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Editorial Note

Lars Josephsen, Editor

We welcome readers to the third issue of the Newsletter.

The CINEFOGO Network of Excellence is now approaching the end of its second year of lifetime, and the Network management is preparing a Mid-term conference that will address the theme 'European Citizenship', a key focus to the entire CINEFOGO project. More information on the conference will be found in this issue of the Newsletter.

As a prelude to the conference, we are happy to be able to present the essay 'European Citizenship as seen from Brussels', written for the Newsletter by Vice President of the European Commission, Ms. Margot Wallström. And we urge our readers to respond on this essay.

The character of the activities in the CINEFOGO Network has gradually been changing. In the first year or so, the initial phase, many efforts were focusing on building up necessary internal and external relations and communication structures. Such activities have more or less been replaced by working realities, resulting in a long series of workshops, conferences, and seminars, and direct outcomes in terms of reports, articles and other documentation material, most of which can be found at the CINEFOGO website.

In this issue we have adopted a new layout with improved readability, still aiming at keeping texts brief and clear, and with extensive links to articles and other material to be found at the CINEFOGO website at www.cinefogo.org. And we are satisfied to present the Newsletter in a pdf-format, thereby offering a facility for easy downloading of relevant parts.

Another new feature is concerning the CINEFOGO related PhD-network: A special site, named Students Corner, has now been established. Its direct address is www.civilsociety.se. The Students Corner site collects information on People, Programs, Publications, Places and PhD resources. A link is placed at CINEFOGO's website.

Again, CINEFOGO partners, scholars and other interested institutions, networks and individuals are urged to contribute on the European debate on *Civil Society and New Forms of Governance* through CINEFOGO Newsletter as well as CINEFOGO website.

Civil Society and New Forms of Governance in Europe is the Newsletter for the CINEFOGO Network of Excellence, supported by EU's 6th Framework Programme. / The Newsletter is published twice annually. / This issue: May 2007, Issue no. 3. / The Newsletter – together with CINEFOGO's website – appear as a clearinghouse of knowledge, skills and information concerning topics related to civil society and governance in Europe. The Newsletter invites its readers to contribute to dialogue and debate on these topics. **Next issue will be published in December 2007. Deadline for contributions: 15 October 2007. The theme of the fourth issue will be: A European Public Sphere?** / Contacts to CINEFOGO Newsletter should be addressed to the editor: Lars Josephsen, Roskilde University, Denmark. Email: larsjo@ruc.dk / CINEFOGO website: www.cinefogo.org / CINEFOGO Newsletters: www.cinefogo.org/publications/newsletters.

CINEFOGO Conference on 'European Citizenship' in June 2007

Lars Josephsen, Editor

Background and overall focus

The CINEFOGO Network of Excellence arranges its Mid-term Conference at Roskilde University (Denmark) the 1st to 3rd of June 2007. The overarching theme of the Conference is 'European Citizenship - Challenges and Possibilities', - an issue that seems highly relevant for the CINEFOGO Network, whose project subtitle is "the making of European Citizenship".

What is hiding behind the concept of European Citizenship? From a purely legalistic point of view, every person holding a nationality of a member state is a citizen of the Union (cf. box 1)*.

Several other definitions/demarcations of the concept of 'citizenship' can be found in the literature. Some examples are illustrated in 3 other boxes.

The Conference will address the issue of European Citizenship on a broad basis, in accordance with the Network's interest in reflecting on the relationship between civil society and citizenship in Europe and the impact of social movements on democracy, social participation and citizenship for European citizens.

Thus, results and accomplishments from the first 2 years of activities in the Network will be exposed at the conference. By focusing on debate on European Citizenship we want to discuss the possibilities and constraints in further economic, social and political integration in Europe.

Conference themes

The following five themes will be addressed at the conference in plenary lectures, in paper sessions, and in round table discussions:

'Denationalisation' of citizenship.

Trends towards 'denationalisation' of citizenship are examined, including the idea of cosmopolitan citizenship and identity as background for European citizenship. The importance of national European institutions has declined, but transnational institutions have not replaced them in determining the content and the scope of citizenship.

Organised civil society. The contribution of non-profit institutions in enhancing civic participation and establishing good governance in Europe is assessed, and the role of gender and ethnicity in defining the civic culture in Europe is taken up. As a background document serves the Commission's White paper on European Governance (cf. box 5).

Citizenship – contested and renewed.

This theme addresses the changing faces of governance and civic participation on local, national and EU-levels, and their links with issues of rights and participation. How to promote active participation among European citizens at all levels and for all groups of European citizens - across gender, ethnicity, and age?

Public Services in Europe.

Public Services in Europe - The provision of public services is key in this theme, and the relations to citizenship and governance, as well as the future role of public services are investigated. Is there a transnational concept of public services that could serve as a cornerstone of a future shared European model?

European Citizenship in a globalised world.

European Citizenship in a globalised world. How to bridge the gap between EU citizens and non-EU citizens in promoting an active European Citizenship? What is the range of citizens' cross-national rights in the context of migration - how to ensure these rights?

Plenary lectures and speakers

The plenary lecture structure of the conference, and the plenary speakers and their topics are listed below:

Citizenship and Globalisation – trends towards 'denationalisation' of citizenship

Dr. Klaus Eder, professor, Humboldt University, Berlin (Germany): *The relationship between Organised civil society and the constitution of European Citizenship*

Dr. Donatella della Porta, professor, European University Institute, Florence (Italy): *The Emergence of European Movements ? Civil Society and the EU*

European Citizenship in Globalised World

Dr. Gerard Delanty, professor, University of Liverpool (UK): *After the enlargement of the Nation-State: The Legacy of the EU reconsidered*

Dr. Göran Therborn, professor, SCASS and Uppsala University (Sweden): *European Citizenship in a Globalised World*

European Citizenship and Cultural Diversity

Barbara Einhorn, professor, University of Sussex (UK): *European Citizenship or Narrow Nationalisms: Challenge of Gender Equality*

Carl-Ulrik Schierup, professor, University of Linköping (Sweden): *Migration, Citizenship and the European Welfare state*

Organised Civil Society – enhancing civic participation and establishing Good Governance

Dr. Adalbert Evers, professor, Justus Liebig University, Giessen (Germany): *Intertwined - Changes in Citizenship and Changes in the Provision of Social Services*

Dr. Victor Pestoff, professor, Mid-Sweden University (Sweden): *Democratic Governance: Co-production, the Third Sector and Citizen participation in the Provision of Social Services*

Citizenship, Participation and Social Capital – how to promote active participation among European Citizens?

Dr. Claire Wallace, professor, University of Aberdeen (UK): *What makes a good citizen? European perspectives*

Dr. Raimo Blom, University of Tampere (Finland); Annamari Konttinen, University of Turku (Finland); Marri Siisiäinen, University of Jyväskylä (Finland): *Political participation as an Aspect of Good Citizenship: Normative Conceptualizations, Empirical Observations*

For further information please contact **Professor Thomas P. Boje**, Roskilde University, boje@ruc.dk, or Managing Director **Inger Vibeke Dorph**, ivd@ruc.dk or consult the CINEFOGO website, www.cinefogo.org.

* All five explanatory boxes are on the next page.

Box 1: European Citizenship (European Union)

Every person holding a nationality of a Member State is a citizen of the Union. A citizenship of the Union was established by the Maastricht Treaty in 1992. It is included in Part Two (Articles 17–22) of the EC Treaty. The EU citizenship complements national citizenship of the Member States and does not replace it. Citizens of the Union enjoy rights conferred by the Treaty and they are subject to duties imposed thereby.

The importance of citizenship of the Union lies in the fact that the citizens of the Union have genuine rights under Community law. The core rights conferred by citizenship under Part Two of the EC Treaty are:

- freedom of movement and the right of residence within the territory of the Member States;
- right to vote and stand as a candidate at elections to the European Parliament and at municipal elections in the Member State of residence;
- right to diplomatic and consular protection;
- right of petition to the European Parliament; and
- right to refer to the Ombudsman.

<http://ec.europa.eu/youreurope/nav/en/citizens/citizenship/citizenship/index.html>

Box 2: Citizenship according to T. M. Marshall

The concept of citizenship as a status which provides access to rights and powers is associated with T. H. Marshall (1963). Civic rights comprise freedom of speech and equality before the law. Political rights include the right to vote and to organize politically. Socio-economic rights include common welfare and social security.

The Penguin Dictionary of Sociology (1994), Third Ed., p 54

Box 3: Citizenship: Political and non-political aspects

Citizenship is as old as settled human community. It defines those who are, and who are not, members of a common society. Citizenship is a manifestly political enterprise, yet two general questions arise out of its practice which show that an appreciation of only the political dimension is insufficient for a proper understanding of it.

The issue of who can practice citizenship and on what term is not only a matter of the legal scope of citizenship and the formal nature of the rights entailed in it. It is also a matter of the non-political capacities of citizens which derive from the social resources they command and to which they have access. A political system of equal citizenship is in reality less than equal if it is part of a society divided by unequal conditions.

J.M. Barbalet (1988) Citizenship, p 1

Box 4: Citizenship: A sociological notion addressing inequality

Citizenship may be defined as that set of practices (juridical, political, economic and cultural) which define a person as a competent member of society, and which as a consequence shape the flow of resources to persons and social groups. It is useful to indicate the most important aspects of this definition.

First, it seems to be important to emphasize the idea of *practices* in order to avoid a state and juridical definition of citizenship as merely a collection of rights and obligations.

The word 'practices' should help us to understand the dynamic social construction of citizenship which changes historically as a consequence of political struggles. Thus the concept of social practice is intended to pinpoint the idea of citizenship as a genuinely sociological as distinct from a legal or political notion.

Secondly, this definition of citizenship places the concept squarely in the debate about inequality, power differences and social class, because citizenship is inevitably and necessarily bound up with the problem of unequal distribution of resources in society.

Bryan S. Turner (1993) Citizenship and Social Theory, p 2

Box 5: White paper on European Governance

The White paper on European Governance, was adopted by the European Commission in July 2001.

It contains a series of recommendations on how to enhance democracy in Europe and boost the legitimacy of the institutions. The aim is to modernise European public action in order to increase the accountability of European executive bodies to the elected assemblies and open up the Union's decision-making procedures to allow citizens to participate in making decisions which concern them.

Promoting new forms of European governance is one of the four strategic priorities which the Commission set itself for its 2000-2004 term of office.

The [White Paper on European Governance](#) COM (2001) 428 final

Recent Network activities – and a first look back

Lars Josephsen, Editor

The second year of the CINEFOGO Network of Excellence started September 2006. Since then the frequency of activities in terms of accomplished conferences, workshops and seminars has increased. The issues addressed by those events represent a broad spectrum of topics within CINEFOGO's field of interest, and several events have been planned in cooperation with representatives from non-CINEFOGO institutions and networks, a feature that supports the Network's Spread of Excellence efforts.

Events in the Autumn 2006 have highlighted the following issues: "European Identities" (WP8), "Social Capital in EU and the US" (WP18), "The Non-profit Sector in Europe" (WP16), "The Public Sphere" (WP7), and "Differences in Social Participation and Civic Cultures across Europe" (WP11).

Further, in the three first months of 2007, the following topics were in focus at CINEFOGO events: "Partnership – Keystone of Governance" (WP17), "Citizen Participation in Policy Making" (WP14), "Social Policies and Social Citizenship Rights" (WP13), "Work-Family Balance" (WP32P), and "Between States and Citizen" (WP15).

Further details concerning these activities and their outcomes can be found at CINEFOGO's website www.cinefogo.org. (Search under the actual WP i.e. work package).

When looking back on the first 18 months of its lifetime, it seems safe to conclude, that the Network of Excellence has been fairly efficient and fruitful. In that period, in total 23 work packages containing a number of milestones and deliverables have been successfully implemented.

Taking the size of the Network and the large number of work packages into account, schedule adjustments are inevitable. Changes are usually necessitated by unforeseen and uncontrollable circumstances, or are made with a view to improving the quality and effectiveness of the organization of Network activities.

A comprehensive evaluation of the activities of the CINEFOGO Network will be presented at the Network Council meeting 31st of May - 1st of June. The report will address scientific perspective, research integration perspective (interconnection of themes, gender aspects, etc), and structural perspective (including Spread of Excellence dimension). It will also touch upon implications for innovation and European added value, implied by the Network activities up till now.

Recent Spread of Excellence activities

Marta Nachtmannová, Spread of Excellence Office

Dialogue and dissemination

A good and fruitful dialogue engages both internal and external communication of the Network. An effective dissemination requires an excellent *knowledge management* inside the Network together with an exquisite overview and understanding of the *audience*.

As Wikipedia indicates, "*knowledge management comprises a range of practices used by organisations to identify, create, represent, and distribute knowledge for reuse, awareness and learning.*" CINEFOGO has set up several tools to support the knowledge accumulation, sharing and dissemination. The web portal www.cinefogo.org, represents the core learning & dialogue platform of the Network. This platform is supported by the Activity reporting tool interface allowing an upload of knowledge produced and shared within the WPs activities.

Knowledge production and accumulation are the first and necessary steps to the knowledge dissemination. It should reach all the relevant audiences – or target groups. Spread of Excellence (SoE) Office has already mapped out related projects, networks, institutions and

initiatives – the stakeholders which should get actively involved in the activities of the Network. A constantly amplified list of their web links is accessible at <http://www.cinefogo.org/learning-dialogue/related-projects-networks>.

But there are more target groups the Network needs to reach: policy-makers, journalists, civil society activists, doctoral students as well as unorganised citizens and particular groups, such as women, youth or migrants should be targeted apart of academics. How to do it?

TRANSAACT Trainings

The trainings welcome the Work package responsible for the Spread of Excellence, interested CINEFOGO members but also representatives of related projects and networks and generally the project stakeholders – or target groups. TRANSAACT Training should enhance the ability of sharing knowledge with different target groups and get them involved in the debate on civil society, governance and European citizenship issues. Participants will learn how to communicate research findings in a policy brief, memorandum or issue paper, how to organize a research-based debate

which would actively involve stakeholders and attract media or how to publish a savoury press release.

First training will take place the 23rd-27th September 2007 in Prague (Czechia), second training is planned for June 2008. More at <http://www.cinefogo.org/learning-dialogue/transaact/transaact-training>.

SoE Corner at the Midterm conference

One of the SoE programme outcomes which will be presented at the SoE Corner of the Midterm conference in June 2007 is the European Student Corner for civil society research. This virtual corner at www.civilsociety.se is an easy way for students to find relevant and regularly updated information and knowledge about research and teaching in the field of civil society and third sector.

Databases

A general Outcomes Database will be launched in June 2007. It will make available the project outcomes to wider public and simplify activity reporting.

CINEFOGO is also partner of the IConnectEU project, aiming at creating a generic infrastructure for joint dissemination activities across thematically related projects.

News from other projects and networks

Taking stock

3-5 June 2007
Conference

Conference **"The Open Society: The Role of Science, Multiculturalism, and Media"** at Campus Helsingborg (Sweden). The conference is organized by Lund University (Sweden). More at <http://www.icomm.lu.se/opensocietyconference>.

9-12 July 2008
Conference

The 8th International Conference by ISTR, Barcelona (Spain)

The Conference arranged by the International Society for Third-Sector Research will address **"The Third Sector and Sustainable Social Change: New Frontiers for Research"**, and will take place at CIES-University of Barcelona (Spain). The conference is the 2nd EMES-ISTR European Conference and it is organised in partnership with CINEFOGO Network of Excellence. More at www.istr.org.

9-18 July 2007
PhD Summer School

PhD summer school **"Citizens' Involvement in Local Policy Making"**, Turin (Italy).

The summer school is supported by the European Consortium for Political Research, ECPR. More at http://www.dsp.unito.it/it/summer_school.asp.

22-25 October 2007
Conference

Research Conference on the Social Economy (CIRIEC), Victoria, BC (Canada)

The theme of the conference is **"Building and Strengthening Communities: The Social Economy in a Changing World"**. The conference is organised by: The Canadian Social Economy Hub at the BC Institute for Co-operative Studies and the University of Victoria, British Columbia, Canada in partnership with the International Centre of Research and Information on the Public, Social and Cooperative Economy (CIRIEC). More at <http://www.socialeconomyhub.ca/conference>.

Publications
New scientific journal

New scientific journal: **Central European Journal of Public Policy**

The Central European Journal of Public Policy is a peer-reviewed electronic journal published in English biannually. The aim of the CEJPP is to provide academic scholars and professionals in different policy fields with the latest theoretical and methodological advancements in public policy supported by sound empirical research. The first issue is forthcoming. More at <http://www.cejpp.eu/>.

Read more on related projects and networks and web-sites at <http://www.cinefogo.org/learning-dialogue/related-projects-networks/>

The screenshot shows the CINEFOGO website interface. The main heading is "Related Projects, Networks and Web-sites". Below this, there is a list of related projects and networks, including research projects supported by the 6th Framework Programme, projects supported by the 5th Framework Programme, links to networks, projects and web sites that focus on civil society and new forms of governance, and interesting links. On the right side, there is a calendar for May 2007, showing dates from Sunday to Saturday. Below the calendar, there is a "News" section with several items, including "Central European Journal of Public Policy" (2007-05-05), "PhD summer school: Citizens' Involvement" (2007-04-25), "Migration: New DIIS publications" (2007-04-25), and "Conference on Religion, 19-23 Sep 2007" (2007-04-25).

CINEFOGO Calendar May 2007 – March 2008

May 2007 WP21	The 7th meeting of the PhD-Network on the third sector and civil society takes place 17-20 May 2007 . The meeting is organized by Muenster University (Germany). Contact: freisem@uni-muenster.de .
May/June 2007 WP1	CINEFOGO's Network Council , consisting of the National Coordinators of the CINEFOGO Network, held its annual meeting in Roskilde (Denmark) 30 May-1 June 2007 . The Council meeting is a closed event for Network Council members only. Contact ivd@ruc.dk .
June 2007 WP39Z	CINEFOGO Network's Midterm conference on "European Citizenship – Challenges and Possibilities" will take place 1-3 June 2007 . The conference will be hosted by Roskilde University (Denmark), chaired by professor Thomas Boje, Roskilde University. Contact: boje@ruc.dk or ivd@ruc.dk .
August 2007 WP18	On 27 – 31 August 2007 , a post-graduate summer school on "Civil society, social capital and democracy" will be arranged at Aberdeen University. The summer school will be headed by professor Claire Wallace, Aberdeen University, claire.wallace@abdn.ac.uk .
September 2007 WP6	The first TRANSAACT Training will be held on 23-27 September 2007 In Prague (Czechia). The training will enhance the ability of sharing knowledge with different target groups and get them involved in the debate on civil society, governance and European citizenship issues. The training is organized by CINEFOGO's SoE Office at Charles University (Czechia). Contact: Marta Nachtmannová, nacht@fsv.cuni.cz . A second TRANSAACT Training is planned for June 2008 .
September 2007 WP10	An international conference on "Non-EU Citizens – Civil Rights and Social Integration" is planned for September 2007 . Örebro University and University of Aberdeen organize the conference jointly, and professors Erik Amná and Claire Wallace will chair it. Contact: erik.amna@sam.oru.se or claire.wallace@abdn.ac.uk .
October 2007 WP30M	An international conference on Normative implications of new forms of participation for democratic policy processes will be organized in 4-5 October 2007 in Milan by University of Trento, and it will be chaired by professor Erik Amná. Contact: cinefogo@soc.unitn.it , emanuela.bozzini@soc.unitn.it .
November 2007 WP28K	In November 2007 , a workshop will facilitate "Exchanging of results on the field of immigrant and pro-immigrant associations concerning the healthcare system" at University of Trento (Italy). Professor Carlo Ruzza will chair the workshop. Contact: giulia.bigot@tiscalinet.it .
January 2008 WP38Y	An international conference on "Organized civil society participation in EU institutional processes" is scheduled to take place in January 2008 at University of Trento (Italy). Contact: emanuela.bozzini@soc.unitn.it .
February 2008 WP24C	On 4-5 February 2008 , a conference on "Work/Life Balances in Europe: Possibilities and Constraints" will take place in Plovdiv (Bulgaria). Chair and contact: Siyka Kovacheva, skovacheva@mbox.contact.bg or siyka@pu.acad.bg .
February 2008 WP13	On 15-16 February 2008 there will be an international conference on "The changing Faces of Security and Social Protection, and their Impact on Citizenship" for scholars and policy makers. The conference will be hosted by Centre d'Études des Mouvements Sociaux, Paris (France), and it will be chaired by professor Anne-Marie Guillemard (CEMS) and professor Adalbert Evers, Justus Liebig University, Giessen (Germany). Contact: benjamin.ewert@sowi.uni-giessen.de .
January 2008 WP16	In January 2008 an international conference on "Civic virtue and volunteering at the time of new welfare regimes" will take place in Stockholm, organized by professor Lars Svedberg from Ersta Sköndal University College. Contact: lars.svedberg@esh.se .
February 2008 WP36U	A conference in Roskilde (Denmark) on "Gendered and gendering Citizenship" will be held in February 2008 . Chair and contact: Hanne Marlene Dahl, hmdahl@ruc.dk .
March 2008 WP15	On 8-10 March 2008 , the 2 nd international conference on "Civic Elements in the Governance and Production of Personal Services" will take place at University of Ljubljana (Slovenia). Contact: Zinka Kolaric, fdv.faculty@fdv.uni-lj.si .
March 2008 WP37V	On 12-14 March 2008 an international conference on "European Development Aid and NGOs: Changing Notions of Civil Society in 'North' and 'South'" will be held in London (UK). The conference target group consists of scholars, NGOs and policy makers. The conference will be hosted by London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), and chaired by professor Jude Howell. Contact: i.j.schiemann@lse.ac.uk .
March/April 2008 WP11	A conference on "Differences in social participation and civil culture across Europe" will be organized by the Research Institute for Nonprofit Organisations in Vienna (Austria) by Stefanie Bixa, stefanie.bixa@wu-wien.ac.at or Eva More-Hollerweger eva.hollerweger@wu-wien.ac.at .

European citizenship as seen from Brussels

Margot Wallström, Vice-President of the European Commission
Brussels, May 2007

Editorial Note

It is well known that Ms. Margot Wallström, Vice-President of the European Commission, and Commissioner for Directorate-General Communication, has demonstrated a long lasting interest for questions like "Active Citizens", "Citizen' Rights", "European Public Sphere", and "Communication and Democracy", just to mention a few keywords. All these issues are treated through activities in the CINEFOGO Network of Excellence.

In her essay, written especially for the CINEFOGO Newsletter, Ms. Wallström addresses 'European Citizenship as seen from Brussels', and highlights some perspectives of this important issue, and reflects its actual political status. The essay deserves careful reading by scholars in the CINEFOGO Network, and other CINEFOGO stakeholders, and the Newsletter hereby urges readers to respond on Ms. Wallström's considerations."

One of the basic difficulties in any discussion of "citizenship" is being clear what we mean by that term. All the more so when we use phrases like "active citizenship" – and especially when we add the word "European"! Nationals of Switzerland or Serbia are European citizens but not citizens of the European Union. My neighbour who plays a lot of tennis, goes cycling, walks the dog and raises three children is a very active person: but does that make her an "active citizen"? Let's be careful how we use words.

One definition of an "active citizen" might be someone who takes an interest in public affairs, is active in their local community, publicly expresses their views and influences the political process. That could describe Ahmed, a teenager living in Clichy-sous-Bois. He and dozens like him were very active in their local community in autumn 2005. They expressed their views very clearly by torching cars in the street, thus influencing the outcome of this year's presidential elections in France. But Ahmed – unemployed and facing a lifetime of racial discrimination – probably doesn't feel his citizenship (French or European) means very much.

That example illustrates the urgent need for policies to help integrate young people, especially those from immigrant communities, into mainstream society and its democratic life. The process has to start with giving them a decent education and real jobs. But it has to go beyond that – which is why we have programmes, at national and European level, to encourage people to become

"active citizens".

However, if we are to design such programmes effectively and measure their success accurately, we need to know what we're aiming at. What, for example, is the European Commission aiming at in its programmes to promote "active European citizenship"?

Commission programmes to promote 'active European citizenship'

The 'Citizens for Europe' and 'Youth in Action' programmes (2007-2013) aim to bring together people from different countries so they can develop mutual understanding, solidarity and appreciation of their cultural diversity. No-one, I think, could object to that.

More controversial, no doubt, is the aim of giving people a sense of "belonging to Europe" and stimulating them to become actively involved in constructing an "ever closer Europe". This is an overtly integrationist agenda, and eurosceptics will complain that we are spending public money on a form of political propaganda. I'll return to that issue later.

Developing understanding and solidarity – or at least tolerance – between people is always good for society; but they are passive qualities. To quote an earlier CINEFOGO newsletter: "Being tolerant is surely a quality of a good citizen but its not exactly active citizenship".

In what sense, then, is the Commission encouraging "active citizenship"? In the case of the 'Youth in Action' programme, we are encouraging young people to get involved in *volunteering* – spending some of their free time working on social,

environmental or development projects.

But beyond that we want people (of all ages) to become more *politically active* citizens of the European Union. To quote again your previous newsletters, "most of us are spectators and consumers of professional politics"; but "in many countries, people have lost their trust in politicians, political parties, central institutions or the political game..."

As a result, fewer and fewer people are taking part in elections or joining political parties, trades unions and NGOs. However, these trends may reflect not so much a growth in public apathy as the growth in internet use, especially by young people. For many people, the World Wide Web has become the 'market square' of the global village, and it is here that many citizens now like to 'meet' to discuss the issues of the day and to organize political activities.

They are surely 'active citizens'. But internet activism cannot be a substitute for representative democracy or for the institutional framework of EU decision-making. The Commission very much favours public policy debates online, but we want these debates to motivate people to turn out and vote in local, national and European elections.

European Union citizens' rights

Another aim of EU programmes like 'Citizens for Europe' and 'Youth in Action' is to make people more aware of their *fundamental rights* as citizens of the European Union. For example, the right to live, study and work in another EU country. At present, relatively few EU

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citizens avail themselves of these rights – partly due to lack of awareness. There are other reasons too. Many people who consider moving to another European country are put off by language barriers, administrative hassles and difficulties in accessing information.

The Commission is concerned about this and is taking action to help change the situation. We have, for example, set up a one-stop-shop internet portal (the “Your Europe” portal <http://europa.eu.int/youreurope>) where a wide range of information and advice is available to help EU citizens exercise their rights in the internal market.

But I believe EU citizens have other rights too. For example, the right to know what the European Union is doing and deciding, and why. The right to hear the full range of views about European issues and the right for citizens to make their own views heard in dialogue with European policy-makers.

To me these are basic democratic rights: but at present seven out of ten EU citizens know little or nothing about what the European Union is or does. It hardly features in school curricula. The national media report European issues from a national – or even nationalistic – viewpoint. There are very few trans-national forums in which European issues can be discussed by the citizens of different countries.

A European public sphere?

In short, we lack a *European public sphere* in which citizens can communicate with one another and a European demos can evolve. The need for such a sphere is the central theme of the European Commission's White Paper on a European Communication Policy, published in February 2006.

In this paper we pointed out that the task of creating a European public sphere is well beyond the capacity of the European Commission itself – or indeed of any single institution. It will require concerted action by all the EU institutions, national governments, regional and local authorities, as well as civil society and the media.

But what action should we take, exactly? And how can we do the job together? The White Paper invited all stakeholders, and the general public, to post their views on our consultation website. By the end of last September we had received around 700 responses. We then held a series of stakeholder conferences, bringing together not only the EU institutions and national governments but also hundreds of representatives of the media, of NGOs and citizens' associations.

On the basis of this very extensive consultation exercise the Commission will, this summer, put forward plans for introducing a European Union policy or Community programme on communication. The aim will be to empower citizens by giving them the tools for democracy to which they are entitled: complete and accurate information; forums and meeting-places for debate; channels for dialogue with European decision-makers.

A vision of the public sphere in action

What might this mean in practice? Here is my own vision of the ideal situation.

It starts in school, where young people will learn the basic facts about the EU as part of their civic education curriculum. At the same time, the media – everything from the national daily newspapers to local radio – will keep us regularly informed about what is being discussed and decided in Brussels and Strasbourg. We will be able to go to the internet, or to our local public library, to find out more background and more detail on these issues.

We will be able to attend regular public meetings in our town hall or local school where local politicians, environmental activists, consumer representatives, trade unionists and business people will discuss how EU policies affect life in our local community.

Nation-wide and trans-national discussions of the same issues (ideally in more than one language) will be

possible on the Internet, thanks to websites set up by associations of NGOs. These ongoing, online forums will be backed up by debates on regional and national TV and by international conferences where we can discuss the hot topics with other European citizens, EU officials and MEPs.

The European Commission will monitor these debates, and it will conduct opinion polls and focus group discussions to get an overview of European public opinion. The 'Europe Direct' networks and contact centre will also help the Commission to identify the issues of greatest concern to citizens. The results of this "listening" exercise will feed directly into the process of formulating EU policies.

European political parties will also be permanently taking part in this public debate. When the time comes for elections to the European Parliament, these parties will clearly present their positions on the key issues and thus give citizens a real choice between live options. This will motivate many people to turn out and vote, and that in turn will give greater democratic legitimacy to European institutional decision-making.

How to make the vision a reality?

This, as I say, is the ideal situation. But making it happen will be far from easy. How does one get 27 national governments to agree a common agenda for EU-related education and public information? How does one get the media to commit to reporting EU affairs regularly and objectively? Can one even get the EU institutions to speak with one voice and avoid duplicating each other's communication efforts? It's not at all obvious.

Each national government has a particular political colour and its own policy agenda. It is also very much focused on getting re-elected, which will often mean claiming the credit for European policies that prove popular and blaming "Brussels" for the unpopular ones.

The media insist on their freedom and independence – even if in reality

Dialogue and Debate

some newspapers and TV channels are owned by politicians or tycoons with their own political agenda. Broadcasters and journalists are very suspicious of any suggestion that they should work more closely with the EU institutions. They will only report what they consider newsworthy, and they will spin it in the way their editor decides, so citizens cannot expect to get the whole picture from any one source.

Communication, civil society and democracy

What about civil society? What role can NGOs play in European Communication Policy? Obviously, they have well-established communication networks through which views and information can flow back and forth between citizens and policy-makers. NGOs also do an important job monitoring the way EU policies are put into action and they provide useful feedback to the EU institutions. But what more could they do?

I would love to see NGOs linking up with one another across Europe to run online trans-national discussion forums. Are they likely to do so? The willingness is there, but obviously NGOs have widely different interests and sometimes competing agendas, and are reluctant to commit their slender resources to common ventures. Individual NGOs might agree to be part of a European Communication Policy – provided the Commission can give them substantial financial support. But the Commission's resources are limited too.

Previous CINEFOGO newsletters have raised very pertinent questions about the relationship between civil society and the EU institutions, and more generally about EU Communication Policy. I would like briefly to respond to two of those questions.

First, how would a future European Communication Policy – with its focus on a decentralized dialogue with all citizens – relate to the existing centralized dialogue between the Commission and organized civil society groups? Would the former replace the latter?

No, that is not at all my intention. I see the two approaches as complementary, not mutually exclusive. Our existing system of consultation with selected NGOs will continue – though it may need improvement to ensure that the NGOs we consult are as representative as possible of citizens' interests and concerns. But that is a separate issue.

Second, is European Communication Policy an effort to popularize the EU or to legitimize the European integration process? Yes, if popularization means making EU policies more understandable and accessible to the citizens. No if it means spoon-feeding the citizen with pre-cooked and ready-made solutions for the future of Europe. European Communication Policy is about stimulating a healthy debate in which the citizen can compare different views: pro- and anti-integration views; views for and against specific EU policies; the views of all political parties and of the European Commission, whose job is to foster the common European interest. Moreover, in any EU country citizens should be able to hear the views of people from the other EU countries. In short, it should be a genuinely open-ended trans-national conversation.

Communication Policy is therefore not about legitimizing the status quo or any particular view of Europe's future: it is about dialogue, debate and democracy. In this way it complements the "active citizenship" programmes I mentioned earlier.

When will our proposed Communication Policy become reality? This summer the Commission will publish a new policy document proposing a range of measures that it is prepared to take – jointly with other EU institutions, with governments and with civil society. The emphasis will be on setting up practical working partnerships. Our document will put forward an agenda or programme for concerted action on communication. We would not presume to tell any of our partners what to do, but we can and will make concrete suggestions for *doing the job together*.

Enabling citizens to set the agenda

Let me close by giving just one example of how the European Commission and civil society are already working together to put communication at the service of democracy. Last autumn we helped a group of civil society organisations launch a major project called the "European Citizens' Consultations". This is a series of simultaneous debates between citizens in every EU country, spread over a period of several months. In all 27 countries, the discussions focus on a small number of key European issues selected at the outset by agreement between delegates from the countries concerned. The people involved in the national debates are randomly selected, so they are of all ages, come from all walks of life and represent the entire spectrum of public opinion.

The outcomes of the national debates are now being put together in an overall synthesis report, and the Commission will ensure that its recommendations are put to the European Council in June.

Exercises of this kind are an excellent way of consulting citizens who are **not** part of organised civil society, and I would like to see them become a regular – perhaps annual – part of our overall communication programme. They should certainly provide input into the European Commission's policy-making work, alongside the other consultations we carry out with NGOs, experts, the social partners, etc.

The rationale is simple: the EU exists for its citizens and it is they who must be enabled and encouraged, in many different ways, to set the European agenda.

Margot Wallström, Brussels, May 2007