany)
Marian Cramers (Belgium)
Christoph Janosch Delcker (Germany)
Matilda Flemming (Finland)
Saila Huusko (Finland)
Eemeli Isoaho (Finland)
Nevena Jovanović (Serbia)
Apollonia Khan (France)
Mihails Kozlovs (Latvia)
Daniele Mallamaci (Italy)
Georgi Michev (Bulgaria)
Zuzana Nováková (Slovakia)
Lidija Pejčinović (Serbia)
Veronika Sobolová (Slovakia)
Doru Toma (Romania)
Laura Virué Escalera (Spain)
Ulyana Vynyarchuk (Ukraine)

Chapter one was edited by Michiel van Hulten, FutureLab Europe Course Leader at the European Policy Centre in Brussels. Chapter two was written by Michiel van Hulten, assisted by Hannah Collins. Chapter three was edited by Michiel van Hulten, assisted by Joan Manuel Lanfranco Pari.

Editorial guidance was provided by Gabriele Woidelko and Julia Pötter, respectively FutureLab Europe Programme Director and Programme Manager at the Körber Foundation in Hamburg.

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FutureLab Europe
c/o European Policy Centre
4th floor, Résidence Palace
155 Rue de la Loi
1040 Brussels, Belgium
info@futurelabeurope.eu

1. ONE PASSPORT, ONE PEOPLE

MANIFESTO BY THE FUTURELAB PARTICIPANTS

Europe has been united once before, with a single currency, a single administration and a single legal system. That union - the Roman Empire - was as grandiose as it was catastrophic, and like the EU, no stranger to institutional failure. It was one of several doomed attempts to create a political and economic structure capable of exploiting fully our continent's huge potential.

The EU as we know it today was constructed with these historic lessons in mind. It was based on the pursuit of economic integration rather than the imposition of ideology, religion or morality. In the course of its development it rarely sought to interfere directly with people's nationality, citizenship or sense of identity.

But in the last few years it has become clear that the current supranational set-up has reached the limits of what it can achieve. The EU has largely failed to harness the forces of globalisation, it has proved unable to communicate effectively with its own population, and some of its key policies have run into serious difficulties. Perhaps most importantly, the EU's bureaucratic modus operandi has proved wholly inadequate in the face of problems of increasing magnitude and complexity.

Once upon a time, the single currency was seen as the miracle answer to all these challenges. The euro, or so it was thought, would give the European economy the means to pull its weight in the global marketplace and would

serve as a tangible symbol of the EU's strength and usefulness. Today we know that this was perhaps more wishful thinking than based on calculation and reason. The recent turmoil has not just undermined the euro itself; it also threatens the future of the European project as a whole.

Recent events underscore the risk of relying solely on public policy to promote a sense of common destiny. The EU's legitimacy depends to a large extent on the effectiveness of its political, legislative and economic activities, many of which have dramatically improved the lives of its citizens. However, none of these policy achievements can serve as substitutes for an in-depth debate on Europe's long-term goals and ambitions. Nor do they automatically lead to greater public support or an increased sense of European identity.





On the contrary. The rapid enlargement of the EU with new member states and the expansion of EU legal powers have given rise to a sense of public disenchantment. Citizens feel they are not sufficiently consulted and lack the means to exercise democratic control.

We believe it is possible for citizens to come to terms with the EU and to make the project their own. But to get there, the EU must make more of an effort to involve the public in its thinking and in its activities. Giving more power to the European Parliament, for instance by making it the sole legislator and by giving it the power to elect (not just approve) the Commission and its President, would be one way of doing this.

Equally important is the question of what role to accord to national governments and national politicians in the European political system. Long before the Treaty of Rome was signed by the EU's original six member states, Bismarck remarked: "I have always found the word 'Europe' in the mouths of those politicians who wanted from other powers something they did not dare to demand in their own name". This remains largely true today.

If Europe's ground-breaking Union is to become more than just a historical footnote, it urgently needs to discover its soul. We often hear politicians musing about "an ever closer union" and the need to "speak with one voice". But rather than a single voice we need an understandable language, accessible institutions and a lively culture of discussion and debate.

The European continent today is home to a unique and diverse blend of talented and resilient individuals. The current crisis teaches us not to put blind faith in our governmental and financial institutions. But it should also encourage us to have more confidence in what members of society have to say.

The results of the informal survey we carried out among almost 600 young Europeans certainly bear this out. 73% of our respondents are between 20 and 30 years of

age, the demographic group that will constitute the EU's driving force in decades to come. The respondents' willingness to look to the European Union for common solutions to common problems, irrespective of whether they come from 'old', 'new' or non-European countries, is striking. Despite their socio-economic, ethnic, cultural and historical differences, these young Europeans acknowledge global reality by embracing regional unity - to the point of preferring a European passport over their national one.

We believe that, given half a chance, national electorates would provide solid backing to a European Union that recognises the human potential of this continent. Cultural and national identity are not givens but attributes which can be enhanced. Solidarity between nations becomes much easier when the rules of engagement are clear from the start.

As we put the finishing touches to this report, negotiations were opened with Serbia on its prospective membership of the EU. It marks yet another milestone in the history of the EU. FutureLab Europe already counts two Serbian nationals among its members. In this, and in many other ways, we hope to be a reflection today of what Europe may look like tomorrow. Our level of engagement extends well beyond voting, and our vision extends well beyond the next Brussels crisis meeting. If we seize this opportunity, then one day that will be true for all Europeans.

2. SURVEY RESULTS

ABOUT THE SURVEY

In late 2011 and early 2012, FutureLab Europe carried out a survey among almost 600 young Europeans about their views on European identity and the future of the European project.

Each FutureLab Europe participant was tasked with contacting at least 20 young Europeans with a short list of questions which they themselves drew up. The questionnaire contained a number of multiple choice questions as well as several open questions.

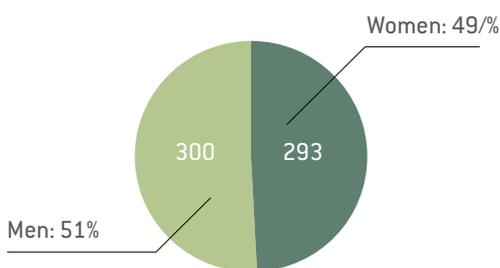
Most of the data was collected through an online interface. Some participants gathered their answers in face-to-face interviews. One participant collected his responses with a video camera: the result can be viewed in the video blog section of the FutureLab Europe website. The answers obtained by video interview are also included in the results given below.

This was not a representative survey. The aim was to get a flavour of the views of young Europeans across the EU, in the Balkans and in the Eastern neighbourhood, not to provide a comprehensive, scientifically sound picture of public opinion. It is heavily skewed towards young Europeans with a higher education background. For this reason, there is no cross-tabulation of findings, except for the breakdown between 'new' EU, 'old' EU and non-EU.

WHO TOOK PART IN THE SURVEY

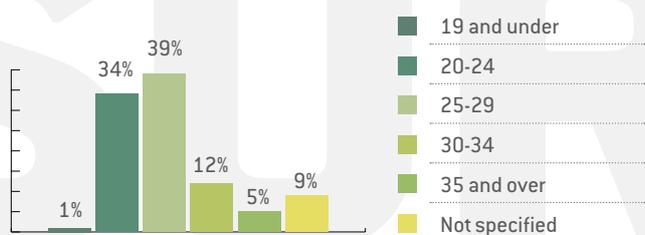
A total of 593 mostly young Europeans were surveyed. Of these 51% were men and 49% were women.

Gender



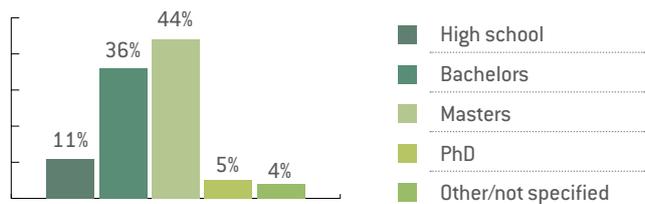
The vast majority of those surveyed (85%) were in the 20-34 age range.

Age



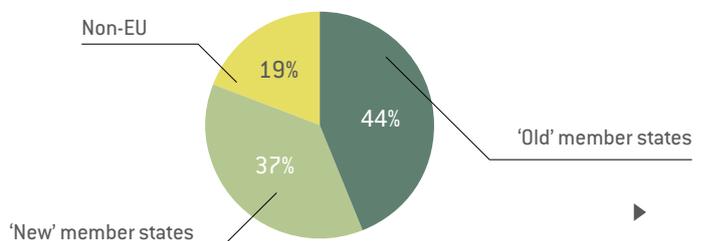
Education

Most of those surveyed (85%) were holders of a bachelor's degree or higher qualification.



Region

Almost half the sample was made up of nationals of 'old' EU member states (the EU-15 before the accession of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe). Nationals of 'new' member states made up just over a third, and non-EU nationals (mostly Balkans and Eastern neighbourhood countries) accounted for just under a fifth of the sample.



Nationality

The number of people questioned per nationality is largely a factor of the nationalities of the FutureLab Europe participants. For instance, Spaniards, Slovaks and Finns are numerically overrepresented within the FutureLab Europe group of participants.

Spanish	11%
Slovakian	11%
Bulgarian	9%
German	9%
Finnish	8%
Italian	7%
Serbian	6%
Ukrainian	6%
French	4%
Austrian	3%
Belgian	3%
Latvian with Russian roots*	3%
Serbs from Bosnia Herzegovina	3%
Czech Republic	2%
Macedonian	2%
Romanian	2%
British	1%
Dutch	1%
Hungarian	1%
Irish	1%
Latvian*	1%
Portuguese	1%
Swedish	1%
Other	7%

* This distinction was introduced by the participant who conducted the survey in Latvia.

Occupation

Of those surveyed, over one third are students; one quarter works in the private sector and one in seven is a public sector employee.

Public sector	14%
Private sector	26%
Student	36%
Academia	6%
Civil society/NGO	8%
Unemployed	5%
Freelance	3%
Other/not specified	2%



Results

All respondents were asked three multiple-choice questions. They had the opportunity to comment on their answer. Each table with answers is followed by a selection of quotes, some of which have been edited for English and/or length.

Question 1. If you had to chose between a regional, national or European passport, which would you choose, and why?

	Total	All	'Old' EU	'New' EU	Non-EU
National	213	36%	42%	32%	32%
Regional	18	3%	5%	1%	2%
European	334	56%	49%	63%	65%
Other/blank	28	5%	3%	5%	1%
TOTAL	593	100%	100%	100%	100%

The results show that over half of those surveyed would opt for a European passport over a national regional passport (although many said it should also state their nationality on it). This answer was most popular among 'new' EU and non-EU nationals.

"A European passport gives you freedom of movement, freedom of employment, freedom of services in Europe and you can know different people, various cultures. If you have just your national passport it is more difficult to travel, spread your ideas and experiences."

"I think that one of the great benefits of the European passport would be the diminution (if not the gradual elimination) of the differences and unequal treatments that citizens of some European Union countries are still confronted with when they are outside their countries' borders. Having a particular ethnic belonging would be thus less important than belonging to a wider family of the EU, which should aim to treat its citizens equally. However, this does not mean that one's identity is being suppressed, but that all citizens under EU umbrella benefit from equal rights and equal treatment (in terms of employment, residence, education), wherever they travel or work within the EU."

Over one third of respondents opted to keep their national passports.

"I am proud to be from the nation I am from and I want that to be shown. We also are able to enter many countries without a visa, so I do not want to lose that possibility."

"I believe in the concept of the Nation State. I don't think nations are just something that can be erased for some common good. They are products of history. They reflect the past and sovereignty of the people who live within their borders."

Finally, some respondents said that rather than a European passport, they would like to see a world passport.

Several argued against all forms of passport. One said:

"In my opinion, documents as passports are segregating elite countries from non-elite countries, and being used to be or not welcomed to a place. I think that the passport that you have got can give you privileges, or take them away from you... therefore I think that the kind of passport that you have (national, regional or European) does not matter at all in terms of human equality, and that other kind of documents should be invented in terms of international security, for example."

Question 2. The European Union is in trouble. What do you think should be done to get out of the current crisis?

	Total	All	'Old' EU	'New' EU	Non-EU
Let's get closer together and transfer more sovereignty to the European level. Only radical measures like a European economic government or eurobonds can save us now.	264	45%	53%	40%	35%
The European way of dealing with the crisis has failed. National governments can react much quicker and be more flexible, so it would be best for EU member states to reclaim more sovereignty, e.g. by abandoning the Euro.	102	17%	18%	19%	12%
I'm not bothered. European leaders have always found a way to cope with crises somehow.	79	13%	8%	13%	28%
It's too late - we have already reached the point of no return and it's only a question of time until the EU as it is today falls apart.	65	11%	10%	11%	15%
Other / not specified	83	14%	12%	17%	10%
TOTAL	593	100%	100%	100%	100%

Almost half of all respondents (45%) believe that more European integration is required to get Europe out of its current crisis. This figure is higher in the 'old' EU than in the 'new' EU member states.

"Only as an ever-closer union (jointly governed, for the most part), Europe will be able to maintain a strong voice in the world. This 'strong voice' is particularly important for Europe's achievements such as the social state, freedom of press, freedom of speech, etc."

"Europe is the best guarantor of peace. And it is the only possibility to make oneself heard internationally. Single states have no weight, compared internationally."

"The European Union project will fail if we continue with the old rules. It is not very wise to go on with a strong monetary union and a weak political union. Same rules for all, same rulers for all. A European government is therefore the solution for a long run, not only for getting out from this difficult situation."

While calling for a transfer of power to Brussels, respondents also emphasised the importance of increasing transparency and accountability.

Then there were those who argued that national governments were better placed to deal with the crisis:

"First, countries should solve their own internal problems and after that they can solve them at the European level. But abandoning the Euro is not a solution. National governments should take more responsibility for their debts, decisions etc."

"In order to achieve the objectives of the European Union some countries are losing autonomy, their own identity and people are suffering the consequences."

"Greece is the very source of all the problems. It has to exit the eurozone. Then, we should transfer more powers to the EU, create a fiscal union and start issuing eurobonds. The EU has to have much more powers and less issues should be resolved at an intra-governmental level."

13% of respondents said they didn't have strong views, and that it should be left to the politicians to resolve.

"It is the role of politicians, and even they have problems answering this question!"

"Actually the leaders of the EU have the necessary qualities to find a way to cope with the problems and difficulties that arise in the organization. And because of the common goal to all of them to save the EU they will find the proper solution."

One in ten respondents said that it was too late to save the euro:

“The reason? Simple! Europe cannot be united in diversity and ‘Merkozy’ cannot save Europe.”

“Decision-making is too slow, national interests are too strong, and citizens are too far removed from decision making centres.”

“Every union is fated to collapse from the very day it was started.”

Finally there were those who didn't pick one of the answers on offer, but presented alternative views instead:

“Both the EU and national governments should undergo a substantial reform in order to get out of the current crisis and to address the underlying crisis spawning from the severe lack of legitimacy both of them present. The way I see it, the fundamental trouble that the European Union faces is one of lack of democratic legitimacy. Both at national and EU level, the decision-making processes, the organisation and the policy outcomes, all present a serious lack of democratic principles such as open for participation, inclusiveness, accessibility, accountability, and thus legitimacy. Underlying the current economic crisis there exists a fundamental crisis of democratic legitimacy and of true representation of the European peoples. I would say that, fundamentally, that is what needs to be addressed.”

“I think the strength of the EU actually lies with cross-national collaboration. However, this should not only take place on a political level, i.e. ‘the elite’ decides, but needs to include exchange of ideas etc. from different levels and areas of society.”

Question 3. How can we promote/strengthen/foster the dialogue between citizens and European decision-makers? What role should citizens play in building a new Europe?

	Total	All	'Old' EU	'New' EU	Non-EU
There should be national consultation hours with European Commissioners and Members of the European Parliament.	107	18%	20%	19%	13%
European questionnaires should be issued twice a year via local authorities.	70	12%	11%	8%	21%
There should be a modern platform where European citizens can post their suggestions or petitions to the European Commission / European Parliament.	319	54%	54%	50%	62%
Other / not specified	97	16%	15%	22%	5%
TOTAL	593	100%	100%	100%	100%

▶ A clear majority of respondents felt a new platform should be created for submitting policy ideas to the Brussels policy-making institutions.

“This seems the most attractive option to me. But in case ‘modern platform’ would need to involve the internet, it would still exclude many people, especially in the poorer member states. Not every has internet available. Anyway, I don't think there is one single way to encourage a dialogue with policy makers. Modern and low-threshold communication is a definite plus, but it mainly attracts vocal and young citizens. This would also require a continuous adjustment of the media that is being used. Just to give you an example of how fast things can change: I am 27 and reasonable familiar with pc and internet, but like many people my age I just don't understand Twitter. Yet this is a medium that is constantly being bombarded as the communication channel of.. well who actually?”

“Direct democracy is no longer impossible with current technologies. Having an active dialogue with citizens is something that could enrich the EU decision-making process. These suggestions should be public so everybody is able to analyze them and keep the track of Commission's analysis as well as the future actions.”

One in five respondents called for national consultation hours with Commissioners and MEPs.

"I think MEPs should be close to the citizens. They should listen to their needs and problems. European citizens should have the opportunity to ask MEPs on their actions and suggest proposals for improvement."

12% of respondents supported the idea of 'European questionnaires' being issued twice a year via local authorities, to give ordinary people some influence over EU level decisions.

"The EU should be more aware of things that matter for people."

"I believe that the local authorities should be given a greater role in the future of the European continent."

The vast majority who answered 'other', said that a combination of, or all of, the above methods would help.

"If we want a union, the distinction between decision-makers and citizens should be erased or at least weakened. Those in power are also citizens! Citizens are not just passive beings but in a democratic system they are also decision-makers! What I am saying is that we, together, need to figure out what participation means. We need to understand that the European Union is nothing but the people in it."

"Make all European officials directly accountable to the people. All European officials should be directly elected by the people. They should not elect each other and they should not have the power to make decisions without citizen approval. If European officials knew that their jobs depended on how well they actually represented the people, they would be forced to act in such a way as the people demand, because doing anything else could and probably would result in losing their position."

"In my experience, European citizens are passive because they are unaware of how they can influence their governments and the European Commission and Parliaments. Heads of states need to stop sneaky treaty adjustments and stick to the principles they signed up for, giving citizens a chance to express their concerns and suggest other alternatives. Having fresh suggestions from the electorate could also help keep politicians alert as well as in check."

"As elitist as it may sound, especially coming from an NGO representative, relying to popular vote and creating crucial policies on the whims of the general public is not the wisest choice within turbulent times that need brave and often very unpopular decisions. Of course, transparency in decision-making, accountability of both national and European authorities is indispensable and ad hoc

consultations with independent experts and NGOs must not cease to exist. Nevertheless, strategic decision-making should be in the hands of professionals, since they are those able to make the long-term projections. In the case of failure of their policies it will be easier to examine the flaws of a single and coherent policy instead of a fragmented bunch of actions dictated by the momentary opinions of the general public."

Conclusions

This was not a scientific survey. Nevertheless, the results point so overwhelmingly in one direction that it seems reasonable to draw some general conclusions.

First, despite the current crisis, and partly because of it, young, highly educated citizens across Europe - the future political, social and economic elites who will determine the future of our continent - remain strongly in favour of working together at the European level to solve common problems, and they call on politicians to take the lead in this.

Second, many of those surveyed experience a strong sense of European identity. They would rather have a European passport than a national one. A real European demos would seem to be in the making. But the respondents consider their European identity as something that complements their national and/or regional affiliations - not as something that replaces it.

Finally, while those surveyed generally support handing over more powers to Brussels, they believe this should be done in a transparent and accountable fashion. They believe citizens should have more of a direct say in the way Europe is run, and they think the European Commission and the European Parliament in particular should do more to give citizens a platform so they can be heard.

3. FUTURELAB EUROPE BLOGS ABOUT THE FUTURE OF EUROPE

Since spending a week in Brussels in September 2011, the FutureLab Europe participants have been blogging about the future of Europe on the FutureLab Europe website. This chapter contains some of the highlights of the posted blogs, on themes as diverse as freedom of movement, the future of the eurozone, climate change, the EU's Eastern neighbourhood and gender policy.

The full text of these blog posts, as well other blog posts by the FutureLab Europe participants, can be found at http://www.futurelabeurope.eu/Get_involved/Blog/

SOLVING THE EUROZONE CRISIS

MERKEL'S SHORT-TERM RHETORIC

by **Christoph Janosch Delcker** (Germany)
Tuesday 15 November 2011



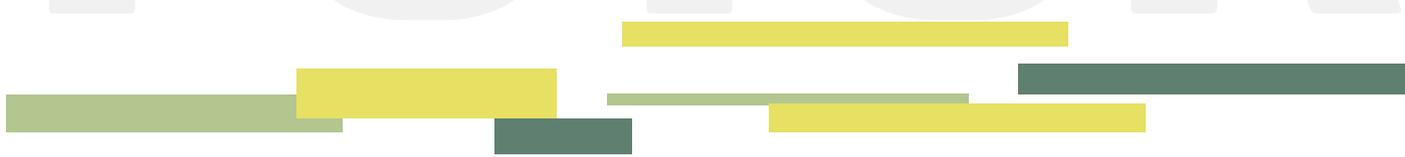
"[...] Merkel has found herself in a lose-lose situation and she has reacted by doing what she thinks she does best: by being pragmatic. As the crisis deteriorated, she replaced the pragmatism of the diplomat with the prosaic pragmatism of a banker: she dwelt on numbers, arguing with short-term economic results. Merkel was well aware that her potential voters were not Greek labour unions, but the German public. If only Greece had been affected, this might have worked. But as the crisis spread, the thinness of this short-term rhetoric became transparent, and the calls for a long-term strategy to save political Europe strengthened. Merkel is therefore left with just one option: to try to strengthen the European cause at home. [...]"

DEAR TRIPLE A'S: START THINKING TWICE

by **Thomas Baumgartner** (Austria)
Monday 5 December 2011



"[...] Quite a number of political figures do put forward that the concept of Eurobonds can only be realised if the EU turns into a fiscal union first. 'As long as we can't have any influence on the debt sinners, then Eurozone bonds are the wrong way', the Austrian Minister of Finance, Maria Fekter, recently said. Such bonds require budget discipline from all countries, the fulfilment of the Maastricht criteria and a sanction mechanism. 'Only when these requirements have been met, could I be in favour of Eurobonds', Maria Fekter added. Fair enough, Ms Fekter. But it's not a question of which step to take first, but how to lay out a roadmap for all these measures at once - fiscal union, eurobonds and maybe a redefined role of the ECB. Enough time has been lost over the last couple of months. What we need now is a great leap forward in order to tackle the problems we are facing. [...]"



THOUGHTS FOR TOMORROW

by **Marian Cramers** (Belgium)
Saturday 31 December 2011



“[...] The European Union prides itself in having created the first era of peace in a tremendously long time and perhaps rightly so. Yet it seems that decades of welfare, interaction and integration still haven't provided a foundation on which Europe's half a billion citizens can truly rely. Even the once so evident concept of democracy is barely managing to maintain its grip as the economic crisis tears through our societies. The heads of state in the hardest-hit countries are replaced overnight; others struggle hard to overcome the political deadlock that makes them unable to govern. At the level of EU, after a series of crisis meetings, timid decisions are taken but are lacking the popular support, legal legitimacy and economic common sense, and fall short in meeting the ambitions of the trillion euro packages. [...] If this crisis teaches anything, it must be that the EU's responsibility and accountability can no longer be loosely defined as the grey zone between national governmental limitations and globalised, ambiguous ideals. [...]”

HARD RESET - A BUTTON EUROPE SO DESPERATELY NEEDS

by **Milan Balaban** (Bosnia and Herzegovina)
Friday 13 January 2012



“[...] The European Union in serious trouble. If it is to survive, it must change and evolve - very fast. Improvements must be made almost overnight - quite literally. Markets need to do their business and we must accept that we have to pay for our mistakes. If markets are not allowed to restart at this point and if we continue to artificially keep them alive the European Union could reach a point of no return in the near future. Then it will be forced to start at the beginning and be rebuilt from the first brick. There are still many people who believe in the European Union. They still have dreams of a better Europe. I call that a solid foundation and see no reason to tear those dreams down. We need to build upon them and take decisive steps to sustainably grow and prosper as one Union, one Europe.”

STOP TYING UP RESOURCES - TALK STRAIGHT

by **Lukas Brück** (Germany)
Monday 23 January 2012



“[...] It is appalling to see the determination with which the value of the Greek population is downgraded in the public opinion while, simultaneously, satisfaction in German media is rising, and to also see that German politicians are evoking envy, distrust, and hate towards Greece in a populist manner. Part of the explanation undoubtedly lies in the picture Germans get of their southern neighbours. The best-read newspapers in Germany have increasingly been describing the Greeks as genuinely lazy, chaotic, and undisciplined and thus are making it easier for them to be disenfranchised [as it was one idea to take away the votes of underperforming countries]. It is not as much about questioning their membership in the European Union or cultural differences as it is about doubting their civic competence. [...] The project of Europe only works if every country is working together and doing everything in its power to strengthen the Union. [...]”

THE FUTURE OF THE EU

THE EPILOGUE OF THE EUROPEAN IDEAL?

by **Estefanía Almenta López** (Spain)
Sunday 25 September 2011



“I belong to the Erasmus generation. I have had the opportunity to live and study abroad without the nightmare of getting visas and exchanging currencies. I have friends from all across Europe. I speak four European languages. I feel European rather than Spanish. Oblivious to the political battle, the daily life of Europe's open frontiers has quietly shaped a European identity. A remarkable number of young Europeans have broadened their horizons thanks to their experience within the multicultural and multilingual European community. [...] Citizens will not feel European because a law proclaims they are. The European citizenship feeling cannot be built on limits and restrictions, but on cosmopolitan, mobile and multilingual people that feel at home anywhere in Europe. [...]”

A GLANCE AT THE EU NOWADAYS

by **Lidija Pejčinović** (Serbia)

Friday 6 January 2012



“[...] As long as there are individuals within the EU who believe unselfishly in the powers and possibilities which pave the EU way, there is a chance for the EU. Therefore, I will not write any more about the decadence of the EU idea and its unfortunate effects on its own soil, nor about the willingness of the EU people to make it sustainable, since it is evident that there are still people, foundations, political parties that believe in the EU, and, as long as this is so, the EU could recuperate and be re-established with new brightness and glory. [...]”

FRANKENSTEIN

by **Apollonia Khan** (France)

Tuesday 17 January 2012



“The European Parliament, since its first election by universal suffrage in 1979, has gained more and more power in the European decision-making process. [...] MEPs represent the European intérêt général, they are the voice of the European citizens. [...] Changing the rules for European elections by doing away with existing constituencies and replacing them with new transnational ones would force political parties to adapt, to finally address European issues [...]. National parties would become obsolete [...]. Without an electorate, they would have no chance of winning [...]. This would perhaps lead to building a real European political landscape, to a more political Europe, even to a more representative one.”

EUROPE AND ITS NEIGHBOURHOOD

A EUROPEAN FUTURE FOR THE WESTERN BALKANS - CHALLENGES AND PERSPECTIVES

by **Nevena Jovanović** (Serbia)

Wednesday 18 January 2012



“All Western Balkan countries made significant steps in fostering democracy and the rule of law in the region, strengthening administration capacities and improving internal and external security, but there are still serious challenges (related to corruption, organised crime, unsustainable economic models, open political issues and insufficient regional cooperation) that the region is facing. Enlargement fatigue is often given as one of the reasons for the slowing down of the process of European integration for the Western Balkan countries. [...] Also, we can identify a lack of public debate about the EU enlargement strategy and its possible redefinition among EU member states, although public opinion surveys have shown that EU citizens believe that enlargement in the past contributed to the stability and prosperity of European Union. [...]”

UKRAINE: DAZED AND CONFUSED

by **Ulyana Vynyarchuck** (Ukraine)

Tuesday 7 February 2012



“Dazed and confused, in my opinion that’s the way Ukrainian society feels these days. [...] As an emerging economy with a population of 48 million and with imperial Russia as its northern neighbour, Ukraine cannot afford the luxury of being politically and economically neutral. Under these circumstances that would mean political suicide for any country. And our partnership options? There aren’t so many. [...] Despite its internal turmoil and current troubles the EU should not turn its back on the Ukraine but keep its doors open.”



CLIMATE CHANGE

DURBAN AND THE NORMATIVE EU POWER

by **Zuzana Nováková** (Slovakia)
Friday 9 December 2011



“Unlike the Copenhagen conference in 2009, the ongoing UN Climate Summit in Durban, South Africa, is passing without much media or public attention. (...) What role should the EU assume in this process? The Union, with its relatively high environmental goals and progressive greening agenda, has already offered to do much more than other rich countries. Contrary to when the Kyoto Protocol was signed in 1997, Europe is no longer responsible for the majority of the world’s CO2 emissions. In fact, it managed to reduce its share to 11 percent of global emissions and has committed to further reductions. However, the EU has a bigger role to play than simply cleaning its own back yard. Some academics have cast the EU as a normative power, an actor serving as ‘norm entrepreneur’, spreading standards to the global arena; norms which will then cascade down the system and sediment. (...)”

GENDER AND TRADE

GENDER JUST TRADE?

by **Matilda Flemming** (Finland)
Tuesday 10 January 2012



“Trade is said to be the European Union’s most powerful external policy domain: the EU has the largest internal market in the world, and this makes it an attractive destination for trade. Furthermore, trade is one of the few sectors where the EU can act as a single actor and where the debate among member states is somewhat limited. (...) What, then, is the link between trade and gender equality? Trade can create possibilities to strengthen gender equality. (...) Internally the EU has worked hard to mainstream gender, but externally as a trade organisation, it has neglected gender equality. (...) It would be essential that the consistency between EU trade and development policy is improved, and thereby that the scope of gender equality in the EU external policy also includes trade.”

NATIONAL POLITICS

IS SLOVAKIA LEARNING TO BECOME EUROPEAN?

by **Veronika Sobolová** (Slovakia)
Monday 28 November 2011



“(...) Slovakia was the last of the 17 eurozone countries to approve the European Financial Stability Facility. The debate in Slovakia was different; it was not just about the necessity of approving the bail-out fund. The Slovak Prime Minister, Mrs Iveta Radičová, coupled the vote on the bail-out fund with a vote of confidence in the government. There was a lot at stake in this game. (...) How does Europe look at Slovakia now? It slowed down the decision-making in the eurozone and it nearly vetoed the decision of 16 other eurozone governments. Unfortunately, in Slovakia it was not just a question of solidarity, it was also a fight for political power that discredited the image of the country in other politicians’ and investors’ eyes. (...) We are progressing and growing economically but is our thinking still communist? Are we simply following the commands of the Union or are we trying to ‘think European’ for ourselves? (...)”

SPAIN: THE TWO MAJOR PARTIES MUST WORK TOGETHER TO RESTORE CONFIDENCE IN POLITICS

by **Laura Virués Escalera** (Spain)
Monday 28 November 2011



“(...) It is significant how in the campaign, neither Rajoy nor Rubalcaba made great mention of his plans regarding their position in the European Union, although they know that the solutions to the crisis are beyond Spanish borders. (...) It is clear that the new government’s goal is to recover the credibility and the confidence, and above all, alleviate the tremendous levels of unemployment. Economic recovery is essential for Spain, but also, people seem to ask other major changes, particularly after the huge demonstrations of Indignados in Sol and other squares. People call for more transparency, for the politicians to be closed to the reality, for the end of political corruption, and for a more effective democracy. The people demand that the two major parties in Spain and also other voices work together to restore the people’s faith in democracy, and not only to reassure the financial markets in Spain’s ability to cope with their debt. (...)”



ABOUT FUTURELAB EUROPE

Internal and external security, financial crises and solidarity, migration, demographic change and energy politics - these are only some of the areas in which Europe faces tremendous challenges in the 21st century. How can these challenges be met and how can the idea and the spirit of Europe be preserved at the same time? Which kind of commitment does Europe need from its citizens and how can young Europeans become involved in the future development of Europe as a democratic space based on solidarity, unity and peace? These questions are at the core of FutureLab Europe, an initiative launched in 2011 by the European Alliance for Democratic Citizenship, coordinated by the Körber Foundation, operated by the European Policy Centre and affiliated to NEF, the Network of European Foundations.

FutureLab Europe is aimed at committed young citizens of Europe from the networks of the partner foundations that are members of the European Alliance for Democratic Citizenship. Potential applicants for FutureLab Europe have to be ready to develop their own ideas and positions on matters of European relevance and have to be willing to take responsibility and action now, in order to help build the Europe of the future. FutureLab Europe is open to young European professionals aged between 20 and 30 who, if they are selected for its programme, become members of the FutureLab Europe community and are involved in a number of different programme elements.





FutureLab Europe is a project of the European Alliance for Democratic Citizenship, affiliated to the Network of European Foundations and initiated by the Körber Foundation. It is operated by the European Policy Centre.

www.futurelabeurope.eu
info@futurelabeurope.eu
Twitter: @futurelabeurope

