



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MIGRATION AND HOME AFFAIRS

Directorate A: Strategy and General Affairs
Unit A.1: Inter-Institutional Relations and Citizenship

EUROPE FOR CITIZENS – HISTORY DEFINES OUR FUTURE

2-3 April 2019

REPORT AFTER EVENT

DAY 1

Welcome and introduction

In his opening address, Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship, Dimitris Avramopoulos dedicated the event to all European citizens, describing the occasion as being "about our European dream and our shared journey, along the roads of the past, which serve as a source of inspiration for our common future." According to Commissioner Avramopoulos, the key question is how to strengthen European values, achievements and identity whilst maintaining pride in one's own heritage.

The Berlin Wall fell 30 years ago and it is 40 years since the first European Parliament elections, yet the battle of European values is ongoing to this day. "In these increasingly tumultuous times that we live in, we need to continue paying tribute to the struggles of our predecessors," he said. Peace and freedom should not be taken for granted. While democracy, solidarity and diversity are core to the European Union agenda then and now, "at the same time we hear more and more voices that wish to divide us." It is only through collective, European actions that we can provide solutions to citizens' concerns and challenges".

Panel discussion: 2019 – a crucial year for European citizens: looking back on Europe's history in order to look forward

Commissioner Avramopoulos was joined for a panel discussion by Vera Jourova, Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality and by Corina Cretu, Commissioner for Regional Policy. Moderated by Beatrice Delvaux, the Chief Editor of leading Belgian newspaper Le Soir, the discussion underlined:

- The role of schools in teaching history, how democracy works, how to balance powers, to counter disinformation;
- The need to complete the European Union project, which requires solidarity between Member States, a common foreign policy and defence systems to preserve peace, better ways of reaching out to citizens;

- The need to defend European values, to support civil society organisations while ensuring that they comply with law and rules.

In Commissioner Avramopoulos's view, it is legitimate to be a patriot and love one's country but he warned against nationalism, which fosters hate towards other countries.

The panellists agreed that Europe's citizens have a say about how they want the EU to go forward through casting their votes this May in the European Parliament elections 2019. Commissioner Avramopoulos however had a word of caution for voters in the European elections 2019: "If we ignore history, we will repeat it" he said.

DAY 2

EUROPEAN REMEMBRANCE

Panel discussion: Europe in 1989 and 2019 – the role of civil society in building trans-European solidarity, fuelling political and economic transformation, bringing Europe and Europeans together - remembrance practices over the past 30 years

The discussion was moderated by the Director General for Migration and Home Affairs Paraskevi Michou. Professor Włodzimierz Borodziej, (Historian, University of Warsaw), Dr. Tomáš Samek, (Anthropologist, Charles University in Prague) and Dr. Martina Steer (Historian, New York University) were the panellists. 52 participants in the "Europe for Citizens" programme has attended this session.

DG Michou explained that she was in Berlin in 1989, shortly before and after the fall of the Berlin Wall and she remembered the feelings of freedom and togetherness that this major event generated. She asked panellists if they saw the fall of the Berlin Wall 30 years ago as a significant step towards peace and more democracy in Europe and what remembrance challenges Europe faced today.

Professor Borodziej explained that the fall of the Wall had overshadowed all other symbols including national ones, which created a feeling of frustration in some parts of Europe, making 1989 a watershed in Europe. Since 1989, Europe has been largely peaceful with notable exceptions in former Yugoslavia and Ukraine. As to democracy, it is not stable. Thus 1989 is not the end of history and the European Union is still a project under construction.

According to Dr. Samek, 2019 does not only mark the 30th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall. It is also the 20th anniversary of Eastern European countries accessing NATO and the 15th anniversary of new countries accessing the EU. In spite of these developments, today, both horizontal and vertical threats jeopardize the "we" feeling. Horizontal threats include tensions between Eastern and Western Europe as well as between North and South (turning the latter into a new East). Vertical threats are social and economic divides emerging in individual countries between those who have benefited from the European integration and those who feel they have been less favoured and are more critical of the European Union. There is a need to address both horizontal and vertical divides.

Professor Borodziej challenged the existence of a clear-cut socio-economic demarcation between East and West. Unemployed people in the UK or young people in Greece may feel just as deprived as disadvantaged people in Eastern Europe. In his view, divides can also stem from other factors. For instance, a country such as Poland suffering from an inferiority

complex will be happier to join the bigger EU community than a more self-confident country like the Netherlands.

In Dr. Steer's view, memory is diversified in the EU: some memory is shared, e.g. holocaust, some is specific to some parts of Europe e.g. communism, colonialism. Whilst we have to live with this diversity, we should also shape a collective memory. Monuments and museums are useful for that purpose but we should also use new technologies and revisit education to reach out to young people. Videogames are increasingly used to learn about history. The process should indeed be inclusive. It should involve all segments of European society including the people who have migrated to the EU. She added that the collective memory is not necessarily the one we wish for. In coping with all aspects of the past, we should be guided by common European values such as humanism, tolerance, democracy, mutual acceptance.

Dr. Samek agreed that different memories had developed. For instance, 1945 is perceived as the year of liberation in Western Europe while in Eastern Europe, it marks the change from one dictatorship into another dictatorship. In the USA, they have managed to develop a strong common "we" culture in spite of big differences in the origins of citizens (European and Latin American migrants, African slaves, ...). There is a need to build on what unites us in our recent past and today. From that point of view, instead of naming the event "History Defines our Future" we should entitle it "History Influences our Future". Examples of uniting action include:

- Celebrate birthdays of world-known European writers such as Milan Kundera across Europe;
- Gather citizens around broadcasts on European politics on big screens in all capital cities, in all European languages;
- Study citizens' lives for longer periods in their areas to understand why developments such as Brexit occur; such studies may have the form of field-work research funded by the European Union;
- Use Facebook and information technology to develop a common identity.

When asked if heritage related to past crimes should be destroyed or preserved, Professor Borodziej replied that tokens from a shameful past should not be erased. He gave examples of how such tokens remained visible in Vienne and Danzig, with information to explain their dark sides.

Dr. Steer explained that building a critical commemorative culture and commemorating accomplishments and failures are necessary to protect democracy. However, we should maybe focus less on events and more on work areas (e.g. migration), common experience (e.g. visits of museums) and processes (e.g. how to use historical facts).

Participants in the audience raised a number of additional challenges:

- How to avoid the rewriting of history according to the political agenda
- How to reach out to young people. In the Western Balkans, young people are tired of remembering and many have left the region
- How to account for marginalised memories
- Where does Russia fit in European history
- How to acknowledge women's role in past events

In her conclusions, DG Michou underlined the role played by the “Europe for Citizens” programme in offering space to discuss history but also to develop visions for the future and she confirmed that work will continue in these areas at EU level after 2020.

Discussion: expanding the impact of projects beyond their implementation

The discussion was chaired by Beate Gminder, Director in charge of the Migration and Security Funds, Financial Resources and Monitoring in Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs of the European Commission.

In her introduction to the debate, she stressed that a difference should be made between outputs of projects and long-term impact and invited participants to share experience and good practice.

Participants engaged in the discussion raising the following points:

- If the Commission relies on projects to reach out to citizens and to convey messages, constructive demands could be formulated to the grant beneficiaries.
- Networking is important to increase projects’ impact. Events gathering project beneficiaries offer the opportunity to network and to create more sustainability. Therefore, events should be used as platforms for the exchange of best practice.
- Guidelines on how to reach sustainable impact could be helpful, but would project beneficiaries read and implement them?
- Europe for Citizens Contact Points can play an important role in adding visibility and impact to projects.
- Connecting with Members of Parliaments can also help to have higher visibility and more sustainable results.
- The strong involvement of towns and municipalities and a well-implemented media and communication strategy are essential factors for reaching impact.
- Event-based projects still seem to work, but implementation of innovative ideas can help increasing project impact.
- Communicating about projects means sometimes communicating failures and missed opportunities, which is a challenge.
- It remains difficult to achieve a change of attitudes at the level of society, but an impact on direct participants is always reached and can be measured.

Discussion: possible priorities and areas of work under the next multi-annual financial framework – where do we go from here

The discussion was moderated by Christine Grau, Head of Unit at Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs at the European Commission. Alexandru Olaru, Head of Unit at the Ministry of Justice of Romania participated in the panel as representative of the Romanian EU Presidency.

Christine Grau introduced the discussion explaining that Europe for Citizens will not continue as a separate programme in the future but will be merged with the current Rights, Equality and Citizenship programme in a new framework. She stressed that the proposed budget for

the proposed successor programme, the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values programme will not be cut contrary to many other programmes. The proposed future programme will allow for greater flexibility, more synergies with other EU funding programmes and a simpler legislative procedure for its adoption.

Christine Grau and Alexandru Olaru gave an overview on the state of play of the inter-institutional negotiations and the time schedule for the adoption of the future programme. Following the Commission proposal of May 2018, inter-institutional negotiations (between Commission, European Parliament and Council) started in autumn 2018 leading to a provisional political agreement on the future Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values programme that was reached in March.

The proposed Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values programme will have wider objectives than Europe for Citizens. It will aim to protect and promote rights and values as enshrined in the EU Treaties and to support open, democratic and inclusive societies. Its three specific objectives will be:

- to promote equality and rights (Equality and rights strand);
- to promote citizens' engagement and participation in the democratic life of the Union (Citizens' engagement and participation strand);
- to fight violence (Daphne strand).

The activities of the current Europe for Citizens programme will be covered by the Citizens' engagement and participation strand. The civil dialogue group will be maintained and it is foreseen to set up National Contact Points that would not only be in charge of the Citizens' engagement and participation strand, but of all strands of the future programme.

During the negotiations, a specific new strand on EU values was added to the proposed programme with the aim to support civil society organisations promoting fundamental values within the European Union at local and national level, including in countries with shrinking civic space. However, the setting-up of this new strand will depend on the budgetary provisions of the multi-annual financial framework (MFF) 2021-2028 still to be adopted.

During the discussion, participants stressed the following points:

- It seems a very good idea to strengthen the synergies, not only between the different strands of the proposed future programme, but as well with other programmes, for example Erasmus+ through the European Solidarity Corps or Creative Europe through European remembrance activities.
- Remembrance organisations agreed that European remembrance goes beyond commemorating victims and anniversaries of tragedies. The aim of the activities developed so far under European remembrance has been to overcome national visions of history and to develop instead a European vision. Therefore, the term "European remembrance" should be used in the future programme instead of the term "commemorative activities" that would be seen as a step backwards.
- The role of the future Contact Points needs to be clarified, given the enlarged scope of the future programme. As in many countries, the current structures are based in Ministries of Culture, there is the fear that they will not be re-designated by national governments. Representatives of Europe for Citizens Contact Points invited the

Commission to send guidelines to the Member States recommending the designation of entities that have experience with Europe for Citizens.

- Contact Points of the future Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values programme will need training and additional budget to cover all strands of the future programme.
- The introduction of multi-annual priorities for remembrance activities were seen as a positive achievement of the last years that should continue under the future programme.
- Spanish participants stressed that more attention should be given to the Spanish Civil War and its victims.

DAY 2

CIVIC PARTICIPATION

Panel discussion: the power of words - the role of civil society in building citizens' media literacy, countering disinformation and carrying the voice of European citizens

The discussion was moderated by Paweł Świeboda, Deputy Head of European Political Strategy Centre, European Commission. Viktoras Daukšas (Head of Debunk.eu initiative), Joanna Krawczyk, (President of the Board, Gazeta Wyborcza Foundation) and Sally Reynolds (Media and Learning Association, ATIT) were the panellists. 71 participants in the “Europe for Citizens” programme has attended this session.

Mr Świeboda introduced the debate by highlighting the quality of democracy nowadays, but also the changes induced by technology and new participatory tools. All panellists were asked: what is your stand in relation to democracy and democratic experience today? Are you more optimistic or pessimistic about it?

In response, Ms Reynolds said that at first, we need to set our values right and that everybody is responsible for it. Ms Krawczyk added that the perception of values and their implementation differ a lot in the different Member States and made a distinction between old and new Member States. Mr Daukšas raised the issue of disinformation and emphasised that it is much easier to spread it than to find and debunk it.

In response to the question “How empowering can media literacy be? How are words used today to spread fear?” Ms Krawczyk outlined that media literacy is perceived as a responsibility of NGOs. She re-iterated that other actors must also be involved. She mentioned that teaching of critical thinking should happen already in schools and underlined the need of changing and updating national curriculum in this regard. In her view, the reluctance of politicians to take concrete steps and introduce changes in the education system might be linked to their fear that once their voters develop good critical thinking, it could turn against politicians themselves.

She added that it is also a task of traditional media to act against propaganda and help their readers to develop critical thinking. But young people would be less interested in paper media than older generations.

In response to the question “Who bears prime responsibility of teaching people critical thinking?”, Reynolds agreed that too much in this field is left to civil society and that

Ministries of Education should get more involved. In her view, teaching critical thinking at school is as important as focusing on science and technology. In addition, she raised the issue of anonymity online and the fact that it is widely accepted without questioning it. Because of new technologies, the youth lives in a bubble and this might lead to atomisation of societies and, in some cases, to nationalism.

In response to the question “Is the magnitude of new initiatives of fact checking proportionate to the scale of disinformation?” Mr Daukšas explained how complicated and very resource – intense a task of fact checking is. Nevertheless, it does not bring profits. He raised the issue of the difficulty of finding appropriate funding organisations fighting against disinformation.

Questions and reflections from the audience:

- 5% of online users create 50% of hate speech. This needs to be looked at in this perspective.
- It is very difficult to tackle emotional argument with facts.
- To tackle disinformation, different formats for different audiences should be used. Linking fact with emotion makes it much more appealing to consumers.
- Online platforms do not see themselves as media. We are far too gentle on them. It is time that platforms admit they are media and take responsibility.
- Our ability to recognise truth from lie was there, but we lost it.
- Maybe the underlying question should be: Why are people so angry and anxious? Why do they want to consume fake news even though they know it is fake? Parallel to consuming drugs. When we feel bad, we need to find an enemy. More research is needed on these questions.
- Consumers are addicted to “free” information. Making consumers pay for “good quality” (fact checked) information can be a way to keep “low quality” information (fake news) for poor people.
- Importance of reviving local media and local connections was emphasised. Showing that media is there for people and that ordinary people are included in the debate. Giving more space in media for civic society issues.
- Why are the media so keen on covering negative messages?
- Media are going through a change of business model: advertising is not so lucrative anymore. It is time to think about alternative models, like subscription or donations, which could be better models for fact-checked information.

Mr Świeboda closed the discussion by emphasising that the democracies today are more mature than ever and with the help of new technologies, it is easier for people to be informed and to take part in public deliberations. However, there is a need for responsible citizenship where rights and obligations are given equal importance.

Discussion: expanding the impact of projects beyond their implementation

The discussion was moderated by Head of Unit Gilles Pelayo, Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency.

Question: How can we improve the program impact and ensure that the political recommendations from citizens reach the decision makers? How to take into account the feedback on the program activities? How to transform the information and who is responsible for it?

Structural Dialogue with citizens at local level should be encouraged. Civil dialogue in the new CERV programme will be a very good instrument as well. More effort should be made to monitor the implementation of article 11 of the Treaty, which calls the European Institutions to consult with Civil Society representatives. Despite the provisions of the EU law, citizens' participation rights are denied in some Member States. Long life cycle of European policies and programmes makes immediate feedback sometimes difficult.

An informed debate is important, including policy analysis, different forms of communication and multipliers' workshop and discussion. The main step would be the collection of data at local regional level, the transformation of information by intermediary organisation (i.e. Think Tanks) and delivery. The possibility to create specific platforms made of CSO at grassroots level was evoked to persuade a government to change position (such as in the Czech Republic, where a “national convention of EU affairs”, made of grassroots organisations, meets once a month and makes recommendations to the government).

Question: How to transform the information and who is responsible for it?
Involvement of citizens is a long-term process that cannot be evaluated in just half a year project. In order to get results, the programme should not support “one-shot” activities. Project duration could be extended from 2 to 5 years. It was proposed to hold yearly meetings of program beneficiaries to discuss the program results. The aim would be to draw a list of recommendations to be submitted to the European Commission and Parliament. This will allow a real impact of the program results, in terms of policy recommendations.

The use of artificial intelligence, as in France's ‘*grand débat national*’, was mentioned as well as the use of ‘civic tech’ tools. In terms of crowdsourcing, it was stressed that everybody interested in the analysis, evaluation of project should be able to participate.

The programme should be more visible through documentary, movies, broadcasting. On citizens' consultation on the CERV program, it was conducted at a very short notice, which made it difficult to articulate the opportunities for EU funding, in line with the political agenda. This should be avoided in the future.

Question: How to build EU networks of CSO and how big organisations could support small ones?

The importance of using intermediary organisations at national regional level was acknowledged. For CERV Program the request for cascading grants was put on the table. This has some positive aspects. However, the Commission does not want to hamper its link with the Umbrella organisations. Access to funding for newcomers should be guaranteed. Youth should be one of the main targets of the program, as it has been for the Europe for Citizens program. The support to networks is also essential, as the program gets bigger and more focused on civil society. Online applications can be a problem for small organisations. The way in which the programme will be implemented is as important as the size of funding. We should therefore focus on priorities and on how EU should engage on promoting values in the Member States. This can be done also by encouraging cross-cutting relations between organisations (i.e. on media against hate, migrants) as a lot can be achieved with less money.

Question: How to reach newcomers?

The narrative about identities should be avoided and we should talk more about common values. Young people should be encouraged to participate more in policies and in civil societies' activities. It was suggested to build partnerships between local authorities, citizens, the Commission on thematic issues as previously successfully done for the urban agenda of migration. Many comments from this partnership have been brought to the agenda.

There is a need to innovate the exchanges in the town twinning, including young people involvement. Alliances should be established between citizens and new practices should be identified for cities to step up in the debate when Member States are not doing the right thing.

Discussion: possible priorities and areas of work under the next multi-annual financial framework – where do we go from here

The discussion was moderated by Director Marta Cygan, Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs, European Commission. Bodil Valero (Member of the European Parliament) and Diana Mihaela Popescu (Director, Ministry of Justice of Romania) participated in the panel.

Ms Cygan briefly presented the successor program "Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values (CERV)" which will replace the current Europe for Citizens programme. The purpose of the session was to brainstorm on the priorities for the implementation of the future program taking into account the mid-term evaluation of Europe for Citizens.

The new program will preserve the legacy of Europe for Citizens programme and develop potential for new synergies and complementarities. The legal basis has changed, allowing now to have co-legislation by the Parliament and the Council. The CERV program is grouping the former Rights, Equality and Citizens Program and the Europe for Citizens programme. It consists of 4 strands. One of the strands called "Union values" was added on request of the European Parliament. A partial political agreement has been reached and budgetary aspects will be discussed in autumn. The Parliament welcomed that NGOs were included in the Commission proposal as beneficiaries of the new program. However, budget is not sufficient yet and needs to be increased. The new strand comes from a request from NGOs to get access to funding. The Parliament also requested the independence of program contact points from the Member states. The Parliament regrets that an emergency mechanism (EU values support mechanism), which would have allowed to sanction Member states not fulfilling EU rights values, was not part of the compromise. The program will also allow to better target all gender issues.

The Council negotiated on the basis of the Commission proposal and asked for an extension of its mandate, in order to take into account the request of the Parliament on a new strand. The extension has been accepted by the Member states provided that the budget for the new strand would not be taken out from the other strands and that its objectives would not overlap with other programs.

Question: How to ensure that the new Program will increase the understanding of common history and civic participation at the Union's level?

The Program provides the framework for this to happen. It also focuses on NGOs working at grassroots level, not only on umbrella organisations, which will allow getting even closer to Civil society. However, it should not be detrimental to those organisations and build up on synergies between existing EU networks and local NGOs. There is a crucial need for education on EU values and rights, as there is a huge lack of knowledge on these issues. The new strand is meant to promote those Rights and Values. It is important to mention the fact that EU funds are not allocated to projects which are not based on European values.

Question: What would be the complementarity between program strands and other program?

Synergies with Erasmus + in the area of education should be exploited. Town-twinning is a useful tool which could be also used in other areas of the program. The strand on Union values should not be seen as separate strand but rather as supporting horizontal priorities, supporting actors of change and increase NGOs advocacy and their capacity to react. Complementarities with the Justice program should be exploited as well.

Question: What about the visibility of the new program? Should communication be centralised or localised?

Communication is a crucial element. We should concentrate more on the content of the message and the way of its transmission, rather than only on the budget allocated to it. The program's visibility should increase and this could be discussed within the Civil dialogue group as well as with beneficiaries. Best practices should be shared in order to promote the best results. Participants should be Ambassadors of values and work together establishing Networking and Partnership in this area. The support of the National Contact Points is essential as they are working on the ground and are in contact with the programme's applicants.

It was suggested to make more user-friendly the map of projects funded by the Europe for citizens program (VALOR). Some criticism was raised against the lack of support by some National Contact Points in promoting events. On the other hand, NCPs recalled that the financial support did not increase since 2014 and if contact points are to receive more responsibilities, the financing should be adjusted accordingly.

Participants welcomed the addition of the strand “Union values” which CSO develop collaboration advocated for years. This will allow NGOs to have access to funding. It was suggested to involve organisations experienced in supporting NGOs to help define the modalities, eligibility criteria, type of activities for the future programme's calls.

Contact:

Marie CORMAN, tel.: +32 229 80025, Marie.CORMAN@ec.europa.eu

Dalia MURAUSKAITE, tel. +32 229 89281, Dalia.MURAUSKAITE@ec.europa.eu