



COMISIÓN DE LAS COMUNIDADES EUROPEAS

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**COMUNICACIÓN DE LA COMISIÓN AL PARLAMENTO EUROPEO, AL
CONSEJO, AL COMITÉ ECONÓMICO Y SOCIAL EUROPEO Y AL COMITÉ DE
LAS REGIONES**

**«Europa a debate»: construir a partir de la experiencia del Plan D de democracia,
diálogo y debate**

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INTRODUCCIÓN

En junio de 2005, el Consejo Europeo pidió que se iniciara un período de reflexión sobre el modo de seguir adelante con la reforma institucional¹. La respuesta de la Comisión Europea fue la adopción, el 13 de octubre de 2005, del «Plan D de diálogo, democracia y debate»², con el objetivo de animar a los Estados miembros a organizar un amplio debate público sobre el futuro de la Unión Europea, con la participación de los ciudadanos, la sociedad civil, los interlocutores sociales, los parlamentos nacionales y los partidos políticos y la contribución de las instituciones de la UE.

La idea central del Plan D consistía en «escuchar mejor», «explicar mejor» e «incidir en la esfera local» para atraer a los ciudadanos. El Plan promovía un tipo de consulta sobre el futuro de Europa que complementase las consultas al gran público y a las partes interesadas sobre propuestas políticas específicas.

Encabezaban dicho Plan seis proyectos transfronterizos europeos de ciudadanos, gestionados por organizaciones de la sociedad civil (anexo 1). El objetivo de dichos proyectos era poner a prueba métodos de consulta innovadores y permitir que personas procedentes de diferentes ámbitos públicos nacionales se pusieran en contacto entre sí, en calidad de ciudadanos europeos, y debatieran sobre el futuro de la UE.

En junio de 2006, el Consejo Europeo manifestó su gratitud a la Comisión por su contribución al período de reflexión y afirmó que el compromiso de la UE para ganar en democracia, transparencia y eficacia no se limitaba al período de reflexión. Afirmó, asimismo, que «un diálogo reforzado con los ciudadanos requiere medios y un empeño adecuados»³ y recomendó que el período de reflexión se ampliara a 2007.

La Comisión respondió en noviembre de 2006, con las conclusiones extraídas del primer año, en una nota informativa titulada *Plan D – Wider and Deeper Debate on Europe* (Plan D: un debate más amplio y profundo sobre Europa)⁴. La Comisión renovó su compromiso con las acciones iniciadas en el marco del Plan D y decidió cofinanciar una serie de proyectos de la sociedad civil que ponían especial énfasis en la juventud y en las mujeres e incidían en la esfera local.

El período de reflexión concluyó en junio de 2007, cuando el Consejo Europeo acordó un mandato para una nueva conferencia intergubernamental (CIG) destinada a reformar el marco institucional de la UE. La CIG concluyó en octubre y el «Tratado de Reforma» se firmó en Lisboa en diciembre de 2007. Estos acontecimientos abrieron una nueva fase, en la que la ratificación del nuevo tratado irá seguida de las elecciones europeas, en junio de 2009. El Consejo Europeo destacó la importancia capital de comunicar más y mejor con los

¹ Declaración de los Jefes de Estado y de Gobierno de los Estados miembros de la Unión Europea sobre la ratificación del Tratado por el que se establece una Constitución para Europa (Consejo Europeo de los días 16 y 17 de junio de 2005, apartado 4).

² COM(2005) 494, de 13.10.2005.

³ Conclusiones de la Presidencia, Consejo Europeo, 15 y 16 de junio, apartado 3.

⁴ SEC(2006) 1553.

ciudadanos, proporcionándoles información exhaustiva sobre la UE e involucrándolos en un diálogo permanente⁵.

En octubre de 2007, la Comisión adoptó una Comunicación titulada «Comunicar sobre Europa en asociación»⁶, cuyo objetivo global es reforzar la coherencia y las sinergias entre las actividades que llevan a cabo las distintas instituciones de la UE y los Estados miembros, a fin de ofrecer a los ciudadanos un mejor acceso y una mayor comprensión del impacto que tienen las políticas de la UE a escala europea, nacional y local.

La presente Comunicación aborda el futuro del planteamiento del Plan D de «escuchar mejor, explicar mejor e incidir en la esfera local», que duró de 2005 a 2007. Este planteamiento se ampliará, con algunos ajustes, a 2008 y 2009, durante el proceso de ratificación del Tratado de Lisboa y de cara a las próximas elecciones europeas.

Su finalidad es contribuir a uno de los principales objetivos de la política de comunicación de la Comisión, a saber, capacitar a los ciudadanos dotándolos de acceso a la información, de manera que puedan mantener un debate sobre los asuntos de la UE con conocimiento de causa.

1. EVALUACIÓN DEL PLAN D: RESULTADOS Y EXPERIENCIAS

A fin de impulsar el desarrollo de una esfera pública europea, el Plan D trató de promover el diálogo bidireccional, tanto cara a cara como virtual, entre las instituciones y los ciudadanos de la UE. Este planteamiento resultó particularmente útil a la hora de iniciar el diálogo sobre el futuro de Europa a raíz del rechazo de Francia y los Países Bajos al Tratado por el que se establece una Constitución para Europa.

El Plan D, junto con otros programas gestionados por la Comisión y otras instituciones y organismos de la UE, ha desempeñado un papel esencial en la búsqueda de métodos innovadores que permitan a las organizaciones de la sociedad civil implicar a los ciudadanos, con independencia de su profesión o condición social, en los debates sobre el futuro de Europa, combinando para ello:

- comunicación virtual y cara a cara;
- consultas y encuestas deliberativas;
- consultas nacionales, transfronterizas y paneuropeas.

Se celebraron debates vía internet en el sitio web *Debate Europe*⁷. Se recurrió con frecuencia a las Representaciones de la Comisión y a los centros de la red Europe Direct. Las visitas de los miembros de la Comisión en el marco del Plan D desempeñaron un importante papel en el contacto con los parlamentos nacionales, la sociedad civil, los líderes empresariales y sindicales y las autoridades regionales y locales de los Estados miembros, lo que confirmó la importancia del contacto personal, así como de «ponerle un rostro» a la UE.

⁵ SI(2007) 500.

⁶ COM(2007) 568, de 3.10.2007.

⁷ http://ec.europa.eu/commission_barroso/wallstrom/communicating/conference/dialogue/index_en.htm.

En concreto, en el marco del Plan D, la Comisión cofinanció proyectos de la sociedad civil; se seleccionaron ciudadanos al azar y se pusieron en contacto, dentro del mismo país y más allá de las fronteras. Se les facilitó la información pertinente —por ejemplo, documentación sobre las cuestiones que debían debatirse, revisada por un comité representativo de miembros del Parlamento Europeo—, así como los medios para superar la barrera del idioma, de manera que pudieran utilizar su lengua materna a lo largo de todo el proceso de consulta. De este modo, pudieron mantener profundas discusiones con responsables de la toma de decisiones y formular sugerencias para el futuro de la UE. En total, cerca de cuarenta mil personas participaron en los seis proyectos transnacionales del Plan D de manera presencial y se calcula que cientos de miles lo hicieron de manera virtual, vía internet. Las organizaciones de la sociedad civil que gestionaron los proyectos actuaron como repetidores y difundieron las opiniones manifestadas por los ciudadanos a través de sus redes políticas y de medios de comunicación, en diferentes etapas de los proyectos.

Los proyectos de la sociedad civil del Plan D pusieron de manifiesto que la democracia participativa puede ser un complemento útil para la democracia representativa. Confirmaron las conclusiones extraídas de otros tipos de programas de ciudadanos, en particular que las consultas constituyen para los participantes una experiencia tanto política como humana. Independientemente de la opinión que los ciudadanos tuvieran de la UE, sus puntos de vista evolucionaron de manera significativa en el transcurso de las consultas. Al término del proceso estaban ansiosos por escuchar la opinión de los responsables de la toma de decisiones, en particular de las instituciones y los organismos de la UE.

Por ello, en diciembre de 2007, la Comisión organizó una conferencia de clausura de los seis proyectos de ciudadanos del Plan D, cuyo título fue «El Futuro de Europa: la Agenda de los Ciudadanos». Por primera vez en el ámbito paneuropeo, los ciudadanos que habían participado en diversos proyectos transnacionales de democracia participativa tuvieron la ocasión de sintetizar sus deseos y exponerlos directamente a los responsables de la toma de decisiones.

Las recomendaciones resultantes se dirigieron, en forma de carta abierta, a los Jefes de Estado y de Gobierno de la UE, los parlamentos nacionales, las instituciones de la UE y los partidos políticos europeos antes del Consejo Europeo de diciembre (anexo 2). Se instaba a los partidos políticos europeos a abordar dichas recomendaciones en sus programas y a debatirlas con los ciudadanos en la campaña previa a las elecciones al Parlamento Europeo de 2009. Se instaba, asimismo, a los Jefes de Estado y de Gobierno de la UE a fomentar el desarrollo de la ciudadanía europea activa en todas las instancias del gobierno.

Los proyectos de ciudadanos demostraron que había varias maneras de lograrlo, mediante:

- un sitio web europeo de debate, conectado a una red de sitios de debate nacionales y combinado con debates europeos, nacionales y locales;
- un sitio web multilingüe, altamente interactivo, cuyo contenido habían determinado grupos específicos de diferentes países de la UE y se había adaptado con arreglo a los comentarios procedentes de talleres organizados para un público determinado;
- consultas nacionales sobre las mismas cuestiones en todos los Estados miembros, celebradas más o menos al mismo tiempo, que daban lugar a una síntesis europea;

- encuestas deliberativas paneuropeas, en las que una muestra aleatoria de la población encuestada se reunía durante tres días y debatía cara a cara;
- debates locales en varios Estados miembros de la UE, combinados con encuestas y grabación en vídeo de las opiniones de los ciudadanos.

Estos proyectos pusieron de manifiesto que el desarrollo de la democracia participativa en relación con cuestiones relativas a la UE a nivel local, regional, nacional y transfronterizo es posible por lo que se refiere tanto a la calidad como a la logística.

En lo relativo al contenido, revelaron el desfase existente a veces entre las expectativas de los ciudadanos y los ámbitos reales de competencia de la UE, por ejemplo en el ámbito de los asuntos sociales, la educación y la diplomacia o la defensa. Los ciudadanos, al participar en las consultas, cada vez estaban más familiarizados con el proceso de toma de decisiones de la UE. Al término del proceso, tenían una visión más clara de cómo rebatir a los responsables de la toma de decisiones y, en el futuro, acortar las distancias entre éstos y los ciudadanos.

También pueden sacarse conclusiones interesantes de los proyectos en relación con la sincronización, la selección de participantes, la formación de los moderadores, la logística de los debates transfronterizos y multilingües y el tipo de información y experiencia necesarias para asegurarse de que los ciudadanos, con independencia de su profesión o condición social, son capaces de mantener un debate sobre las cuestiones europeas con conocimiento de causa. Facilitar el acceso al asesoramiento y los conocimientos científicos es particularmente indispensable en los procesos en los que participan partes interesadas no especializadas y responsables de la elaboración de políticas.

2. EL FUTURO: «EUROPA A DEBATE»

En su primera fase, el Plan D se centró en la parte de «debate y diálogo» del proceso. En la segunda fase del Plan D, el proceso dará un paso adelante y se centrará en la «D de democracia», permitiendo en mayor medida a los ciudadanos que expongan sus deseos directamente a los responsables de la toma de decisiones y utilicen mejor los medios de comunicación en el proceso. Esta es la razón por la que la nueva fase se denominará «Europa a debate», traducción del nombre del sitio web de la Comisión dedicado al Plan D.

«Europa a debate» actuará de la manera siguiente:

1. Organizará consultas a los ciudadanos que se celebrarán entre la sociedad civil y los responsables de la toma de decisiones. Las conclusiones a las que lleguen los ciudadanos las sintetizarán ellos mismos y las enviarán a los representantes políticos, a los partidos y a las fundaciones. Un punto culminante será el debate entre los ciudadanos y los políticos sobre las propuestas recogidas por las plataformas de ciudadanos. En este proceso, «Europa a debate» aprovechará el nuevo contexto político e institucional europeo, incluido el nuevo Reglamento⁸ que regula los partidos y las fundaciones políticas a escala europea.

⁸ Reglamento (CE) nº 1524/2007 del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo, de 18 de diciembre de 2007.

2. Fomentará una estrecha colaboración y, cuando sea posible, la acción conjunta entre las instituciones y organismos de la UE, para maximizar el impacto de su esfuerzo por promover la ciudadanía europea activa (foros de ciudadanos; estrategias de comunicación del Parlamento Europeo antes de las elecciones de 2009 y debates tipo ágora con las organizaciones de la sociedad civil; e iniciativas del Comité de las Regiones y el Comité Económico y Social Europeo).
3. Potenciará las iniciativas actuales de la UE, incluidos los programas de la Comisión que promueven la ciudadanía activa; por ejemplo, el programa «Europa con los Ciudadanos», el Fondo europeo para la integración de los nacionales de terceros países, los programas de cohesión social y lucha contra la pobreza, otras acciones concretas para celebrar el Año Europeo del Diálogo Intercultural 2008 y el Año Europeo de la Creatividad y la Innovación, la acción preparatoria para la participación electrónica y otras actividades relacionadas, así como la iniciativa sobre inclusión electrónica. De este modo, «Europa a debate» redoblará los esfuerzos de la Comisión por explicar a los ciudadanos el valor añadido de las políticas de la UE (por ejemplo, los éxitos relacionados con el mercado interior: las tarifas de itinerancia en la telefonía móvil, los vuelos de bajo coste, la reducción de diferencias en el desarrollo regional, la protección medioambiental y la lucha contra el cambio climático).
4. Seguirá adelante con otras acciones del Plan D que hayan tenido éxito (debates vía internet, acercamiento entre los funcionarios y los ciudadanos de la UE, cooperación entre las Representaciones de la Comisión y las Oficinas de Información del Parlamento Europeo y utilización de los centros de información de la UE para «incidir en la esfera local»).

2.1. Establecimiento de vínculos entre los debates de ciudadanos y las instancias políticas representativas

Hay un deseo generalizado de reducir las distancias entre la política nacional y la política europea. Los partidos políticos europeos necesitan apoyo en sus esfuerzos por participar en los debates que se celebran en la esfera pública de cada país. En particular, durante las campañas a las elecciones europeas, las cuestiones europeas deben ocupar un primer plano y los ciudadanos deben percibir el impacto que tiene en su vida diaria su elección política a nivel europeo.

«Europa a debate» actuará como un catalizador para reforzar las iniciativas de la Comisión que están en curso y reducir las distancias mencionadas. Asimismo, cofinanciará un proyecto paneuropeo de consultas de ciudadanos cuya gestión correrá a cargo de las organizaciones de la sociedad civil en colaboración con foros de reflexión, organizaciones de investigación y universidades, así como fundaciones y partidos políticos. También promoverá acciones a nivel nacional y regional que permitan a los ciudadanos, con independencia de su profesión o condición social, debatir, sintetizar sus opiniones, discutir las con los responsables de la toma de decisiones e implicar a los medios de comunicación.

Se beneficiará, además, del nuevo Reglamento de la UE sobre fundaciones y partidos políticos, que constituye una de las medidas prácticas derivadas de la primera fase del Plan D. Dicho Reglamento amplía el ámbito de actividades de los partidos políticos europeos y apoya el desarrollo de fundaciones políticas europeas, que desempeñarán un importante papel a la

hora de implicar a los ciudadanos en un diálogo político permanente, genuino y con conocimiento de causa.

En 2007, estas fundaciones presentaron a la Comisión varios planes de acción destinados al desarrollo de una serie de actividades experimentales en 2008: concienciar a los ciudadanos sobre las próximas elecciones europeas a través de sesiones de formación, iniciativas de comunicación específicas, sitios web, folletos y la creación de redes con fundaciones nacionales y foros de reflexión. A partir de septiembre de 2008, las fundaciones políticas estarán financiadas de manera permanente.

«Europa a debate» completará estos esfuerzos invitando a las fundaciones políticas a participar en las consultas de ciudadanos organizadas por la sociedad civil.

2.2. Mejora de la cooperación con el Parlamento Europeo

La conferencia «El Futuro de Europa: la Agenda de los Ciudadanos», celebrada en diciembre de 2007 en el marco del Plan D, puso de manifiesto que el impacto de las instituciones de la UE es mayor cuando *unen sus fuerzas* y participan *juntas* en el diálogo con los ciudadanos. Ofrece a las instituciones la posibilidad de mostrar la democracia de la UE en todo su espectro, mientras que para los ciudadanos es una oportunidad para comprender mejor el proceso de toma de decisiones de la UE. Este tipo de cooperación interinstitucional se integrará en los proyectos de «Europa a debate» a nivel tanto europeo y nacional como regional.

En su estrategia de comunicación para las elecciones, el Parlamento Europeo pide la colaboración estrecha entre las instituciones de la UE. «Europa a debate» contribuirá a satisfacer esta necesidad. De hecho, cuando se trata de promover la ciudadanía europea activa, no sólo es esencial la cooperación con el Parlamento Europeo, sino también con el Comité de las Regiones y el Comité Económico y Social Europeo. Todas las instituciones y organismos han adquirido una experiencia considerable en la organización de foros de ciudadanos.

La Comisión está dispuesta a colaborar con las futuras presidencias de la UE que deseen organizar cumbres de ciudadanos en las que participen los diferentes organismos e instituciones de la UE, proporcionando una plataforma que ofrezca a los responsables europeos de la toma de decisiones la perspectiva de los ciudadanos sobre cuestiones concretas.

2.3. Creación de sinergias entre los programas de la Comisión

«Europa a debate» complementará otros programas de la Comisión que promueven la ciudadanía europea activa y actuará en sinergia con ellos. Los proyectos de «Europa a debate» se distinguirán por su carácter interinstitucional y político y por la participación de los medios de comunicación; el resultado de las consultas organizadas a nivel regional, nacional y paneuropeo será un debate público, con conocimiento de causa, entre ciudadanos y responsables de la toma de decisiones procedentes de los Estados miembros y de todas las instituciones de la UE.

Los términos de las convocatorias de propuestas de «Europa a debate» garantizarán que los proyectos seleccionados tengan en cuenta el esfuerzo político global de la Comisión por promover la ciudadanía europea activa, en particular:

- el programa «Europa con los ciudadanos», que promueve la ciudadanía europea activa a través del apoyo a una amplia gama de participantes (autoridades locales, sociedad civil, organizaciones empresariales y de consumo y ciudadanos), de manera que puedan actuar, debatir, discutir y establecer redes conjuntamente de varias formas, tanto tradicionales (actividades de hermanamiento de ciudades o proyectos transnacionales de la sociedad civil) como innovadoras (por ejemplo, comités de ciudadanos);
- el Año Europeo del Diálogo Intercultural 2008, en el que participan todas las instituciones y organismos de la UE, y el Año Europeo de la Innovación y la Creatividad 2009;
- las fundaciones y partidos políticos europeos que se esfuerzan por concienciar a los ciudadanos sobre las próximas elecciones europeas con apoyo comunitario;
- el Fondo europeo para la integración de los nacionales de terceros países: la integración de los inmigrantes es un proceso en el cual se da una estrecha colaboración entre diferentes instancias del gobierno y agentes no gubernamentales, como la patronal, los sindicatos, las organizaciones religiosas, la sociedad civil, las asociaciones de inmigrantes, los medios de comunicación y las ONG que ayudan a los inmigrantes;
- la acción preparatoria para la participación electrónica, cuyo objetivo es incrementar la participación de los ciudadanos en los procesos legislativo y de toma de decisiones a nivel de la UE utilizando nuevas tecnologías; se están implementando diversas pruebas sobre nuevas formas de interacción entre los ciudadanos y las instituciones europeas;
- iniciativas de investigación y de apoyo a la investigación financiadas por el VII Programa Marco de Investigación en los ámbitos de la gobernanza y la ciudadanía (programa de trabajo de Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades) y el compromiso público con la ciencia (programa de trabajo de la Ciencia en la Sociedad⁹).

2.4. Desarrollo de otras iniciativas del Plan D

«Europa a debate» actuará simultáneamente con iniciativas que ya están en marcha en los Estados miembros, muchas de las cuales ofrecen un gran potencial para la cooperación interinstitucional. Figuran entre ellas:

- Redes Piloto de Información, con las que ya se ha llegado a un acuerdo. Reunirán a los parlamentarios europeos, nacionales y regionales con periodistas y otros formadores de opinión europeos, para compartir información, conocimientos e ideas sobre la UE. Estas redes acercarán el debate europeo a los parlamentos nacionales. Utilizarán internet, otras herramientas en línea y reuniones para desarrollar «redes de ideas» y ayudar a poner en contacto a los políticos y los medios de comunicación con los proyectos innovadores de la sociedad civil.
- Espacios públicos europeos: las Representaciones de la Comisión y las Oficinas de Información del Parlamento Europeo de Madrid, Tallin y Dublín han trabajado de manera conjunta para crear unos espacios públicos europeos en los que se celebran exposiciones, debates, seminarios y sesiones de formación sobre asuntos relacionados con la UE. Está

⁹ Decisión nº 1982/2006/CE del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo; Decisiones 2006/971/CE y 2006/974/CE del Consejo.

previsto ampliar este proyecto piloto a otras capitales, empezando con Roma, Londres, Copenhague y Berlín.

- Foros de ciudadanos: el Parlamento Europeo, el Comité Económico y Social Europeo y el Comité de las Regiones organizan foros de ciudadanos en los Estados miembros. «Europa a debate» animará a los miembros de los distintos organismos e instituciones de la UE a agruparse y participar de manera conjunta en estos foros, siguiendo el concepto de «Mesas Redondas Europeas para la Democracia» del Plan D¹⁰.
- Visitas a los Estados miembros: los Comisarios, en sus visitas a los Estados miembros en el marco del Plan D, han llegado a los parlamentos nacionales, las autoridades regionales y locales, los medios de comunicación y la sociedad civil. Se ha animado a los funcionarios de la Comisión a visitar sus antiguos colegios. «Europa a debate» seguirá desarrollando estos contactos «cara a cara», en consonancia con la estrategia de compromiso del personal de la Comisión¹¹, mediante la cual ésta anima a su personal a desempeñar un papel activo en el ámbito de la comunicación como embajadores de la Institución (por ejemplo, a través de la operación «Vuelta al Colegio» o la red *Enterprise Europe Network*). «Europa a debate» también animará a los miembros y funcionarios de los demás organismos e instituciones de la UE a sumarse a esta iniciativa.
- Mayor incidencia aún en la esfera local: los centros de la red Europe Direct, junto con las Representaciones de la Comisión, han organizado debates, actos y seminarios con ciudadanos en localidades y ciudades diferentes de las capitales de los Estados miembros. «Europa a debate» seguirá desarrollando estas actividades, aprovechando que en 2009 se pondrá en marcha una «segunda generación» de centros de Europe Direct.
- Optimización de las encuestas de opinión del Eurobarómetro de la Comisión: las encuestas de opinión del Eurobarómetro tendrán en cuenta experiencias extraídas de la primera fase de los proyectos del Plan D, durante la cual se experimentó con técnicas de encuestas deliberativas sobre el futuro de la UE a escala paneuropea.
- Debates vía internet: el sitio web *Debate Europe*, dedicado al Plan D, fue reformado en enero de 2008 para incrementar su potencial de debate interactivo con usuarios de internet sobre cuestiones de actualidad relacionadas con la UE, con la participación de las Representaciones de la Comisión. El reciente relanzamiento de las discusiones a través de la web irá seguido de discusiones en línea similares más adelante en 2008 y en 2009.

3. CONVOCATORIA DE PROPUESTAS Y ACCIONES DESCENTRALIZADAS

«Europa a debate» velará por que el esfuerzo global de la Comisión por promover la ciudadanía europea activa forme parte de un esfuerzo interinstitucional integrado que alcance a los responsables de la toma de decisiones en todas las instancias de gobierno.

Se sugiere una estrategia a dos bandas, respaldada por un presupuesto de 7,2 millones EUR:

¹⁰ COM(2005) 494, punto 4.1.5.

¹¹ SEC(2007) 912.

- a nivel paneuropeo: una convocatoria de propuestas centralizada para cofinanciar un proyecto transnacional que incluye a los veintisiete Estados miembros, con un presupuesto de 2 millones EUR;
- a nivel nacional y regional: convocatorias y acciones descentralizadas para financiar proyectos locales con un presupuesto de 5,2 millones EUR¹².

A nivel paneuropeo, en los términos de la convocatoria se precisará que, teniendo en cuenta la experiencia de la primera serie de proyectos transnacionales de democracia participativa, «Europa a debate»:

- celebrará consultas a los ciudadanos en todos los Estados miembros;
- establecerá unas conclusiones comunes a nivel europeo y las enviará a las organizaciones políticas europeas;
- implicará a los ciudadanos en el diálogo con sus representantes y con las organizaciones políticas europeas, con la estrecha colaboración del Parlamento Europeo, el Comité Económico y Social Europeo y el Comité de las Regiones.

A nivel nacional o regional, las Representaciones de la Comisión:

- han previsto unas ciento cuarenta acciones en 2008 para estimular el debate público en torno a la UE;
- cofinanciarán acciones adaptadas a necesidades específicas (por ejemplo, acciones dirigidas a los colegios y centros de juventud, exposiciones, ferias y festivales, conferencias, seminarios, actos con las ONG, etc.) mediante convocatorias de propuestas a nivel local;
- llevarán a cabo estas acciones con otros organismos e instituciones de la UE, por ejemplo, a través de los espacios públicos europeos, del Año Europeo del Diálogo Intercultural, del previsto Año Europeo de la Creatividad y la Innovación y de los institutos nacionales de cultura de la UE.

Dependiendo del contexto nacional, incluso la limitada financiación de las ONG a nivel nacional podría dar lugar a un diálogo fructífero sobre las cuestiones relacionadas con la UE. Las Representaciones de la Comisión, en colaboración con las Oficinas de Información del Parlamento Europeo, incrementarán el impacto de dicho diálogo implicando a las autoridades regionales y locales.

Estas iniciativas podrían dar un impulso a las redes locales y regionales, nuevas y existentes, y ayudar a difundir las mejores prácticas, utilizando para ello herramientas de participación electrónica¹³. Asimismo, podrían suscitar el interés de los políticos que se presentan a las elecciones europeas, que podrían utilizar estas discusiones como base para el diálogo con sus electores.

¹² Decisión C(2008) 924 de la Comisión, relativa al programa de trabajo anual sobre subvenciones y contratos en el ámbito de la comunicación para 2008, adoptada por la Comisión el 12 de marzo de 2008 (cuadro 2.6.2).

¹³ Como las descritas por la comunidad de participación electrónica en www.epractice.eu.

4. CONCLUSIÓN

Implicación de los ciudadanos

El apoyo público a la UE solo puede conseguirse a través de un debate público intenso y abierto y logrando que los ciudadanos participen activamente en los asuntos europeos. Además de las numerosas consultas a las partes interesadas y al público en general celebradas por la Comisión en torno a cuestiones relacionadas con políticas específicas, la UE necesita más debate político y una mayor concienciación si quiere lograr sus objetivos y formular las políticas adecuadas. Este es uno de los objetivos centrales de la política de comunicación de la Comisión¹⁴: capacitar a los ciudadanos promoviendo la ciudadanía europea activa.

Sintonización con los responsables de la elaboración de políticas

Los partidos políticos y sus representantes se encuentran en una posición privilegiada para plantear las cuestiones europeas en el debate nacional y difundir el debate público transfronterizo por Europa. Es necesario que las vías de comunicación transfronterizas promuevan el debate y el diálogo sobre cuestiones que preocupan en todas las agendas europeas. La Comisión ha contribuido a desarrollar estas vías a través de propuestas legislativas destinadas a facilitar la evolución de los partidos políticos europeos mediante una serie de programas de ciudadanos y actividades para la divulgación de las ONG, así como a través del Plan D.

Tras la realización de varios proyectos piloto, el reto es garantizar que sus resultados alimenten el proceso de toma de decisiones políticas. La primera fase del Plan D confirmó que hay una clara demanda de medidas para reforzar y expandir el diálogo político sobre cuestiones europeas y que la democracia participativa puede ser un buen complemento de la democracia representativa.

En la fase siguiente (2008 y 2009) y en vísperas de las elecciones europeas, «Europa a debate» proporcionará un marco operativo para llegar, sintonizar y actuar en colaboración. No obstante, también es importante la perspectiva a largo plazo: «Europa a debate» trata de cambiar la percepción según la cual los asuntos de la UE son demasiado abstractos y están demasiado desconectados de la esfera pública nacional como para interesar a los ciudadanos, y ofrece la oportunidad de acabar con la separación, a menudo artificial, que existe entre las cuestiones nacionales y europeas.

¹⁴ COM(2007) 568, de 3.10.2007.

- Anexo 1: Descripción de proyectos del Plan D
- Anexo 2: Carta abierta / recomendaciones de los participantes en la conferencia de clausura de los seis proyectos de ciudadanos del Plan D
- Anexo 3: Proyecto de convocatoria de propuestas centralizada
- Anexo 4: Proyecto de convocatoria de propuestas descentralizada

ANEXO 1

Citizens' consultations projects co-funded by the Commission in the framework of Plan D in 2006-2007 projects

Speak Up Europe

- Co-ordinator: European Movement International
- Amount of the project: EUR 1,039,310.63
- Grant from the EU budget: EUR 719,375.70
- Pan-European
- An integrated approach combining virtual and face to face communication, both on a European level and on a national level.
- Virtual: each partner created a national web site. Web animation (e.g. cartoon "What has Europe ever done for us?").
- Face to face: a series of local, national and European events.
- 27 000 people had taken part physically in the project by the end of September 2007.
- Specific multimedia site targeting youth, called "European Vibes".
- Specific site launched by one of the partners, Euractiv, called "EU debates and opinions" to promote the outcome of Speak Up Europe had received 110 000 viewers by end of September 2007.

European Citizens' Consultations

- Co-ordinator: King Baudouin Foundation
- Amount of the project: EUR 2.715.376,60
- Grant from the EU budget: EUR 1.895.751,95
- Pan-European.
- Deliberative consultation of citizens on a national level, on the basis of an agenda set at European level by a sample of citizens.
- European synthesis of the outcome of the national consultations and a European web site.

- 1 800 citizens participated in the project altogether.
- Feedback from 1 000 out of the 1 800 citizens involved via an evaluation survey.

Tomorrow's Europe

- Co-ordinator: Notre Europe
- Amount of the project: EUR 1.352.500
- Grant from the EU budget: EUR 849.500
- Pan-European
- Europe-wide deliberative poll.
- 3 550 citizens polled on the future of the EU.
- 362 of them were randomly selected to deliberate for three days in Brussels, with the help of experts.
- They filled in a questionnaire at the beginning of the deliberative phase and were polled at the end to measure the evolution of their views.

Our message to Europe

- Co-ordinator: Deutsche Gesellschaft e.V.
- Amount of the project: EUR 358.000,00
- Grant from the EU budget: EUR 250.000,00
- Germany, Austria, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Poland.
- 4 000 participants altogether.
- 70 intensive dialogue events (54 in Germany, 4 in Austria, 4 in Slovakia, 4 in Czech Republic, 4 in Poland) with panel discussions.
- Opinion polls carried out during those events: 2600 people polled altogether, under 21 and over 21.
- In 20 of the events people had the opportunity to have their individual "message to Europe" recorded on video - 300 audiovisual messages collected altogether.

Radio Web Europe

- Co-ordinator: CENASCA-CISL
- Amount of the project: EUR 794.475,03
- Grant from the EU budget: EUR, 556.132,50
- Italy, Lithuania, Austria, UK, Spain, Portugal, Malta.
- Creation of a multimedia and interactive website targeting 18-35 years old. Content determined by face to face meetings with target audience through focus groups (two per country). At a second stage, workshops to collect feedback.
- National reports served as a basis for a synthesis report.
- Users can view and download audiovisual products and post their own (comments, videos, interviews, games, cartoons...). At the end of the project, website hosted 200 multimedia products. Average number of monthly visits: 5 000.

Our Europe-Our Debate-Our Contribution

- Co-ordinator: European House Budapest
- Amount of the project: EUR 364.000
- Grant from the EU budget: EUR 254.500
- Hungary, Austria, Italy, Slovakia and Slovenia.
- Fostering debate at grass-root level by meeting people in the streets and public transport, asking them to reply to a questionnaire (also posted on the project's English-language website).
- A "regional events" dimension (face to face meetings).
- A European bus touring the five countries, displaying a "European labyrinth" at every stop which people were invited to enter with a "European passport". People's views were recorded on video at every stop.
- The aim was to collect 2 500 people's views on Europe either through the questionnaire or by video.

Projects co-funded by the Commission Representations in the framework of Plan D in 2007-2008

Representation	Project
Bulgaria	Regional Dialog Open Forum: Women for Social Inclusion
	The Tender Europe: targeting more marginalised social groups – meetings and debates in schools, youth organisations, municipalities, chambers of commerce etc.
	An Investment for Creating Qualified and Internationally Educated Young People Corresponding to the Requirements of the European Single Market: Advertise the possibilities provided through European funding under the ERASMUS Program.
	No to Discrimination in United Europe: Let us Talk about the Different! Civic debate on issues related to discrimination and dissemination of EU best practices in the field of anti-discrimination measures in the cross-border region Svishtov (BG) - Zimnitch (RO).
Czech Republic	Gender Studies OPS: Flexicurity/labour market/ professional-private life - survey, video, discussions, leaflets, audit of pre-school establishments.
	Klub mladých Evropanu, o.s.: Generation EU: Target group - young people 15-19years. Workshops on labour market, education, security, freedom, future, European social model, European identity/values, 1 national conference.
Denmark	Your Europe
	Food Safety in the Consumers' EU
	Gender Divided Labour Market and Violence against Women
	Global Citizen and EU
	The Model Parliament
Estonia	Federation of Estonian student unions - Estonia in the EU's higher educational system (seminars, conference, articles in student press, discussions on internet forums, publication).
	Junior Achievement Estonia - Youth Entrepreneurship Conference on gender equality Project activities.
	NGO umbrella organisation in Viljandi - promotion of equal opportunities of local level citizens in the EU (conference, seminars, youth forum, study visit to Finnish rural areas).

France Paris	Europe , the future and citizenship in the Aquitaine region.
	Brittany youth's contribution to a European strategy to limit the scale of climate change.
	Know more about Europe to understand it better.
	Young European prize.
	Les Eurois, citizens of Europe.
	Europe for and by the young.
	A silent majority: women in the EU. Awareness raising among women, a major stake for the future of Europe.
	Etats généraux de l'Europe.
	Etats généraux de l'Europe.
	Deedale – Vendée region.
Hungary	Launch of the Hungarian chapter of the European Youth Parliament (Pillar Foundation)
	National consultation of women (Partners Hungary Foundation)
	Climate Change Youth Campaign (WWF Hungary)
Ireland	Institute of European Affairs (Future of Europe including immigration; crime and terror; climate change; Reform Treaty; Citizens Europe; EU@50; What has Europe done for citizens; use of overall theme "Europe 2.0". Use of web based products to widen and deepen the debate; meetings and debates across colleges, and other centres; production and dissemination of publications; explaining the new Treaty to different groups and especially the target groups; specifically target young professionals. Virtual tools and meetings, debates, high visibility events; dedicated Europe 2.0 website; podcasts; production of "6 Pack" information items for use with the target groups; production of a book "What the Reform Treaty Means", pamphlets; Young Professional network; high profile discussions and debates.
	Irish Countrywomen's Association (ICA) : legal rights in Europe; Irish farm Families; Quality of Life in Europe; Migration; Social Reality. Regional Seminars; training of co-ordinators; use of co-ordinators for training and organisation of seminars; use of expert speakers. Focus is on 16,000 families.
Latvia	Regional debates on social reality
	Youth observers in local and district authorities on cohesion and regional policy
	Training of multipliers - schoolchildren and teachers - on corruption and transparency issues

Malta	Fondazzjoni Temi Zammit
Portugal	Porto, Coimbra, Santarém, Évora and Faro Environment protection / Energy- Youth
	National: Future of Europe; Europe in the world; Migrations; Security - Youth
	All islands of the archipelago of Azores European integration; Future of Europe; Europe in the world
	Vila Real district Prosperity; Solidarity; Security and Freedom e Liberdade; Future of Europe; Europe in the world
	Beira Interior Solidarity – European Year Equality; European Year of Intercultural Dialogue; Cohesion and Rural Development Sept.2007 to August 2008
Spain Madrid - Barcelona	Fundación Ciudadanía Euro activos. ex:talleres para jóvenes que quieren darle la vuelta a Europa
	Europa Action and Lobby Development of a multilingual forum.
	Infocentro de Zaragoza Europa Joven, 50 años de logros
	Casal d'Europa de Sabadell Euroaptive,T
The Netherlands	Communicado Foundation Le Camping: Development of a pilot episode for six broadcastings for NL school TV. EU is visualised as a campsite; Member States are tents with their habitants. EU cooperation issues (enlargement, environment etc..) are explained through interaction of the actors in a comprehensible and educational way.
	ETV NL Europe is Fun! : Production of an educational project for secondary education scholars. A competition for digital EU stories, study materials and teachers training.
	Stichting Eggietalk (io) Eggietalk. Communication translation programme: pupils can communicate in their own language with pupils in other EU languages.
	Click on Europe. "Debatainment" with website and educational material for lower secondary education. Organisation aims at stimulating hard-to-reach target group to debate Europe in a competitive way.
	Nationaal oorlogsmuseum/ CHO Consultants Freedom and Democracy: Fundamental rights in Europe. Creating awareness and stimulating debate among youth in the national war museum. Electronic info pillars will be placed in the museum (including a voting system), and a website will be launched with small clips on 4 basic rights.

	<p>Passage Christelijk-Maatschappelijke Vrouwenbeweging Living together in Europe: Project proposed by the 4 largest woman movements in NL combined. The target group is approximately 120.000 female members, including many housewives. Newsletter, symposium, study days and an EU crafts contest. spin-off through family, friends etc. Create awareness of European issues among the members and to promote woman participation (use of voting right) in the 2009 European Parliament elections.</p>
	<p>Nationale Jeugdraad All about Europe.nl: website aiming at providing youth with a complete overview of the EU, to facilitate a structured dialogue. Bundle all relevant info for youth in one website. Nationale Jeugdraad (National Youthcouncil) portal website: Allesovereuropa.nl. This portal will bundle all relevant EU information for youth and youngsters in an understandable manner. Advertising campaign.</p>
	<p>CED Groep Europe in the news: 8 special topics on the EU. Communication with pupils in other EU countries. EU section added to existing website. Website is part of "learning by discussing/debating" teaching method.</p>
<p>United Kingdom London</p>	<p>Women in Northern Ireland – Connecting to Europe. Northern Ireland Women's European Platform. The platform aims to promote any charitable purpose for the benefit of women in Northern Ireland including the advancement of their education and development.</p>
	<p>My Voice in Europe The Community Development Foundation is a leading source of intelligence, guidance and delivery on community development in England and across the UK. The overall aim of the European and International Unit of CDF is to link and feed into practice and policy within the European and International arena by acting as a bridge between the UK and relevant international mechanisms.</p>
	<p>Voicing young people's views on climate change Inspire, support and celebrate young people as agents for change in society. Their aim is to create a generation of young, active citizens, drawn from all sectors of the UK population who will be a force for change in achieving global social and environmental justice.</p>
	<p>Flexicurity: young workers' views in a cohesion region Bevan Foundation, at the forefront of new thinking about achieving a fair and just Wales by carrying out research, organising conferences and debates, and by publishing articles and reports.</p>
	<p>Fem e-U Link, FATIMA Women's Network Innovation Centre. Fatima is a socially responsible minority ethnic-led organisation supporting the social and economic empowerment of all women through inter alia personal development, education and training, networking and engagement, as well as research and consultation.</p>
	<p>Forward Ladies Limited Non-profit business support network for women -networking opportunities, inspirational speakers, training, mentoring, coaching, business support and facilitates international trade missions.</p>

People and Politics Day-Europe: promoting democracy and active citizenship. Research, conferences, reports, promotion of democratic change.

Decentralised communication actions planned by Commission Representations in 2008

Plan D decentralised actions planned for 2008					
Action type		Member State	Associated communication priority	€	
1. Local calls	Programmed	UK	Energy & CC	150 000	
		Italy	Intercultural Dialogue	150 000	
		Netherlands	None	142 000	
		Austria		203 000	
		Germany		200 000	
		Sub-total			845 000
	To be programmed	Amounts confirmed	Netherlands	None	258 000
			Malta		150 000
			Germany		100 000
			Slovakia		50 000
			Czech Rep.		50 000
			Lithuania		20 000
		Sub-total			628 000
		Amounts TBC	Latvia	None	TBC
			Slovenia	Reform Treaty	TBC
Total				1 473 000	
2. Other actions				3 429 867	
Total Plan D	Allocated			5 200 000	
	Requested			4 902 867	

ANEXO 2

Open letter / recommendations from the participants at the concluding conference of the six Plan D citizens' projects

The future of Europe-the citizens' agenda

Open letter to the EU Heads of State and Government, the National Parliaments, the European Union Institutions and European political parties

Brussels, 9 December 2007

Next week, the Heads of State and Government of the European Union will sign the Lisbon Treaty. The EU celebrated its 50th Anniversary this year. Since 1957, the European Union has progressed from economic cooperation to a political union that affects the lives of almost 500 million citizens. This evolution also brings responsibilities for the political leaders of Europe. The permissive consensus that existed at the beginning has to be turned into an actively earned consensus in dialogue with the European citizens.

Associating citizens to the European construction is more than ever a fundamental issue. If we do not want the citizens to desert once more the European elections in 2009, political leaders need to regain the citizens' trust and confidence in the European project and show they care about citizens' involvement in the decision-making machine.

Plan D launched by Commission Vice-President Margot Wallström responded to this challenge in a novel manner. It co-financed a series of projects to learn how ordinary citizens can be involved in the EU decision-making and how they view the EU's future. This exercise responds to a basic value of the EU in the 21st century: active citizenship.

The European Movement International, the King Baudouin Foundation, Notre Europe, Deutsche Gesellschaft, European House Budapest and CENASCA-CISL, with a large network of partners across Europe have engaged actively in Plan D. A series of grass roots debates, consultations, polls and events aimed at consulting citizens on their visions of Europe have been carried out in a number of Member States, while deliberative polling and consultation has taken place on a pan-European scale.

Thousands of citizens took part in those projects throughout the European Union in 2007. Over 250 of them have assembled in Brussels on 8 and 9 December to debate on the major concerns which have emerged through Plan D. There was a clear consensus among participants that more opportunities of this kind should be provided to involve citizens in the debate over Europe's future.

They have structured these concerns into three themes:

1. The human aspects of globalisation
2. Enlargement, political integration and EU citizenship
3. The EU's role on the world stage.

They have consolidated their conclusions into a single set of recommendations (annexed to this letter).

They have debated those recommendations with decision-makers representing the EU institutions as well as the present Portuguese and future Slovenian Presidencies of the EU:

- Mrs. Margot Wallström, Vice-President, European Commission.

- Mrs Jillian van Turnhout, Vice-President, European Economic and Social Committee.
- Mr. Ivo Opstelten, Mayor of Rotterdam, Member of the Committee of Regions,
- Mr. Pierre Jonckheer, Member of the European Parliament
- Mr. Valter Lemos, Portuguese Secretary of State for Education,
- Ambassador Igor Sencar, Permanent Representative of Slovenia.

They call on the European political parties to address those recommendations in their programmes and to discuss them with citizens in view of the elections to European Parliament in 2009.

They call upon the EU Heads of State and Government, both in their capacity as European but also as national leaders, to heed those recommendations and thereby encourage the development of active European citizenship, without which there cannot be a truly political Union.

They call for the dialogue with citizens on European issues to be continued and deepened in the future.

The participants to the conference on "The future of Europe-the citizens' agenda

Twenty–seven recommendations

1.

As work is considered a crucial dimension for individual emancipation, the **welfare systems** should protect citizens' life conditions during periods of transition for example by providing people with an unemployment indemnity when changing jobs.

2.

Citizens expect more action from the EU in the area of **social policy and social cohesion** in order to fight the black market, reduce salary gaps, promote gender-equality, ease unemployment and to make it attractive to work longer before retiring.

3.

The EU should promote **equal rights, comparable standard of living** in all EU member states and foster equal opportunities through harmonised social and economic policies and a welfare model for all member states.

4.

*The Member States and the EU should make sure that **migrants** enjoy equal rights and opportunities and have access to education and work if they observe the laws, rules and values of the host country and commit to learning the language.*

5.

The **European migration policy**, so far based only on restrictive measures, should adopt a more sophisticated approach aiming at the social and economic development of the involved countries. The EU needs to clarify its approach to economic refugee status.

6.

Migration needs to be acknowledged as one of today's most pressing issues, and cannot be tackled without a coherent development aid strategy.

7.

*The EU should ensure that part of each country's national curriculum, in both **schools and universities**, requires a section on Democracy and European Citizenship, to ensure a greater understanding of the EU, its history, and its opportunities.*

8.

The EU should show more commitment to educational promotion in general but also specifically regarding European issues, e.g. through the expansion of existing educational EU programmes or the establishment of new EU programmes as well as the incorporation of the European integration process as a central topic in the national school curricula.

9.

Exchange projects need further support to encourage young people to recognise the importance of their EU citizenship in the global context.

10.

The EU should help preserving, appreciating and respecting the **diversity** of peoples, knowledge, customs and languages identities - while recognising common and shared European values.

11.

Integration strategies such as the **educational policy** incorporating the EU into school curricula will favour the development of a European identity.

12.

The EU should prioritise creating and communicating a new '**memory**' about Europe, to move away from the stereotypes associated with certain countries and history, so that all citizens can be valued and we can understand each other better.

13.

*The EU should increase opportunities for a more active, **direct participation of European citizens** from all walks of life in policy-making through regular citizen Plan D-type participatory projects, debates, public hearings, etc. at EU but also at regional and national levels. More transparency-more influence for European citizens!*

14.

*The EU should make sure that the **current citizen recommendations** are considered and discussed not only by the EU but also national policy-makers or become part of existing policy-making processes (e.g. impact assessments, public consultations). The EU should not only listen but also learn.*

15.

The EU should become more interactive, citizen friendly and inclusive, recognising the growing significance of regional approach and identity. New and innovative information technique should be used to improve communication with citizens especially young people. Specific attention has to be paid to the frequently neglected gender issues.

16.

***Climate change and energy security** cannot successfully be dealt with at the national level alone. The EU should be given stronger powers to develop a common energy policy and ensure that Member States live up to the commitments they have made at European level.*

17.

In a global world, it makes sense for the EU to take greater responsibility than today in the fields of **military action, foreign aid and diplomatic relations**. The EU should be able to speak with one voice on a global level to defend its values.

18.

The EU can be more efficient than national governments in **security, police and struggle against drugs traffic and cartels**.

19.

The EU should lead the world in **protecting the environment** and promoting clean energy.

20.

Europe should develop a strong voice on the global stage with **common foreign and security policies that promote peace**, security in regional conflicts democracy and the respect for human rights providing for a strong role model across the world, whilst recognizing the importance of the nation state.

21.

The EU should show **a united front in international affairs**; the current practice is influenced too much by national short-term interests and considerations.

22.

The EU should tackle the impact of Europe's energy use on both the economy and the environment and foster the transition to environmentally clean, safe and sustainable energy sources.

23.

European citizens want the EU to **take the lead when it comes to social, energy and environmental standards** on a global level.

24.

The EU should develop **specific educational and action-oriented programmes for citizens on global issues** such as trade, energy and the environment.

25.

The EU should **coordinate its aid programmes with NGOs** engaged in humanitarian work to bring timely and efficient relief to crisis regions or to promote sustainable development.

26.

The EU should **lower barriers to international trade** as, overall, freer trade benefits developed and developing countries.

27.

The EU should show **more commitment in the fields of international peacekeeping** as well as humanitarian aid during catastrophes.

ANEXO 3

CENTRAL CALL FOR PROPOSALS - DG COMM No < A2-1/2008 >

Financial support for an initiative emanating from organisations with a significant trans-national dimension as provided by the European Commission's Debate Europe Communication

1. INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

On 13 October 2005 the Commission approved its Communication to the Council, to the European Parliament, to the European Economic and Social Committee and to the Committee of the Regions: Plan D for Democracy, Dialogue and Debate.

This was a listening exercise so that the European Union can act on the concerns expressed by its citizens. The Commission aimed to stimulate debate and widen recognition for the added value that the E U provides.

It was a two-way process which:

- informed the public about the EU's role, with examples of its projects and achievements,
- identified their expectations for the future in return.

On 29 November 2006 Vice President Wallström presented an information note to the College of Commissioners on Plan D – Widen & deepen the debate. The purpose of this was to take stock and further widen and deepen the debate in the period of reflection.

On 2 April 2008, the Commission adopted a Communication to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions entitled "Debate Europe-building on the experience of Plan D for Democracy, Dialogue and Debate". It noted that the first phase Plan D focused on the "debate and dialogue" part of the process. The next phase of Plan D will take this process one step further and focus on "D for democracy", further enabling citizens to articulate their wishes directly to decision-makers and making better use of the media in the process. This new phase has been named "Debate Europe".

In October 2005 the Commission launched a series of Europe-wide civil society projects for 2006, which it co-financed. In 2007, it promoted a further series of initiatives, targeting young people and women in particular.

2. OBJECTIVES

One of the key lessons from this first round of projects and the concluding conference of Plan D is that the interface between citizens and EU decision-makers needs to be strengthened to ensure that issues of interest and concern Europe-wide are debated and addressed at a European level. There is a need to communicate those Europe-wide issues and concerns

which affect to a large degree all of Europe's citizens identified from consulting on a pan-European basis and to communicate these to European political decision-makers and media especially in view of the June 2009 European elections.

As a result, the Commission wishes to strengthen the existing debate about the future of Europe and its impact on citizens' daily lives by launching one or more pan-European projects with the following objectives:

In a first phase;

- Carry out a Europe-wide dialogue between citizens, political decision-makers and other key opinion formers through a series of debates/conferences/consultations and other events, with a view to ascertaining citizens' principal issues and concerns at a European level which touch their daily lives. This dialogue will ensure a close involvement of the other EU institutions (EP, EESC, COR) and European political parties' foundations.
- The conclusions arising from these events would be synthesised and made public. At a concluding event they should be presented to European decision makers to give them the opportunity to react and take into account the concerns of the European electorate. This phase of the project should be completed ideally before the June 2009 European elections.

In a second phase, the contractor could continue with a series of meetings with newly-elected MEPs and representatives from the principal European media (television, radio, press).

In carrying out both phases, the contractor will take into account the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue and on-going Commission programmes such as Europe for Citizens and e-Participation.

The resulting projects will involve consortia of civil society organisations with a view to replying to these objectives on a Europe-wide scale. These consultations will complement those planned to be held at local level designed to address concerns focused on European issues with a more local impact.

3. TIMETABLE

3.1. Submission of applications

Publication of call beginning April 2008.

Applications must be submitted by end June 2008 at the latest.

Contracts will be signed September 2008.

Please read carefully section 10 of this call for proposals concerning the procedures for submitting applications.

3.2. Duration of projects

The project should begin between 1 September and 1 October 2008 and will be in two phases as described above.

The first phase will be completed by mid-May 2009 (before the European elections) and the second phase by 1 November 2009.

Applications must clearly state the project's starting and finishing dates (dd/mm/yy).

The maximum duration of projects is 14 months.

However, if, after the signing of the agreement and the start of the project, the beneficiary observes that, for fully justified reasons beyond his control, it becomes impossible to complete the project within the scheduled period, an extension to the eligibility period may be granted. A maximum extension of 3 months will be granted, provided that this is requested before the deadline specified in the grant agreement. The maximum duration will then be 18 months.

The period of eligibility of expenditure resulting from implementation of a project will begin on the day of signature of the grant contract by the last of the parties. If the nature of the project requires the project to start before the contract is signed, expenditure may be considered eligible before the signature of the contract. Under no circumstances can the eligibility period start before the date of submission of the grant application.

3.3. Information on the results of the selection

It is planned that applicants will be informed of the outcome of the selection procedure in July 2008.

The lists of selected projects will be published on the following website:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/dgs/communication/grants/index_en.htm

Applicants whose applications have not been selected will be informed in writing.

4. FINANCING

The budget initially available for part-financing projects is estimated at € 2 000 000.

If during the 2008 budget year, additional amounts are allocated to boost the initial budget for this call for proposals, they might be allocated to co-financing projects which were adopted at the selection phase but not given priority for co-financing in the overall budget initially available. The Commission therefore reserves the right to set up a “reserve list” of proposals evaluated positively in order to take account of the resources actually available in the 2008 budget.

The grant awarded may not exceed 70% of the total eligible project costs.

Community contributions are meant to facilitate the implementation of a project which could not otherwise be implemented easily without the support of the European Union. They are based on the co-financing principle.

Consequently, a minimum of 30% of the total estimated eligible expenditure of the project must come from sources other than the European Union budget. Applicants must include evidence that co-financing is available (secured) for the remainder of the total cost of the project.

The Commission intends to finance 1 to 2 projects for a budget of € 1 or € 2 million in total..

The European Commission reserves the right not to distribute all the funds available.

The amount allocated by the Commission may not in any circumstances exceed the amount requested. Moreover, the Commission reserves the right to award a grant lower than the amount requested by the applicant.

An organisation is not entitled to receive more than one grant from the Commission for the action covered by the selected project.

After approval by the Commission, a “grant contract”, a draft of which is reproduced at Annex VI, expressed in euros and specifying the conditions and the financing level, will be concluded between the Commission and the beneficiary. The originals of the finance contract must be signed and returned to the Commission immediately for signature. The Commission will be the last party to sign.

The payment methods are detailed in the draft contract (Article I.4), with a list of eligible and ineligible costs (Article II.14 of the general conditions and Article I.3 of the special conditions of the grant contract).

5. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Applications which comply with the following criteria will be the subject of an in-depth evaluation.

5.1 Eligible countries

Grant applications are eligible if they are presented by organisations having a legal status and established in one of the 27 Member States.

Organisations established in countries other than the countries listed above are not eligible.

5.2 Types of cooperation eligible

The types of cooperation eligible include partnerships. The term partnership/partners implies full or partial active intellectual collaboration in the execution of the project. In no case will financial support alone (sponsorship) be deemed to constitute a partnership. However, any financial support accompanied by active intellectual collaboration in the execution of the project will be accepted as a partnership. In all cases, the purpose of partnership is to add value to the project.

6. EXCLUSION CRITERIA

Applicants must certify on their honour, by signing the application form, that they are not in one of the situations mentioned in Articles 93 and 94 of the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities (Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 of 25 June 2002), which are listed below.

Applicants will be excluded from participating in this call for proposals if they are in one of the following situations:

- a) they are bankrupt or being wound up, are having their affairs administered by the courts, have entered into an arrangement with creditors, have suspended business activities, are the subject of proceedings concerning those matters, or are in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for in national legislation or regulations;
- b) they have been convicted of an offence concerning their professional conduct by a judgement which has the force of res judicata;
- c) they have committed serious professional misconduct recorded by any means that awarding authorities can justify;
- d) they have not fulfilled obligations relating to the payment of social security contributions or the payment of taxes in accordance with the legal provisions of the country in which they are established or with those of the country of the contracting authority or those of the country where the contract is to be performed;
- e) they have been the subject of a judgment which has the force of res judicata for fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organisation or any other illegal activity detrimental to the Communities' financial interests;
- f) following another procurement procedure or grant award procedure financed by the Community budget, they have been declared to be in serious breach of contract for failure to comply with their contractual obligations.

Applicants will not receive financial support if, during the grant allocation procedure:

- a) they are subject to a conflict of interests;
- b) they are guilty of misrepresentation in supplying the information required by the European Commission as a condition of participation in the grant award procedure, or fail to supply this information.

In accordance with Articles 93 to 96 of the Financial Regulation, administrative and financial penalties may be imposed on applicants who are guilty of misrepresentation or are found to have seriously failed to meet their contractual obligations under a previous contract award procedure.

To respect these provisions, the applicant and his partners must provide evidence that they are in none of the situations listed in Articles 93 and 94 of the Financial Regulation.

7. SELECTION CRITERIA

The selection criteria are designed to demonstrate the applicant's capacity to see the project through to a successful conclusion.

Applicants must provide evidence of stable and sufficient sources of funding to maintain the activity throughout the period during which the project is being carried out and/or grant-aided, as well as evidence of their financial participation. The applicant must also provide evidence of professional competencies, qualifications and/or experience relevant to the proposed project.

7.1 Technical capacity

Candidates must show that they have the operational (technical and management) capacity needed to complete the proposed action and provide evidence of their capacity to direct a large-scale activity corresponding to the dimension of the project for which the grant is requested. Particular attention will be devoted to the capacity for integration in society in the Member States, to the mobilisation of the public and to the analysis of their contributions. The capacity to operate in a large number of Member States (ideally in all of them) would be an advantage.

Applicants must attach to the grant application a curriculum vitae for the project leader and for the personnel of their organisation who will actually do the work. They must also enclose a recent activity report .

7.2 Financial resources

In order to permit assessment of this criterion, applicants must submit with their application the following documents:

- annual accounts for the last complete financial year;
- the “financial identification” form (bank details) (Annex III), completed by the beneficiary and certified by the bank (with original signatures).

If, on the basis of the submitted documents, the Commission assesses that the financial capacity of the applicant is not sufficient, it may:

- reject the request for a Community grant;
- ask for further information;
- ask for the deposit of a guarantee;
- propose a grant agreement without a pre-financing payment.

7.3 Audit

Where the cost of the project to be financed exceeds €300 000, the grant application must be accompanied by an external audit report produced by an approved auditor.

This report must certify the accounts for the last year available and give an assessment of the applicant’s financial viability.

8. AWARD CRITERIA

Account will also be taken of other Commission programmes such as the European Year for Intercultural Dialogue in 2008, Europe for Citizens and INTI (Integration of Third-Country Nationals).

Eligible projects will be evaluated on the basis of:

- a) the consistency of the overall concept of the project with the objectives of Debate Europe, as described at point 2 of the call for proposals;
- b) the quality of the work programme and the *modus operandi*;
- c) the dynamics of networking and the establishment of pan-European cooperation;
- d) the capacity of the project to:
 - act in the largest number of Member States as possible, and ideally in all 27;
 - involve the largest number of citizens as possible;
 - ensure their diversity of origin and their representativeness;
 - provide for the use of the largest number of national languages possible;
 - generate transnational results;
- e) the likely multiplier effect through the media and civil society networks, as calculated on the basis of the measures proposed to give visibility to the project and its outcomes;
- f) the system of feedback to European political decision-makers and citizens involved, as recommended by Debate Europe;
- g) the mechanism for evaluation of the objectives pursued by the project.

9. PUBLICITY

Provided the successful tenderer agrees (unless the publication of information is likely to endanger the successful tenderer's safety or harm his interests), the Commission will publish the following information in whatever form and on whatever medium it wishes, including the Internet:

- the name and address of each beneficiary;
- the subject of the grant;
- amount awarded and rate of funding.

10. PROCEDURE FOR THE SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS

10.1 Publication

The text of the call for proposals, the annexes and, for information purposes, a copy of the standard agreement can be obtained from the Europa website at the following address:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/dgs/communication/grants/index_en.htm

10.2 Application form

Applications must be presented in one of the official languages of the EU.

Since the call is addressed first of all to organisations operating in several Member States, DG Communication would, however, appreciate it if grant applications (which must be made out on the 2006 form devised for the purpose) are accompanied by a version in one of the European Commission's working languages (French, English or German).

This form can be downloaded from the above Internet address.

Only grant applications submitted on the application forms attached to this call for proposals and comprising all the necessary documents mentioned in Annex D will be considered.

Applications must be:

- typed; hand-written applications will not be accepted;
- duly dated, filled in and signed by the legal representative of the organisation;
- sent in quadruplicate (the original, which must be identified as such, plus three copies).

10.3 Submission of the application

Deadline for the submission of applications: end May/early June 2008

Applications submitted after will not be considered.

Applications may be submitted in one of the following ways:

Proposals must be submitted on paper:

- by registered post to the following address, for which purposes the relevant date is to be the date of dispatch by post, as evidenced by the postmark or the registered delivery receipt issued by the postal services:

European Commission
Directorate-General COMMUNICATION
Unit A2 (Communication: planning and priorities)
Debate EuropeOffice BERL 5/234

B-1049 Brussels

Belgium

- by hand delivery or courier service.

For security reasons, applications submitted personally or conveyed by a courier service can be presented only to the Commission's Central Mail Department (Rue de Genève 1, 1140 Evere, Belgium), and envelopes must be marked "DG COMMUNICATION, Unit A2 (Communication: planning and priorities), BERL 05/234 – Debate Europe Project". In the event of hand delivery, the submission date is the date of receipt. In the event of delivery by a courier service, the submission date is the date of receipt by the mail department.

Applications submitted by fax or e-mail will not be considered.

No modification of the application will be authorised after the submission of the application and its annexes. However, the Commission reserves the right to request any additional information needed for it to take a final decision on the award of financial support.

Applicants will be informed in writing when their application is received.

Only applications complying with the eligibility and exclusion criteria will be considered for the possible award of a grant.

Applicants whose applications are judged to be ineligible will be notified by mail, with an explanation as to why they were judged ineligible.

Tenderers will be informed, as soon as possible, of the decision taken by

the Commission on their grant application. No information will be released until the Commission's decision on project selection has been taken.

All selected applications will be subject to technical and financial analysis. In this connection the Commission may ask the applicant organisation for supplementary information, or possibly for guarantees.

Any applicant whose application for a Community grant is not accepted will be informed in writing.

10.4 Legal framework

- European commission Communication datedMarch 2008 (Comm): "Debate Europe-building on the experience of Plan D for Democracy, Dialogue and Debate".
- European Commission Communication dated 13 October 2005 (COM(2005) 494 final): The Commission's contribution to the period of reflection and beyond: Plan D for Democracy, Dialogue and Debate
- European Commission Communication dated 03 October 2007 (COM(2007) XXX final): Communicating Europe in Partnership

- OJ L 248, 16.9.2002 (Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 of 25 June 2002 on the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities)
- OJ L 357, 31.12.2002 (Commission Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 2342/2002 of 23 December 2002 laying down detailed rules for the implementation of Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 on the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities)

10.5 Contacts

The Commission department responsible for the implementation and management of call for proposals DG COMM No A2-1/2006 is Unit A2 (Communication: planning and priorities) of Directorate-General Communication (COMM).

Additional information can be obtained by electronic mail or by fax, either at the electronic address COMM-A2@cec.eu.int , or by fax number from ++ 32 2 295 24 69 , indicating clearly the reference of this call for proposals.

Annexes:

Annex A: Daily allowance scale

Annex B: Contractual obligations

Annex C: Text of the banking guarantee to be completed (only on request)

Annex D: Application checklist

Annex I: Application form (parts A and B)

Annex II: Budget form

Annex III: Financial identification form

Annex IV: Financial capacity form

Annex V: Legal entity form

Annex VI: Draft contract (for information)

Annex VII: Acknowledgement of receipt of the application

ANEXO 4

CALL FOR PROPOSALS MANAGED BY EUROPEAN COMMISSION REPRESENTATIONS IN EU MEMBER STATES (LOCAL CALL)

- DG COMM No xxxxxx, EC Representation xxxxxxxx

**Grants for local and national civil society initiatives
to promote public debate about European issues
- part of the European Commission's "Debate Europe" initiative**

1. BACKGROUND

On 13 October 2005 the Commission approved its Communication to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions entitled "Plan D for Democracy, Dialogue and Debate".

This was a listening exercise to enable the European Union (EU) to act on citizens' concerns. The Commission aimed to stimulate debate and widen recognition for the added value that the EU provides.

It was to be a two-way process which:

- informed the public about the EU's role, with examples of its projects and achievements,
- identified their expectations for the future in return.

On 29 November 2006 Vice President Wallström presented a note to the Commissioners entitled, "Plan D – Widen & Deepen the Debate". Its purpose was to take stock and further widen and deepen the debate in the period of reflection. The note is publicly available and has been sent to Member States and other EU institutions.

On 2 April 2008, the Commission adopted a Communication to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions entitled "Debate Europe - Building on the Experience of Plan D for Democracy, Dialogue and Debate". It noted that the first phase of Plan D focused on the "debate and dialogue" part of the process. The next phase of Plan D will take this process one step further and focus on "D for democracy", further enabling citizens to articulate their wishes directly to decision-makers and making better use of the media in the process. This new phase has been named "Debate Europe".

In October 2005 the Commission launched a series of Europe-wide civil society projects¹⁵ for 2006, which it co-financed. In 2007, it promoted a further series of initiatives, targeting young people and women in particular.

¹⁵ "Tomorrow's Europe" introduced by the foundation "Notre Europe" (Paris)

<http://www.notre-europe.eu/>

"European Citizens' Consultations" introduced by the "King Baudouin Foundation" (Brussels)

<http://www.european-citizens-consultations.eu>

"Speak up Europe" introduced by the "European Movement International" (Brussels)

Drawing on this experience, the Commission, through its Representations in EU Member States, will offer grants in each Member State for civil society initiatives focusing on "Debate Europe" priority issues¹⁶. These are:

- Priority issue 1: involvement of citizens with political decision-makers;
- Priority issue 2: joint action between EU institutions and bodies to promote active citizenship.

Differences in economic, social and other aspects of national life greatly affect the public's attitudes to the EU and to particular European issues. So the new round of local calls will therefore be **tailored to each Member State's needs**.

The Commission's Representations will help define the content, and manage and follow up the calls. Depending on the national context, even limited funding for country-level NGOs could result in a fruitful debate **on EU issues**.

2. OBJECTIVES

2.1. General

The Commission wishes to help fund national and regional initiatives by civil society organisations to:

- solicit citizens' views on European issues which have a direct impact, locally and nationally, on their daily lives; and
- encourage citizens to become more informed about these issues, and to discuss and debate them with local opinion-formers.

http://www.europeanmovement.org/emailing/newsletter/speakupeurope_briefing_nonote.pdf

"Our message to Europe" introduced by the Deutsche Gesellschaft (Berlin)

http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/communication/grants/index_fr.htm

"Radio Web Europe" introduced by CENASCA (Rome)

<http://www.cenasca.cisl.it/entra.htm>

"Our Europe – Our Debate – Our Contributions" introduced by the European House (Budapest)

<http://www.europeanhouse.hu/>

All data on the 6 Plan D projects are summarized at the following address:

http://europa.eu/debateeurope/paneurope_en.htm

¹⁶ Priorities specified in the Commission's communication entitled "Debate Europe - Building on the Experience of Plan D for Democracy, Dialogue and Debate"(2 April 2008) and in its 2008 annual work programme.

These initiatives will:

- facilitate dialogue between citizens, national and/or local political decision-makers and opinion-formers through debates, conferences, consultations and/or other events;
- closely involve local members of:
 - the European Parliament, European Economic and Social Committee, and Committee of the Regions, and
 - European political parties, and those parties' foundations
- collate and publish these events' conclusions to:
 - identify specific European issues which matter to people in their particular local/national environment;
 - raise local media and politicians' interest in the debate on Europe;
 - increase understanding of the EU's impact on citizens' everyday life;
- create networks of participatory democracy which integrate the European dimension of local/regional/national debates;
- complement:
 - Commission Representations' other initiatives to target local constituencies;
 - current EU programmes with similar goals, including:
 - the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue (EYID) 2008
 - Europe for Citizens
 - e-Participation
 - Integration of Third Country Nationals (INTI).
- be tailored to meet each Member State's specific needs.

2.2. Detailed

2.2.1. Form

Projects can:

- take many different forms – from public debates to online fora.
- be combined with events targeting the public
 - schools and youth centres,
 - exhibitions,
 - fairs and festivals,
 - conferences and seminars

2.2.2. Content

They should:

- define specific issues to be addressed around the overarching topic of debating the relevance of the EU to ordinary citizens lives;

- be accessible to the public and provoke their interest;
- link in with current issues:
 - of local/regional/national interest
 - at EU level.
- allow a variety of opinions to be expressed, without excluding any opinions
- include:
 - dialogue with local, national or EU political authorities;
 - participation by members of the European Parliament, European Economic and Social Committee and Committee of the Regions;
- use the internet to promote the project and facilitate debate.

2.2.3. *Impact*

As a result, projects should:

- make a lasting contribution to the debate on the EU;
- promote genuine local and national participation in debates on the EU;
- lead to the creation of regional and local networks or strengthen existing ones with a view to continuing and deepening the involvement of citizens in the debate on Europe;
- identify those issues at EU level of greatest local concern and how best they can be addressed on an ongoing basis.

2.2.4. *Action plan*

To allow the Commission to assess whether proposals meet these criteria, the applicant will need to present an action plan setting out:

- the issues which the project will address;
- the project's overall concept and the tools it will use;
- measures to attract the awareness and involvement of the:
 - media - through partnerships and press relations activities;
 - target audience
- actions to follow up the debate including the preparation of a structured summary of citizens' concerns and describe how these will be brought to the attention of local decision-makers including Members of the European Parliament;
- a detailed schedule which respects the deadlines in section 3.1 below.

3. TIMETABLE

3.1. Submission of applications

Applications must be submitted by end June 2008.

Please read carefully section 12 of this call for proposals concerning the procedures for submitting applications.

3.2. Duration of projects

The project should begin before 1 September 2008.

The project must finish no later than 01 November 2009.

Applications must clearly state the project's starting and finishing dates (dd/mm/yy).

The maximum duration of projects is 14 months.

The period of eligibility of expenditure resulting from implementation of a project will begin on the day of signature of the grant contract by the last of the parties. If the nature of the project requires the project to start before the contract is signed, expenditure may be considered eligible before the signature of the contract. Under no circumstances can the eligibility period start before the date of submission of the grant application.

3.3. Information on the results of the selection

It is planned that applicants will be informed of the outcome of the selection procedure [deadline needs to be no later than Jul. 2008]

The lists of selected projects will be published on the following website:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/dgs/communication/grants/index_en.htm &

<http://xxxxxxxxx>

Applicants whose applications have not been selected will be informed in writing.

4. FINANCING

The budget available for this call for proposal is € [to be filled by each Representation].

The grant awarded may not exceed 70% of the total eligible project costs.

Community contributions are meant to facilitate the implementation of a project which could not otherwise be implemented easily without the support of the European Union. They are based on the co-financing principle.

Consequently, a minimum of 30% of the total estimated eligible and final expenditure of the project must come from sources other than the European Union budget. Applicants must include evidence that co-financing is available (secured) for the remainder of the total cost of the project.

Indicatively, the amount of the grant from the EU will be between 50 000 and 100 000 EUR per project.

The European Commission reserves the right not to distribute all the funds available.

The amount allocated by the Commission may not in any circumstances exceed the amount requested. Moreover, the Commission reserves the right to award a grant lower than the amount requested by the applicant.

An organisation is not entitled to receive more than one grant from the Commission for the action covered by the selected project.

After approval by the Commission, a “grant contract”, a draft of which is reproduced at Annex VI, expressed in euros and specifying the conditions and the financing level, will be concluded between the Commission and the beneficiary. The originals of the finance contract must be signed and returned to the Commission immediately for signature. The Commission will be the last party to sign.

The payment methods are detailed in the draft contract (Article I.4), with a list of eligible and ineligible costs (Article II.14 of the general conditions and Article I.3 of the special conditions of the grant contract).

5. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Applications which comply with the following criteria will be the subject of an in-depth evaluation.

5.1. Eligible organisations

Grant applications are eligible if they are presented by organisations having a legal status and established in one of the 27 Member States¹⁷.

6. EXCLUSION CRITERIA

Applicants must certify on their honour, by signing the application form, that they are not in one of the situations mentioned in Articles 93 and 94 of the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities (Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 of 25 June 2002), which are listed below.

Applicants will be excluded from participating in this call for proposals if they are in one of the following situations:

- a) they are bankrupt or being wound up, are having their affairs administered by the courts, have entered into an arrangement with creditors, have suspended business activities, are the subject of proceedings concerning those matters, or are in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for in national legislation or regulations;

¹⁷ Based on the organisation's registered place of business or its place of main activity.

- b) they have been convicted of an offence concerning their professional conduct by a judgement which has the force of res judicata;
- c) they have committed serious professional misconduct recorded by any means that awarding authorities can justify;
- d) they have not fulfilled obligations relating to the payment of social security contributions or the payment of taxes in accordance with the legal provisions of the country in which they are established or with those of the country of the contracting authority or those of the country where the contract is to be performed;
- e) they have been the subject of a judgment which has the force of res judicata for fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organisation or any other illegal activity detrimental to the Communities' financial interests;
- f) following another procurement procedure or grant award procedure financed by the Community budget, they have been declared to be in serious breach of contract for failure to comply with their contractual obligations.

Applicants will not receive financial support if, during the grant allocation procedure:

- a) they are subject to a conflict of interests;
- b) they are guilty of misrepresentation in supplying the information required by the European Commission as a condition of participation in the grant award procedure, or fail to supply this information.

In accordance with Articles 93 to 96 of the Financial Regulation, administrative and financial penalties may be imposed on applicants who are guilty of misrepresentation or are found to have seriously failed to meet their contractual obligations under a previous contract award procedure.

To respect these provisions, the applicant and his partners must provide evidence that they are in none of the situations listed in Articles 93 and 94 of the Financial Regulation.

7. SELECTION CRITERIA

The selection criteria are designed to demonstrate the applicant's capacity to see the project through to a successful conclusion.

Applicants must provide evidence of stable and sufficient sources of funding to maintain the activity throughout the period during which the project is being carried out and/or grant-aided, as well as evidence of their financial participation. The applicant must also provide evidence of professional competencies, qualifications and/or experience relevant to the proposed project.

7.1. Technical capacity

Candidates must show that they have the operational (technical and management) capacity needed to complete the proposed action and provide evidence of their capacity to direct an activity corresponding to the dimension of the project for which the grant is requested. Particular attention will be devoted to the capacity for mobilising the public and to analyse of their contributions. The capacity to involve organisations from other EU countries would be an advantage.

Applicants must attach to the grant application a curriculum vitae for the project leader and for the personnel of their organisation who will actually do the work. They must also enclose a recent activity report .

7.2. Financial resources

In order to permit assessment of this criterion, applicants must submit with their application the following documents:

- annual accounts for the last complete financial year;
- the “financial identification” form (bank details) (Annex III), completed by the beneficiary and certified by the bank (with original signatures).

If, on the basis of the submitted documents, the Commission assesses that the financial capacity of the applicant is not sufficient, it may:

- reject the request for a Community grant;
- ask for further information;
- ask for the deposit of a guarantee;
- propose a grant agreement without a pre-financing payment.

8. AWARD CRITERIA

Commission Representations will evaluate eligible projects against four criteria:

- a) consistency – is the project's overall concept consistent with the:
 - i. objectives of Plan D?
 - ii. general and detailed objectives of the call (see point 2 above)
- b) quality – are the work programme and working methods of sufficient quality?
- c) feasibility – is the project feasible, based on the action plan?
- d) visibility – what is the likely effect of the project's actions to raise awareness?

9. ELIGIBLE COSTS

For all projects, the eligibility period for expenditure relating to the implementation of a project will be stipulated in the grant agreement and will, except as described in the next point, be no earlier than the signature of the agreement by the Commission.

A grant may be awarded for a project which has already begun only where the applicant can demonstrate the need to start the project before the agreement is signed. In such cases, expenditure eligible for financing may not have been incurred before responding to the call for proposals.

The eligibility period for expenditure will not exceed the time allowed under each type of action, and **may not go beyond**.

Only the categories of expenditure listed below are eligible, provided that they are properly accounted for and evaluated in accordance with the market conditions, and that they are identifiable and verifiable. **They must be direct costs** (i.e. generated directly by the project and indispensable for its implementation, having regard to the cost/benefit principle):

- **personnel costs** incurred exclusively for the purpose of implementing the project are eligible only where the accounting systems of the applicants in question can clearly isolate and demonstrate the percentage of staff time devoted to the implementation of the project within the period of expenditure eligibility, and therefore the percentage of personnel costs which can be attributed to the project;
- **travel / accommodation / subsistence costs** associated with the project. Organisations must use their own daily scales to calculate these costs. However, these may not exceed the maximum amounts set by the Commission¹⁸;
- **the cost of organising and running conferences and seminars** (rental of rooms, welcoming and reception services, interpretation, speaker fees);
- cost of **hire or depreciation of technical equipment and services** (only the depreciable element of durable goods can be considered);
- **information dissemination** costs (production, translation, distribution and dissemination costs, etc.);
- cost of **consumables and supplies**
- costs entailed by **other contracts awarded** by the beneficiary for the purposes of the project (also see Section 10);
- costs arising from **requirements imposed by the agreement**;

¹⁸ Commission Decision C(2004) 1313 of 7 April 2004: General implementing provisions adopting the Guide to missions for officials and other servants of the European Commission.

- **general costs** (or "**eligible indirect costs**": office supplies, sundry consumables, depreciation of computer equipment, etc.). These costs may be eligible if incurred by the beneficiary for the purpose of implementing the project, but **may not exceed 7% of total eligible direct expenditure**.

N.B.: indirect costs will not be eligible if the applicant already receives an operating grant from the Commission during the lifetime of the project.

10. NON-ELIGIBLE COSTS

Non-eligible expenditure

The following expenditure cannot be considered eligible **under any circumstances**:

- costs of invested capital;
- general provisions (e.g. for losses, possible future liabilities);
- debts;
- interest owed;
- doubtful debts;
- exchange losses;
- expenditure on luxuries;
- the production of material and publications for commercial purposes; however, monographs, books, journals, discs, CDs, CD ROMs and videos will be taken into consideration if they are an integral part of the project;
- VAT, unless the beneficiary proves that he cannot recover it;
- contributions in kind.

Contributions in kind

Part of the contribution from project sponsors to the project costs may be in kind. These contributions in kind must be included in the provisional budget under the "receipts" section, expressed as a financial equivalent of the services or materials provided, and for an identical amount in the "expenditure" section, but separately from the rest of the budget. In fact, they cannot be considered as eligible costs.

Contributions in kind refer in particular to the provision of durable capital goods, raw materials and unpaid voluntary work by a private individual or corporate body.

The amount declared by the beneficiary as contributions in kind must be valued either on the basis of objective factors or on the basis of official scales laid down by an independent authority or by an outside independent professional.

The cost of private charity work must be valued in accordance with the national rules regarding the calculation of hourly, daily or weekly labour costs.

Contributions in kind will not be accounted for as eligible costs but rather as an increase in the grant in terms of value or as a percentage of the eligible costs.

The Community contribution is subject to a ceiling relating to the total eligible cost (70% maximum of the total eligible cost), excluding the value of contributions in kind.

Subcontracting and calls for tender

Where the implementation of subsidised actions requires a subcontract or the launch of a call for tender, the beneficiaries of the grant must award this contract to the tender offering the best value for money, respecting the principles of transparency and equal treatment of potential contractors and ensuring there is no conflict of interests. None of the basic activities of the project may be subcontracted, et subcontracting must account for only a limited part of the project.

For all contracts, beneficiaries must keep evidence that the selection of subcontractors was competitive, involving at least three offers, unless it can be shown that only one supplier exists in a given market. Grants may only be awarded after a project's start date (given in the application) upon prior written approval from the Commission.

11. PUBLICITY

The Commission will publish the list of successful applicants (unless the publication of information is likely to endanger the successful applicant safety or harm his interests). The Commission will publish the following information in whatever form and on whatever medium it wishes, including the Internet:

- the name and address of each beneficiary;
- the subject of the grant;
- amount awarded and rate of funding.

12. PROCEDURE FOR THE SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS

12.1. Publication

The text of the call for proposals, the annexes and, for information purposes, a copy of the standard agreement can be obtained from the Europa website at the following address:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/dgs/communication/grants/index_en.htm &

<http://xxxxxxxxx> (Website of the Representation)

12.2. Application form

Applications must be presented in one of the official languages of the EU.

This form can be downloaded from one of the above Internet addresses.

Only grant applications submitted on the application forms attached to this call for proposals and comprising all the necessary documents mentioned in Annex D will be considered.

Applications must be:

- typed; hand-written applications will not be accepted;
- duly dated, filled in and signed by the legal representative of the organisation;
- sent in quadruplicate (the original, which must be identified as such, plus three copies).

12.3. Submission of the application

Deadline for the submission of applications: 30 June 2007

Applications submitted after will not be considered.

Applications may be submitted in one of the following ways:

Proposals must be submitted on paper:

- by registered post to the following address, for which purposes the relevant date is to be the date of dispatch by post, as evidenced by the postmark or the registered delivery receipt issued by the postal services:

European Commission

EC Representation XXXXXXXX

- by hand delivery or courier service.

For security reasons, applications submitted personally or conveyed by a courier service can be presented only to the Commission's Representation xxxxxx, and envelopes must be marked "DG COMMUNICATION, EC Representation xxxxxxxx - Plan D Project". In the event of hand delivery, the submission date is the date of receipt. In the event of delivery by a courier service, the submission date is the date of receipt by the mail department.

Applications submitted by fax or e-mail will not be considered.

No modification of the application will be authorised after the submission of the application and its annexes. However, the Commission reserves the right to request any additional information needed for it to take a final decision on the award of financial support.

Applicants will be informed in writing when their application is received.

Only applications complying with the eligibility and exclusion criteria will be considered for the possible award of a grant.

Applicants whose applications are judged to be ineligible will be notified by mail, with an explanation as to why they were judged ineligible.

Tenderers will be informed, as soon as possible, of the decision taken by

the Commission on their grant application. No information will be released until the Commission's decision on project selection has been taken.

All selected applications will be subject to technical and financial analysis. In this connection the Commission may ask the applicant organisation for supplementary information, or possibly for guarantees.

Any applicant whose application for a Community grant is not accepted will be informed in writing.

12.4. Legal framework

- European Commission Communication dated 2 April 2008 - COM(2008) 158: "Debate Europe-building on the experience of Plan D for Democracy, Dialogue and Debate"
- European Commission Communication dated 13 October 2005 - COM(2005) 494: The Commission's contribution to the period of reflection and beyond: Plan D for Democracy, Dialogue and Debate
- **Information note from Vice President Wallström to the Commission – Plan D, Wider and deeper debate on Europe - SEC(2006) 1553, 24.11.2006.**
- OJ L 248, 16.9.2002 (Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 of 25 June 2002 on the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities)
- OJ L 357, 31.12.2002 (Commission Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 2342/2002 of 23 December 2002 laying down detailed rules for the implementation of Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 on the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities)

12.5. Contacts

The Commission department responsible for the implementation and management of the call for proposals is EC Representation XXXXXXXX

Additional information can be obtained by electronic mail or by fax, either at the electronic address xxxx@ec.europa.eu, or by fax number from ++ xx xx xx xx xx , indicating clearly the reference of this call for proposals.

Annexes:

Annex I: Application form (parts A and B)

Annex II: Budget form

Annex III: Financial identification form

Annex IV: Financial capacity form

Annex V: Legal entity form

Annex VI: Draft contract (for information)

Annex VII: Acknowledgement of receipt of the application

Annex VIII: Application checklist

DECLARACIÓN DE INCIDENCIA PRESUPUESTARIA

Comunicación de la Comisión: «Europa a debate»: construir a partir de la experiencia del Plan D de democracia, diálogo y debate

ÁMBITO POLÍTICO: COMUNICACIÓN

ACTIVIDAD: ACCIONES ESPECÍFICAS SOBRE TEMAS PRIORITARIOS, DE LOS CUALES PRINCE

PROGRAMA DE TRABAJO PARA: 2008

1. LÍNEAS PRESUPUESTARIAS AFECTADAS Y DENOMINACIÓN

16.0304 - Acciones específicas sobre temas prioritarios, de los cuales PRINCE

2. BASE JURÍDICA

Tareas derivadas de las prerrogativas institucionales de la Comisión al amparo del artículo 49, apartado 6, del Reglamento (CE, Euratom) nº 1605/2002 del Consejo, de 25 de junio de 2002, por el que se aprueba el Reglamento financiero aplicable al presupuesto general de las Comunidades Europeas (DO L 248 de 16.9.2002, p. 1), modificado por el Reglamento (CE, Euratom) nº 1995/2006 (DO L 390 de 30.12.2006, p. 1).

3. DATOS GENERALES DEL EJERCICIO (EN EUROS)

■ 3.a – Año en curso

	CC
Crédito inicial del ejercicio (presupuesto)	12 830 000
Transferencias	0
Crédito adicional	0
Crédito total	12 830 000
Créditos ya reservados por otro programa de trabajo	0
Saldo disponible	12 830 000
Importe destinado a la acción propuesta	7 200 000 ¹⁹

¹⁹ El importe de la acción (7 200 000 EUR) corresponde a los créditos del presupuesto de 2008 para la línea presupuestaria 16.0304 (Acciones específicas sobre temas prioritarios, de los cuales PRINCE). Por consiguiente, no son necesarios recursos adicionales.

■ **3.b – Créditos prorrogados**

No procede.

■ **3.c – Ejercicio siguiente**

No procede.

4. DESCRIPCIÓN DE LA ACCIÓN

«Europa a debate» prolongará el Plan D en 2008 y 2009 y velará por que el esfuerzo global de la Comisión por promover la ciudadanía europea activa sea un esfuerzo interinstitucional, vinculado a las prioridades de las instituciones de la UE en materia política y de comunicación, que llegue a los responsables de la toma de decisiones en todas las instancias de gobierno.

Se sugiere una estrategia a dos bandas, respaldada por un presupuesto de 7,2 millones EUR:

- una convocatoria de propuestas centralizada para cofinanciar un proyecto transnacional global, con un presupuesto de 2 millones EUR;
- convocatorias y acciones descentralizadas para financiar proyectos locales con un presupuesto de 5,2 millones EUR.

A nivel paneuropeo: en los términos de la convocatoria de propuestas se precisará que, teniendo en cuenta la experiencia adquirida a partir de la primera serie de proyectos transnacionales de democracia participativa cofinanciados en el marco del Plan D, «Europa a debate» financiará una iniciativa de la sociedad civil para organizar consultas a los ciudadanos en todos los Estados miembros, establecerá conclusiones o formulará propuestas a nivel europeo y, a partir de esta plataforma común, implicará a los ciudadanos en un diálogo con organizaciones y representantes políticos, en colaboración con fundaciones políticas europeas.

A nivel nacional: teniendo en cuenta la experiencia adquirida a partir de los proyectos de la sociedad civil cofinanciados por las Representaciones de la Comisión en los Estados miembros, «Europa a debate» cofinanciará acciones descentralizadas adaptadas a necesidades específicas (por ejemplo, acciones dirigidas a los colegios y centros de juventud, exposiciones, ferias y festivales, conferencias, seminarios, actos con las ONG, etc.). Estas acciones incluirán convocatorias de propuestas locales y otras acciones definidas en el marco de «Europa a debate» (por ejemplo, debates vía internet, visitas de los Comisarios, actividades en el marco de espacios públicos europeos y Redes Piloto de Información, incidencia en la esfera local a través de los centros de Europe Direct, etc.).

El desglose detallado de este importe figura en la Decisión de la Comisión relativa al programa de trabajo anual sobre subvenciones y contratos en el ámbito de la Comunicación para 2008, C/2008/0924, adoptada por la Comisión el 12 de marzo de 2008 (véase el cuadro 2.6.2).

5. MÉTODO DE CÁLCULO ADOPTADO

El presupuesto de 7,2 millones EUR asignado a «Europa a debate» se desglosa como sigue:

- Como ya se ha señalado, la sede central de la Dirección General de Comunicación pondrá en marcha una convocatoria de propuestas por un importe estimado de 2 millones EUR, a fin de cofinanciar un proyecto transaccional global.

Además, las Representaciones pondrán en marcha convocatorias de propuestas descentralizadas por un importe estimado de 3,1 millones EUR. Probablemente haya una convocatoria de propuestas por Estado miembro, con un presupuesto medio de entre 100 000 y 200 000 EUR.

Estas cifras se han calculado a partir de experiencias anteriores (las convocatorias de propuestas del Plan D correspondientes a 2007 ascendieron a 2,4 millones EUR para trece Estados miembros).

- Por lo que se refiere a los restantes 2,1 millones EUR, además de los contratos en curso, las Representaciones tienen previsto poner en marcha aproximadamente ciento treinta y seis licitaciones (131 \leq 60 000 EUR y 5 $>$ 60 000 EUR).

6. CALENDARIO DE PAGOS (EN EUROS)

Línea 16.0304	2008	2009	2010	Total
Compromisos	7 200 000	0	0	7 200 000
Pagos	3 600 000	1 800 000	1 800 000	7 200 000